

Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 3:36 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Session on Exodus 12:43-13:16

"You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt!' (Exodus 13:8)

Last week, we saw how the LORD sent the tenth and final plague on Pharaoh and the Egyptian people, because he (Pharaoh) refused to "let His (God's) people go"--bringing death to the firstborn son in all the Egyptian households, beginning with the firstborn of Pharaoh! All those who didn't have the doorposts and lintels of the doors of their homes sprinkled with the blood of a spotless, unblemished lamb! It became known as "the Passover," because the LORD "passed over" the homes of all the children of Israel who had obeyed God's instructions to apply the blood of a spotless lamb. It resulted in a "great cry" in land of Egypt, and Pharaoh responding with a desperate call to Moses and Aaron during the night, with an order for them and all the children of Israel to "rise up and get out from among his people"! This instigated the great "exodus" from Egypt for the children of Israel, and a command from the Lord to always remember this day and establish it as a "permanent ordinance"!

All of which brought us to last nite's lesson, from Exodus 12:43-13:16, which one might appropriately entitle, "Remember the Passover"! And which fit so well with the presentation by Stephen Katz (North American Director of "Jews for Jesus") on "Christ in the Passover," with emphasis on the "Seder," the Passover meal! (And proving that it's possible, and ok, to be a Christian and still a Jew!)

There are at least four important things, in our lesson text, that the LORD told Moses to tell the children of Israel to do "when He would bring them out of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hivite and the Jebusite (the "promised land"), which He swore to their fathers to give them"!

- First of all, they were "to remember this day... the day they were brought out of Egypt, from the house of slavery"! And, when the LORD would bring them to the promised land, they were to "observe (and celebrate!) this rite (speaking of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread) as a (special!) feast unto the LORD (which Stephen Katz so elegantly described last nite!). It was a feast set by the LORD, "beginning on the fourteenth day through the twenty-first day of the month of Abib (later named 'Nisan'), the "first month" of the new Jewish calendar (in the March-April timeframe, as we know it)!
- Secondly, the fathers were "to tell their sons (presumably the firstborn sons who were 'passed over,' and thus 'saved' on the night of the Passover), why they were doing it (i.e., celebrating the Passover)--because "with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place" (with these latter words repeated four times, for emphasis, in this passage)!
- Thirdly, and relatedly (in 13:2,12), they were to "sanctify (or "set apart") to the LORD, and "devote to the LORD, and "redeem," the first male offspring of their sons--because they "belonged to the LORD"!
- And, fourthly--to help them remember (and particularly in generations to come) what the LORD did for them, and said to them--Exodus 13:9 and Deuteronomy 6:6-9 says they were to "bind" (or strap) "phylacteries" (small boxes containing parchments with the "words of God") on their hands and on their foreheads "as a sign to them".

Now for more detail!

Exodus 12:48 makes it clear that "no uncircumcised male" could eat the Passover meal, or otherwise participate in the Passover celebration! The rite of circumcision was specifically instituted by God with Abraham "as a sign of the covenant" between God and Abraham and his descendants! God said to Abraham, in Genesis 17:9-14, "...You shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep...Every male among you shall be circumcised! And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations...A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male...shall be cut off from My people; he has broken My covenant!"

The rite of circumcision was obviously important to God! So much so that, Exodus 4:24 says, God "sought to put Moses to death" as he was on his way to Egypt (to lead the children of Israel out!)--because (can you believe it?) Moses had not circumcised his own son! (You probably remember the story how Moses, and his son, were rescued only after his disgruntled wife, Zipporah, took it upon herself to "cut off her son's foreskin and throw it at Moses' feet"!) Wow!

And yet even the Old Testament made it clear that circumcision had a deeper meaning and purpose--symbolizing the need for a "profoundly deeper cleansing"! The "cutting away" of sin! Moses would later write In Deuteronomy 10:12-16), "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and serve Him with your heart and soul...So circumcise your heart and stiffen your neck on longer!"

And, to complete the thought, Colossians 2:22 says, "And in Him you were also circumcised without a circumcision made with hands; in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of the Christ!"

Well, back to our Exodus passage, and the second important point--concerning the need to "tell your son on that day what the LORD did for you...when with a powerful hand He brought you out of Egypt"! But the father's responsibility doesn't end there! Deuteronomy 4:9 says to "...keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and grandsons (and, in context, that would include daughters and granddaughters as well). Deuteronomy 6:4-9 adds that "...You shall teach them (the "words commanded by the LORD) diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up...And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates!" Wow!

But there's more--concerning the third point, and the seeming "singling out (and "setting apart") of the firstborn," and the LORD's statement that "he belongs to Him"!

Well, it was the firstborn specifically that was "passed over"--and thus rescued and "saved"--on that Passover night (because of the blood of the unblemished lamb that was sprinkled on the doorpost and lintel), and so only appropriate that he would be the one singled out in this passage! But it foreshadows the fact that all of us, as believers, would be "bought with a price" (through the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross) and therefore "redeemed" and now "belonging to Him," and being "sanctified" by His grace!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own! For you have been bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body!"

There's a fourth important point in this passage--that dealing with the "phylacteries" which were to be placed on their hands and foreheads "serving as a sign on that day" (again, presumably on the day of the Passover celebration, but perhaps at other times as well)! Deuteronomy 6 makes it clear that it's referring to the "words commanded by the Lord" that should be seen, and talked about, and written on the doorposts of the houses--as well as on the "frontals on their foreheads"! They didn't have the written Word of God in that day, obviously, and so this was a way of stressing the importance, and certainly for us today, of making the Word of God the centerpiece of our lives as believers and follower of Christ! (And "not for show"! Jesus criticized the Pharisees and scribes, in Matthew 23:5, for "broadening their phylacteries and lengthening the tassels of their garments, to be noticed by men"! Boo!)

Psalms 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee!" Verse 18 says, "Open my eyes, that I might behold wonderful things from Your law!" Verse 105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path!" Jesus prayed to His Father that His disciples would be "sanctified in the truth," adding that "Your word is truth!" And many more verses could be cited!

And so--with all that said--first and foremost--this passage is a recognition that the Passover foreshadows the coming of Jesus Christ as "the Lamb of God" who would offer Himself as the "once for all, all-sufficient sacrifice" for sin, something He announced to His disciples in "the upper room," on the night He was betrayed! The apostle Paul captured the scene this way (in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26): "For I received from the LORD that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me,' In the same manner He took the cup also after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes!"

And so it's appropriate, as Stephen Katz made clear, that we celebrate the Passover as a remembrance of the exodus of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt but, even more importantly, as a reminder of what Christ has done for us, as the "Lamb of God"--which we need to share with our children, and grandchildren--but also as a way of ministering to those who don't know Christ, and particularly our Jewish friends! (I was reminded, as we enter the Christmas season, of the words of John 1:11--"He came to His own (the Jews!) and His own received Him not!" Also, of the words to that old Black spiritual, that seem to apply: "Oh sweet little manger boy...we didn't know who You was...!")

May God be with you, 'til we meet again! Shalom!

Lowell