

## Exodus Chapter Thirteen

Read **Exodus 13:1-2** – Sanctify Your Firstborn

**v.1-2** “AND THE **LORD** SPAKE UNTO MOSES, SAYING, SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN, WHATSOEVER OPENETH THE WOMB AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, **both** OF MAN AND OF BEAST: IT **is** MINE.”

“SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN”, both of men and of beasts. First of all what does the word sanctify mean? It means to consecrate, set aside, or separate something or someone for a special purpose. So Israel was commanded to set aside, dedicate to God their first born. This is the reason that Joseph and Mary journeyed to Jerusalem with their firstborn:

**Luke 2:22-23** “AND WHEN THE DAYS OF HER PURIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MOSES WERE ACCOMPLISHED, THEY BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM, TO PRESENT HIM TO THE LORD; (AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF THE **LORD**, EVERY MALE THAT OPENETH THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE **LORD**;)”

But there was a restriction to that commandment that is not apparent at the time when was first given.

**Deuteronomy 15:19** “ALL THE FIRSTLING MALES THAT COME OF THY HERD AND OF THY FLOCK THOU SHALT SANCTIFY UNTO THE **LORD** THY GOD: THOU SHALT DO NO WORK WITH THE FIRSTLING OF THY BULLOCK, NOR SHEAR THE FIRSTLING OF THY SHEEP.”

This commandment was restricted to the male first born in all cases. We have further clarification in:

**Exodus 34:19** “ALL THAT OPENETH THE MATRIX **is** MINE; AND EVERY FIRSTLING AMONG THY CATTLE, **whether** OX OR SHEEP, **that is male**.” (KJV)

And just so that there is no misunderstanding because “**that is male**” was added by the translators in the KJV we include:

**Exodus 34:19** “ALL THAT OPEN THE WOMB **are** MINE, AND EVERY MALE FIRSTBORN AMONG YOUR LIVESTOCK, **whether** OX OR SHEEP.” (NKJV)

Did God’s commandment to be first, to receive the first fruits of his providence apply only to men and beasts? No. God desires the first of everything:

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**Exodus 22:29** “THOU SHALT NOT DELAY TO OFFER THE FIRST OF THY RIPE FRUITS, AND OF THY LIQUORS (juices, NKJV): THE FIRSTBORN OF THY SONS SHALT THOU GIVE UNTO ME.”

This also helps us understand the admonition of Jesus to his disciples and consequently to us as well:

**Matthew 6:33** “BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.”

Read **Exodus 13:3-10** – The Passover Memorial

**v.3-4** “AND MOSES SAID UNTO THE PEOPLE, REMEMBER THIS DAY, IN WHICH YE CAME OUT FROM EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE; FOR BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE **LORD** BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM THIS PLACE: THERE SHALL NO LEAVENED BREAD BE EATEN. THIS DAY CAME YE OUT IN THE MONTH ABIB.”

Moses repeats the commandment to remember the day of Passover, the day in which they were liberated from Egyptian bondage. He reminds them that their deliverance was through the hand of the Lord and that they should celebrate by eating unleavened bread and conducting this celebration in the month of Abib.

**v.5** “AND IT SHALL BE WHEN THE **LORD** SHALL BRING THEE INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES, AND THE HITTITES, AND THE AMORITES, AND THE HIVITES, AND THE JEBUSITES, WHICH HE SWARE UNTO THY FATHERS TO GIVE THEE, A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, THAT THOU SHALT KEEP THIS SERVICE IN THIS MONTH.”

Moses repeats the promise that God had made to him at the burning bush and instructed him to repeat to the elders of the tribes of Israel:

**Exodus 3:17** “AND I HAVE SAID, I WILL BRING YOU UP OUT OF THE AFFLICTION OF EGYPT UNTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES, AND THE HITTITES, AND THE AMORITES, AND THE PERIZZITES, AND THE HIVITES, AND THE JEBUSITES, UNTO A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY.”

A promise that we see being fulfilled in the record of:

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**Joshua 24:11** “AND YOU WENT OVER JORDAN, AND CAME UNTO JERICHO: AND THE MEN OF JERICHO FOUGHT AGAINST YOU, THE AMORITES, AND THE PERIZZITES, AND THE CANAANITES, AND THE HITTITES, AND THE GIRGASHITES, THE HIVITES, AND THE JEBUSITES; AND I DELIVERED THEM INTO YOUR HAND.”

Where Joshua reminds them of God’s promises, God’s blessings and their covenant with God before leaving them in death.

**v.6** “SEVEN DAYS THOU SHALT EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD, AND IN THE SEVENTH DAY SHALL BE A FEAST TO THE **LORD**.”

They were to eat unleavened bread for seven days and worship God with a feast on the seventh day of their observance.

**v.7** “UNLEAVENED BREAD SHALL BE EATEN SEVEN DAYS; AND THERE SHALL NO LEAVENED BREAD BE SEEN WITH THEE, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE LEAVEN SEEN WITH THEE IN ALL THY QUARTERS.”

The penalty for having eating leaven during the feast of the unleavened bread was what some folks would call “hard”, they were disfellowshipped permanently, cut off from Israel:

“SEVEN DAYS SHALL YE EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD; EVEN THE FIRST DAY YE SHALL PUT AWAY LEAVEN OUT OF YOUR HOUSES: FOR WHOSOEVER EATETH LEAVENED BREAD FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL THE SEVENTH DAY, THAT SOUL SHALL BE CUT OFF FROM ISRAEL.” **Exodus 12:15**

Consequently we are told that “the Jews usage was, before the feast of the Passover, to cast all the leavened bread out of their houses: they burnt it, or buried it, or broke it small and scattered it in the wind; they searched diligently with lighted candles in all the corners of their houses, lest any leaven should remain.” (Matthew Henry Commentary) So here we have another parallel between the Old and New Testaments.

Paul uses this parallel to emphasize the importance of removing that which would corrupt the church and cost men their souls. The Corinthian church was harboring sin within the congregation:

“YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD. KNOW YE NOT THAT A LITTLE LEAVEN LEAVENETH THE WHOLE LUMP? PURGE OUT THEREFORE THE OLD LEAVEN, THAT YE MAY BE A NEW LUMP, AS YE ARE UNLEAVENED. FOR EVEN CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US:” **I Corinthians 5:6-7**

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**v.8** “AND THOU SHALT SHEW THY SON IN THAT DAY, SAYING, *This is done* BECAUSE OF THAT *which* THE **LORD** DID UNTO ME WHEN I CAME FORTH OUT OF EGYPT.”

As is always important and frequently neglected, the children, especially the sons were to be taught to maintain this memorial and to understand it's purpose and importance.

**v.9** “AND IT SHALL BE FOR A SIGN UNTO THEE UPON THINE HAND, AND FOR A MEMORIAL BETWEEN THINE EYES, THAT THE **LORD'S** LAW MAY BE IN THY MOUTH: FOR WITH A STRONG HAND HATH THE **LORD** BROUGHT THEE OUT OF EGYPT.”

This memorial, like the Lord's Supper that we observe today, was for the purpose of keeping the goodness and benefit of being children of God before them at all times. This is the reason that God repeats these instructions in Moses final sermon.

**Deuteronomy 6:8** “AND THOU SHALT BIND THEM FOR A SIGN UPON THINE HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES.”

**v.10** “THOU SHALT THEREFORE KEEP THIS ORDINANCE IN HIS SEASON FROM YEAR TO YEAR.”

Read **Exodus 13:11-16** – The Firstborn Sanctified

**v.11** “AND IT SHALL BE WHEN THE **LORD** SHALL BRING THEE INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES, AS HE SWARE UNTO THEE AND TO THY FATHERS, AND SHALL GIVE IT THEE,”

God continues in his instruction to impress upon the minds of the Israelites that they will indeed be led to the land of Canaan that God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for their posterity. Because of their present circumstance there are things that they need to do now for the Father of all creation.

**v.12** “THAT THOU SHALT SET APART UNTO THE **LORD** ALL THAT OPENETH THE MATRIX, AND EVERY FIRSTLING THAT COMETH OF A BEAST WHICH THOU HAST; THE MALES *shall be* THE **LORD'S**.”

Every firstborn male of any animal was to be set aside and dedicated to the Lord.

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**v.13** “BUT EVERY FIRSTBORN OF A DONKEY YOU SHALL REDEEM WITH A LAMB; AND IF YOU WILL NOT REDEEM *it*, THEN YOU SHALL BREAK ITS NECK. AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MAN AMONG YOUR SONS YOU SHALL REDEEM.” (NKJV)

The basic commandment was that they were to redeem the firstborn of every beast. But if that beast was an unclean animal, a animal that Israel was forbidden to eat then it could not be sacrificed or dedicated to the Lord. It had to be replaced by a lamb or a clean animal that could be sacrificed or dedicated to God.

If a person refused to redeem the unclean beast then the animal was to be destroyed. They had no right to own a firstborn animal that they would not be dedicated to the Lord.

They were likewise to redeem the “FIRSTBORN OF MAN AMONG YOUR SONS”. Again we remember the journey that Mary and Joseph made to Jerusalem with Jesus for that purpose.

**v.14** “AND IT SHALL BE WHEN THY SON ASKETH THEE IN TIME TO COME, SAYING, WHAT IS THIS? THAT THOU SHALT SAY UNTO HIM, BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE **LORD** BROUGHT US OUT FROM EGYPT, FROM THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE:”

As is common among children, at a certain age, they will ask question after question about many things. Israel is being instructed to use these opportunities to teach them the meaning of the feasts, other times of worship and the covenant of law that had been consummated between God and Israel.

This is the most opportune time to teach children about all matters pertaining to the to the church and about God. If we begin properly, at an early age, earlier than most will admit that children can be taught, they will be properly grounded, and the likelihood of losing them at a later age is reduced.

**v.15** “AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN PHARAOH WOULD HARDLY LET US GO, THAT THE **LORD** SLEW ALL THE FIRSTBORN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, BOTH THE FIRSTBORN OF MAN, AND THE FIRSTBORN OF BEAST: THEREFORE I SACRIFICE TO THE **LORD** ALL THAT OPENETH THE MATRIX, BEING MALES; BUT ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MY CHILDREN I REDEEM.”

This portion of Exodus is being recorded at some later time than in which it occurred. Consequently the language refers to events that have already passed and is used to emphasize the importance of the commandments that God has given Israel.

Since God had taken the firstborn of the Egyptians in death in order to free Israel, Israel was obligated to provide their firstborn, both beasts and man, as an offering to God. The beasts to be offered on the altar as a sacrifice, the male firstborn to be offered in service to God, much the same as Paul wrote to the Romans:

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**Romans 12:1** "I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YE PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, *which is* YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."

**v.16** "AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN UPON THINE HAND, AND FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES: FOR BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE **LORD** BROUGHT US FORTH OUT OF EGYPT."

They were to keep this commandment ever before them so that they would never forget and for all time honor God for freeing them from slavery.

Read **Exodus 13:17-22** – Israel Goes Out of Egypt

**v.17** "AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN PHARAOH HAD LET THE PEOPLE GO, THAT GOD LED THEM NOT THROUGH THE WAY OF THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES, ALTHOUGH THAT WAS NEAR; FOR GOD SAID, LEST PERADVENTURE THE PEOPLE REPENT WHEN THEY SEE WAR, AND THEY RETURN TO EGYPT:"

The shortest route from Egypt to the area around Jerusalem is through what is today called Gaza. See Map:

But God did not lead Israel in that direction. As we see here they actually went south from Goshen. This verse tells us that the reason was that they were not prepared for war. Not only did Egypt probably have garrisons in this border land they would have to face the Philistines. They would have turned back as they did try to do more than once. When pursued by Pharaoh's army they cried to God and Moses

**Exodus 14:12** "*Is* NOT THIS THE WORD THAT WE DID TELL THEE IN EGYPT, SAYING, LET US ALONE, THAT WE MAY SERVE THE EGYPTIANS? FOR *it had been* BETTER FOR US TO SERVE THE EGYPTIANS, THAN THAT WE SHOULD DIE IN THE WILDERNESS."

And then again under the influence of the ten spies:

**Numbers 14:3-4** "AND WHEREFORE HATH THE **LORD** BROUGHT US UNTO THIS LAND, TO FALL BY THE SWORD, THAT OUR WIVES AND OUR CHILDREN SHOULD BE A PREY? WERE IT NOT BETTER FOR US TO RETURN INTO EGYPT? AND THEY SAID ONE TO ANOTHER, LET US MAKE A CAPTAIN, AND LET US RETURN INTO EGYPT."

And there were other reasons as well, such as the need for a body of law in order for them to be able to govern themselves; and the need to them to be sifted, tried and hardened by their wilderness wanderings.

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**v.18** “BUT GOD LED THE PEOPLE ABOUT, THROUGH THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS OF THE RED SEA: AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT UP HARNESSSED OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

So God led them down toward the Red Sea and the Wilderness – see Map again.

Who can tell me what the word “HARNESSED” in this verse means? The ASV translates it as “ARMED”, as in armed for war. Since Goshen was a buffer state between Egypt and her enemies to the north and east it would be logical that Israel had men that had been trained in warfare. The NKJV translates this word as “ORDERLY RANKS” so that everyone is moving in concert, in order as would be necessary for that great number of people. This is one of the functions for harness when working with horses or a yoke for oxen.

**v.19** “AND MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM: FOR HE HAD STRAITLY SWORN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, SAYING, GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU; AND YE SHALL CARRY UP MY BONES AWAY HENCE WITH YOU.”

As you should remember from our study of Genesis, when Jacob died his body was carried to the burial site of Abraham, at Mamre, in the burying ground that Abraham had purchased from Ephron the Hittite. Now the bones of Joseph are carried with Israel as they depart Egypt in order to keep the commandment that Joseph had given them.

**Genesis 50:24-25** “AND JOSEPH SAID UNTO HIS BRETHREN, I DIE: AND GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU, AND BRING YOU OUT OF THIS LAND UNTO THE LAND WHICH HE SWORE TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO JACOB. AND JOSEPH TOOK AN OATH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, SAYING, GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU, AND YE SHALL CARRY UP MY BONES FROM HENCE.”

But Joseph was not buried at Mamre with the patriarchs but rather at Shechem in the land his sons were to inherit:

**Joshua 24:32** “AND THE BONES OF JOSEPH, WHICH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT, BURIED THEY IN SHECHEM, IN A PARCEL OF GROUND WHICH JACOB BOUGHT OF THE SONS OF HAMOR THE FATHER OF SHECHEM FOR AN HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER: AND IT BECAME THE INHERITANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH.”

**v.20** “AND THEY TOOK THEIR JOURNEY FROM SUCCOTH, AND ENCAMPED IN ETHAM, IN THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS.”

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The maps that I have access to are in agreement regarding the location called Etham. It's name means house or sanctuary of Tum, the sun god that was worshiped by Lower Egypt. It is located at the northern end of the Red Sea. See Map

**v.21** "AND THE **LORD** WENT BEFORE THEM BY DAY IN A PILLAR OF A CLOUD, TO LEAD THEM THE WAY; AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, TO GIVE THEM LIGHT; TO GO BY DAY AND NIGHT:"

God led them by using a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. This provided not only a beacon that they should follow but a constant reminder that it was Jehovah God who was leading them. The Psalmist writes as a reminder to Israel of God's goodness:

**Psalm 78:14** "IN THE DAYTIME ALSO HE LED THEM WITH A CLOUD, AND ALL THE NIGHT WITH A LIGHT OF FIRE."

**v.22** "HE TOOK NOT AWAY THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD BY DAY, NOR THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT, *from* BEFORE THE PEOPLE."

We read of the continual failure of the nation of Israel to honor God, their continued propensity to complain about what God was providing them, their repeated attempts to turn back into Egyptian slavery; and we wonder. How could they do that when all they had to do was look up and see a special manifestation of Jehovah God right in their midst?