

Delivered from Egypt
December 15, 2024
Allen Power

Exodus 12:21-32

Christmas traditions – let's take a poll. Real tree or artificial tree? Exchange gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day? Any favorite foods that complete your celebration? Fruitcakes are good...or basically a doorstop? ☺ Traditions matter and it can require some grace when we need to change them up.

Traditions for Christmas, Easter, and everything related to following Christ are not just about warm and fuzzy family feelings – they are biblical. Today's text gave specific instructions to the escaping Israelites to teach their children about the miracle and significance of God's deliverance through the first Passover.

The point: God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt is a picture of His wonderful offer to deliver all people from sin and death into freedom in Christ. The story of the first Passover is a picture of Jesus' permanent and totally sufficient substitutionary atonement for all people. The exodus of God's people from slavery also contains several practical lessons for every follower of Christ.

Before the text, some context. At this point God had wrought nine plagues on Egypt to convince hard-hearted Pharaoh to relent and let God's people go free. Each time Pharaoh doubled down on his defiance against God. Now we come to the tenth and most devastating plague: the death of every first-born male human and animal including Pharaoh's own first born son.

Moses gave Pharaoh God's warning: *"Widespread wailing will erupt all over the country, lament such as has never been and never will be again. But against the Israelites—man, woman, or animal—there won't be so much as a dog's bark, so [Pharaoh would] know that God makes a clear distinction between Egypt and Israel."* There would be massive death for Egypt but total protection for Israel from God's "death angel." That protection would come to every household through the blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb.

(NLT) — 21 Then Moses called all the elders of Israel together and said to them, "Go, pick out a lamb or young goat for each of your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. **22** Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning. **23** For the Lord will pass through the land to strike down the Egyptians. But when he sees the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, the Lord will pass over your home. He will not permit his death angel to enter your house and strike you down. **24** "Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. **25** When you enter the land the Lord has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this

ceremony. **26** Then your children will ask, ‘What does this ceremony mean?’ **27** And you will reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. And though he struck the Egyptians, he spared our families.’ ” When Moses had finished speaking, all the people bowed down to the ground and worshiped. **28** So the people of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded through Moses and Aaron. **29** And that night at midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn son of the prisoner in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. **30** Pharaoh and all his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died. **31** Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. “Get out!” he ordered. “Leave my people—and take the rest of the Israelites with you! Go and worship the Lord as you have requested. **32** Take your flocks and herds, as you said, and be gone. Go, but bless me as you leave.”

- Apply the blood of a lamb to the doorposts of your homes. An odd command.
- Scripture tells us sin can only be covered and God’s wrath abated through the shedding of innocent blood (Heb. 9:22). Do you know the theological term for that concept? How was animal sacrifice a picture of when Jesus would come? Why were there no more animal sacrifices after Jesus’ death and resurrection?
- We cannot miss or overstate the symbolism of this episode in Exodus:
 - A lamb without blemish; the picture of Jesus the sinless Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. [Jn. 1:29, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, Heb. 9:14, Rev. 5:6]
 - Dried blood on wood; Christ’s complete atonement by death on the cross.
 - God’s promise then and now: “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*”
 - Deliverance from death: A picture of Christ’s resurrection (and ours.)
 - The journey to the promised land after Passover symbolizes Christ leading His followers to eternal life with Him in our “promised land.”
 - Freedom from slavery to Egypt is a picture of our freedom from bondage to sin and death because Jesus paid our ransom with His blood.
 - God’s declaration in Exodus 12:2 that Passover should be “...*the first month of the year*” for His people symbolizes a new beginning in Christ.
 - Even the meal God commanded them to eat while standing with their “backpacks” on (the first “to-go” meal?) was symbolic:
 - Bitter herbs were a picture of their past suffering.
 - Leaven often symbolizes sin in the Bible, so unleavened bread represents purity and freedom from sin.
 - Eating the Passover lamb and leaving none of it uneaten has both practical and symbolic meaning. Why pause for a meal before leaving?
 - How did eating the Passover lamb foretell Jesus’ teaching about Himself?
- Let’s turn from symbolism to some practical lessons we can learn from how the Israelites responded to God’s instructions in this passage.
- Verse **28**: “*So the people of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded.*”
- If you’ve read the rest of Exodus about the Israelites AFTER they left Egypt, why was verse 28 sort of ironic? Why do you think they were so obedient this night?

- **The first lesson for us is to OBEY** God’s commands in scripture, and His most important command is to trust Him as Savior and Lord. We think of salvation in Christ as an invitation and a free offer, both are true. It is also a command.
- Acts 17:30 quotes Paul speaking the philosophers in Athens: *“God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him.”*
- **1 Timothy 2:3–4 (NLT)** — **3** This is good and pleases God our Savior, **4** who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.
- In obedience they applied the lamb’s blood to the doorposts. How do we apply Christ’s blood to our hearts in obedience to His command to follow Him?
- I think of the lyrics of a favorite old hymn: *“Down at the cross where my Savior died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to his name!”* “Crying” for cleansing means repentance for sin.
- When Christ died in our place “down at the cross,” His blood was shed as a sacrifice for all people. We “apply” it to our hearts when we trust Him as Savior.
- Look at verses 24 & 25. What did God tell them to do? What did God mean by telling them to “observe” this event as a tradition? What words might we use instead of “observe”? Why is observe appropriate in addition to those words?
- Before we can celebrate what God has done, we must observe or look back on it.
- **Lesson #2 is OBSERVE:** Daily, look back and celebrate what God has done.
- Verse 26 describes something that is true of all children. What is it?
- What kinds of questions might children ask about our faith? What questions do we want to intentionally prompt them to ask? What is the lesson here?
- **Lesson #3 is TEACH** your children about Jesus IN THE HOME. Using the truth of scripture we must intentionally teach them what Jesus has done for us.
 - **Deuteronomy 6:6–7 (NLT)**...commit ourselves to God’s commands and...Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them...at home and...on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. [Illustration: Tyson video]
 - **Psalms 78:4-6 (NLT)** — **4** We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders. **6** ...so the next generation will know [His commands]...even the children not yet born— and they in turn will teach their own children.
 - **Proverbs 22:6 (NLT)** — **6** Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.
 - **Ephesians 6:4 (NLT)** — **4** ...bring children up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.
- If you had been one of these Israelites enslaved in Egypt, why might you have had doubts about God’s plan? What likely helped them overcome those doubts?
- **Lesson #4 is TRUST.** God’s display of power in the first nine plagues caused them to trust His instructions. They trusted Him enough to apply that blood to the doorposts and BELIEVE His death angel would spare them. They trusted God enough to go to their captors and ask for treasures to take with them (12:35-36). They trusted Him enough to walk out of Egypt believing in a Promised Land.

- By the way, an important part of teaching our children (and others) about Jesus is to teach them to trust Him in all circumstances.
- Other thoughts about what we can learn from the first Passover?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt is a picture of His wonderful offer to deliver all people from sin and death into freedom in Christ.
- The story of the first Passover is a picture of Jesus' permanent and totally sufficient substitutionary atonement for all people.
- Their exodus from slavery teaches us several important lessons.
- We need to OBEY all His commands in scripture beginning with "applying the blood" of Christ to our hearts by trusting Him as Savior and Lord.
- We must OBSERVE and celebrate what God has done by looking back on His faithfulness thanking and praising Him for delivering us from sin and death.
- We must TEACH future generations about Christ praying they too will trust Him.
- We must TRUST the truth that (as we said last week) He is God, He is in control, He loves His people, and He will care for those He loves.

ⁱ https://hymnary.org/text/down_at_the_cross_where_my_savior_died