



**Sunday School Lesson**  
**Exod. 13:3-16**  
 by Lorin L. Cranford  
 All rights reserved ©

**Remembering**



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Quick Links to the Study**

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [Festival of Unleavened Bread, vv. 3-10](#)
- b. [Consecration of the Firstborn, vv. 11-16](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

This study begins a four part examination of random biblical texts under the theme of “Practicing Our Faith” in the Smyth-Helwys Formations Sunday School quarterly. The thrust is on living as a Christian; the studies are chosen randomly to focus attention on four aspects of Christian living.

Exodus 13:3-16 comprises a speech that Moses delivered to the children of Israel during the exodus from slavery in Egypt. The content of this particular speech has to do with establishing the Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 3-10) and the consecration of the first born among the Israelites (vv. 11-16), as God had demanded (13:1-2).

**I Context**

Relevant parts of a previous study, [Exodus 19](#), will be repeated here.

The name of the book, Exodus, is derived from the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible called the Septuagint (LXX), which uses the title ἔξοδος [exodos, “going out”] for this document. The Hebrew text simply calls the document “and these are the names” [ואלה שמות]. G.E. Wright in the *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (s.v., “Exodus, Book of”) has a helpful summation:

The second book of the OT, which receives its name from the LXX designation of the chief event recorded in it — namely, Israel’s “going out” of Egypt. In the Jewish canon it is the second book of the Law (Torah, contained in the Pentateuch). In Christian exegesis the events of deliverance from slavery and the covenant at Sinai have received more attention than the law contained in the book, particularly because they have provided a language for comprehending the Atonement (God’s “deliverance” in Christ) and the New Covenant. For Israel the events recorded in the book were a testimony to the work of God in fulfillment of promise whereby she became the “people of Yahweh,” saved from Egyptian slavery, bound together in covenant with her Lord, and provided with a cultic center (tabernacle and ark of the covenant) which gave assurance of God’s “tabernacled” presence in her midst (see §§ 1c, 4c, below).

**a. Historical**

As is typically the case with most of the books in the Old Testament, the **external history** - - who wrote it, when, where, why, to whom -- is clouded in mystery. The first five books of the Old Testament have often been labeled the “books of Moses” in a traditional belief that he authored them. But as modern biblical scholarship has clearly shown, these beginning five documents have had many hands at work on them over a lengthy period of time. The final shape of Exodus along with the other four documents, as we know them, most likely

took place at the close of the OT era. This doesn’t exclude elements that go back to Moses, but the final form of Exodus in the Hebrew text tradition is clearly the product of editors who brought the materials together from a variety of sources and developed the content of the text that we’re familiar with.

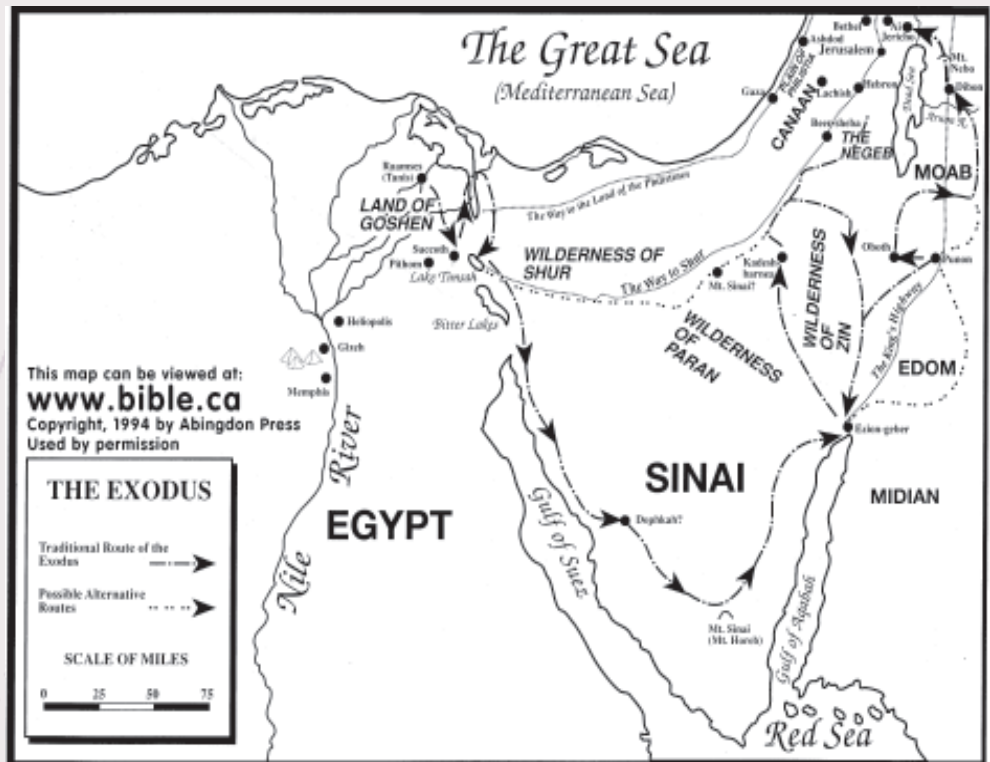
A vigorous analysis of possible sources is expressed by John Gray in the *Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary on the Bible* (iPreach):

[Exod. is a composite work assembled during at least half a millennium \(see "The Compiling of Israel's Story,"](#)

pp. 1082-89). There are doublets and discrepancies, as well as differences in style—e.g. hymn, narrative prose, legal formula, saga, and cult drama—and in theology. These and other clues in the book distinguish the components of 3 of the main literary sources of the Pentateuch: Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), and Priestly (P). There are evidences of 2 stages of P, with a final fusion of the 2 that supplied the framework of the Pentateuch. The traces of Deuteronomistic (D) elaboration in this book are very slight. The passages attributed to the several sources are shown in the table on p. 34.

J, E, and P are the literary crystallization of earlier traditions of miscellaneous character and worth. The originally independent bodies of tradition underlying J, E, P in this book include: (a) the exodus tradition proper, developed with accretions from secular saga as the cult legend of the Passover when it was a public festival, perhaps at Gilgal (cf. Josh. 5:10; 2 Kings 23:22); (b) the tradition of the covenant with the law at Sinai, which developed also with saga accretions as the cult legend of the feast of tabernacles or booths (cf. Deut. 31:10-11), originally at Shechem (cf. Deut. 27:1; Josh. 8:30-35; 24); and (c) the tradition of the desert wandering, including a hero saga about Moses at Kadesh and a number of self-contained traditions associated simply on grounds of common locality about Kadesh and not necessarily the record of a sequence of events. J and E endeavor, not too successfully, to combine these components into a consecutive narrative; and P completes a topographical framework, the late and artificial nature of which precludes our assuming a consistent unity for the whole.

The fact that these traditions developed in cult legends, which were important sources of J and E, does not argue against their genuine historical origin. The frank admission that the Hebrews shared the desert sanctuary of Yahweh with the Midianites—or Kenites (cf. Judg. 1:16; 4:11)—whose cult was actually longer established, is a very strong argument for the historicity and genuine antiquity not only of the worship of Israel here but indeed of the covenant whereby she was constituted as a distinctive sacral community. Her continued affinity in historical times with the Kenites (cf. Judg. 1:16; 4:17-22; 5:24-30; 1 Sam. 15:6; 30:29)



seems to corroborate the tradition of their common association with the worship of Yahweh at the holy mountain. Similarly the inveterate enmity of Israel toward Amalek and the memory in the narrative of Saul late in the 11th cent. that Amalek waylaid Israel on her way up from Egypt (1 Sam. 15:2) supports the historicity of the tradition in 17:8-16.

Although such an analysis stands as hypothetical, all external history assessments share this subjective analysis as well. In more recent times OT scholarship in American circles especially has moved away from exploration of sources to a more contemporary literary critical analysis.

The **internal history** issues are deeply embedded in the text itself and thus will be treated as a part of the exegesis below. But some general observations will help set the background for the study.

The story of Exodus centers around Moses in the early chapters. His birth and childhood are in the first two chapters; his fleeing Egypt and years in the land of Midian finish off chapter two. Chapter three and the first part of chapter four describe Moses' calling by God at the burning bush episode. The second part of chapter four describes his return to Egypt and the enlistment of his brother Aaron to help him. Chapters five through twelve describe the tug of war between Moses and the Egyptian pharaoh over letting the Israelites leave Egypt. Only after the tenth plague of the death of the first born, does the pha-

raoh finally relent and allow Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

The identification of two cities, Ramses and Succoth, in [Ex. 12:37](#), is important to explore as a part of the historical background: “The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.” But this seemingly helpful verse doesn’t provide that much help to modern readers, as J.I. Durham (*WBC*) observes:

The specification of the direction of the exodus journey “from Rameses in the direction of Succoth” was no doubt intended to locate the movement of the first stage of Israel’s journey from the Egyptian Delta. Unfortunately, the note no longer serves its original purpose, because of the uncertainty in identifying the two places mentioned. Alt (*Kleine Schriften* 3:176–85) summarized the data available up to 1954, and more recently Herrmann (*Israel in Egypt*, 23–28) and Hyatt (59–60) have reviewed the location of Delta place names mentioned in the OT, but any precise plotting of the route of Israel in exodus remains impossible.

At best, one can only make an “educated guess” as to their approximate location, which is the case for the location of the two cities in the map on the previous page. As a consequence of this and other factors, some three or so possible routes of the exodus will appear on Bible maps attempting to trace the exact route of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Mt. Sinai. Chapters thirteen through nine-

**The book of Exodus describes the leadership of Moses in delivering the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to their receiving the Law of God at Mt. Sinai. Final composition of the book took place during the Babylonian exile with the purpose of calling the Jewish people to remember how God had delivered their ancestors from captivity many centuries before.**

teen will mention a number of locations where the Israelites camped after crossing the sea, but few of these can be identified with any certainty: 1) Ramses; 2) Succoth; 3) Reed Sea; 4) wilderness of Shur; 5) Marah; 6) Elim; 7) wilderness of Sin (=Zin); 8) Rephidim; 9) Horeb (Massah / Meribah); 10) wilderness of Sinai. This uncertainty doesn’t raise questions about whether or not the exodus took place. Instead, it underscores the uncertainty in knowing precisely which route the Israelites took in getting from Egypt to the east bank of the Jordan as they prepared to invade the Land of Canaan. One of the issues here is that most all this region is pure desert with very few inhabitants. This identifying a route becomes considerably more difficult since archaeological evidence is much more difficult to discover.

### **b. Literary**

The **literary setting** for chapter thirteen needs to be explored as a part of the background to understanding our passage.

The division of the book of Exodus largely revolves around two major emphases: 1) getting the Israelites to Mt. Sinai (chaps 1-18, and 2) giving them the Law at Mt. Sinai (chaps. 19-40). Chapters one through fifteen get them to the Reed Sea and the crossing, while chapters sixteen through eighteen describe the travel from the crossing to Mt. Sinai. Thus the immediate setting for chapter thirteen is immediately after the departure as a climax to the tenth plague of the death of the first born. They had journeyed from Ramses to Succoth where our passage took place.

The **literary genre** of verses 3-16 is that of a speech by Moses to the children of Israel at Succoth. As is true with virtually every speech in the Bible,

the content is intended as a summation of what was said, rather than a word-for-word recounting of everything that was spoken. The key theme of the speech is contained in the opening word, “Remember....” Thus Moses is cast in the role of a leader admonishing his people to carefully recall how God had moved in their lives by providing deliverance for them. The language of the speech underscores the importance of this speech for subsequent generations as a reminder of the central importance of this event to Israelite history for all time. With the final composition of this material most likely during the Babylonian exile many centuries later, this perspective had special importance to a later group of Jewish people once again in captivity. They would find hope of God’s deliverance once again through careful celebration of the Exodus of their ancestors.

## **II. Message**

The internal **literary structure** of vv. 3-16 is rather easy to determine. Verses 3-10 focus on the Festival of Unleavened Bread, while vv. 11-16 stresses the consecration of the firstborn. This will be the basis of our study of these verses.



## a. Festival of Unleavened Bread, vv. 3-10

LXX

ἔειπεν δὲ Μωυσῆς πρὸς τὸν λαόν μνημονεύετε τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην ἐν ἣ ἐξήλθατε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγεν ὑμᾶς κύριος ἐντεῦθεν καὶ οὐ βρωθήσεται ζύμη <sup>4</sup>ἐν γὰρ τῇ σήμερον ὑμεῖς ἐκπορεύεσθε ἐν μηνὶ τῶν νέων <sup>5</sup>καὶ ἔσται ἡνίκα ἂν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χανααναίων καὶ Χετταίων καὶ Ευαίων καὶ Γεργεσαίων καὶ Αμορραίων καὶ Φερεζαίων καὶ Ιεβουσαίων ἢν ὤμοσεν τοῖς πατράσιν σου δοῦναί σοι γῆν ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι καὶ ποιήσεις τὴν λατρείαν ταύτην ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τούτῳ <sup>6</sup>Ἐξ ἡμέρας ἔδεσθε ἄζυμα τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἑορτὴ κυρίου <sup>7</sup>ἄζυμα ἔδεσθε τὰς ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας οὐκ ὀφθήσεται σοι ζυμῶν οὐδὲ ἔσται σοι ζύμη ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου <sup>8</sup>καὶ ἀναγγελεῖς τῷ υἱῷ σου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ λέγων διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησεν κύριος ὁ θεός μοι ὡς ἐξεπορευόμεν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου <sup>9</sup>καὶ ἔσται σοι σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς σου καὶ μνημόσυνον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου ὅπως ἀνγένηται ὁ νόμος κυρίου ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγέν σε κύριος ὁ θεός ἐξ Αἰγύπτου <sup>10</sup>καὶ φυλάξεσθε τὸν νόμον τοῦτον κατὰ καιροὺς ὥρων ἀφ' ἡμερῶν εἰς ἡμέρας

NASB

3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. 4 On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. 5 It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month. 6 For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. 8 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.' 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. 10 Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.

NRSV

3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. 5 When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this observance in this month. 6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival to the Lord. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen in your possession, and no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory. 8 You shall tell your child on that day, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt." 9 It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 10 You shall keep this ordinance at its proper time from year to year.

NLT

3 So Moses said to the people, "This is a day to remember forever – the day you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. For the LORD has brought you out by his mighty power. (Remember, you are not to use any yeast.) 4 This day in early spring will be the anniversary of your exodus. 5 You must celebrate this day when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. This is the land he swore to give your ancestors – a land flowing with milk and honey. 6 For seven days you will eat only bread without yeast. Then on the seventh day, you will celebrate a great feast to the LORD. 7 Eat only bread without yeast during those seven days. In fact, there must be no yeast in your homes or anywhere within the borders of your land during this time. 8 During these festival days each year, you must explain to your children why you are celebrating. Say to them, 'This is a celebration of what the LORD did for us when we left Egypt.' 9 This annual festival will be a visible reminder to you, like a mark branded on your hands or your forehead. Let it remind you always to keep the LORD's instructions in your minds and on your lips. After all, it was the LORD who rescued you from Egypt with great power. 10 So celebrate this festival at the appointed time each year.

## Notes:

One would want to note that this is the second set of instructions on this topic. The first occurs in [12:14-20](#):

14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly, and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. 17 You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance. 18 In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread. 19 For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

J.I. Durham (*WBC*) compares the two accounts in summary fashion:

The differences between the instructions given here and those given in Exod 12:14–20 are not substantial: seven days of eating unleavened bread cakes are mentioned in both passages; the special worship of the first day is not mentioned here; the perpetual nature of the observance is mentioned in both passages, and its significance is linked to the exodus experience, though only here is a catechismal explanation given and only here are reminding symbols mentioned. The strict prohibition of leaven is made very clear in both passages, though a penalty for being found with leaven is given only in the former passage.

The speech in 13:3-16 has both a present and future thrust. “Today...you are going out” (v. 4) and “When the Lord brings you into the land...you shall keep this observance” (v. 5). For the Israelites, this event was foundational. As the entire Old Testament will reflect, the exodus served more than any other single event to define the Jewish people. But this is not just during the OT era. The exodus continues to define Jewish people as a covenant people with obligation to God to this very day. In the annual Jewish religious calendar, that would evolve with the passing of time, the celebration of the Passover stands as the signal event for the religious observances during the year.

For Christians the exodus also marks a central

symbol of God’s deliverance. Jesus’ death during the Jewish Passover takes on much of its meaning against the backdrop of the Jewish Passover. He stands as God’s lamb of sacrifice for all humanity, based on the definition of the sacrificial lamb of the Passover celebration. His shedding of blood in his death is defined by the shed blood of the Passover lamb. The Christian observance of the Lord’s Supper takes elements of this Passover celebration as the foundation for its defining of Jesus’ death. The unleavened bread as a symbol of Jesus’ body, and the cup of wine as the symbol of Jesus’ blood. Thus for these two religious traditions, this event plays a profound role. Additionally, a various times of oppression and suffering, Christians have found hope in God’s deliverance from the experience of the Israelites’ liberation from Egyptian slavery.

The Israelites are commanded by Moses to “Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...” Remembering the past is a large emphasis in the OT, as the 121 instances of the English word “remember” just in the NRSV reflects. But “remembering” in our text is more than just a mental activity in which the mind travels back into the past for a moment of recollection and reflection. In the ritual service of the unleavened bread, the Israelites are to *re-live* the past for seven days each year. Terrence Fretheim (*Interpretation*, iPreach) provides a helpful summation:

While these responses are certainly vehicles for Israel’s expression of gratitude for what God has done, the text contains no explicit language in this regard. Moreover, they are not simply means by which Israel engages in the recollection of the past; the memory language, explicit (vv. 3, 9) and implicit, has a deeper significance. As with Passover (see 12:1-28), the concrete and replicative nature of each of the rituals indicates that they are vehicles in and through which God effects salvation for each new generation. The interweaving of past and present reference and the use of the pronouns (e.g., 12:27; 13:3-4, 8, 14) imply that a cross-generational experience of salvation is in view (cf. Mishnah tractate on Passover, 10:5). The direct involvement of children in each ritual (vv. 8, 14; 12:26) incorporates new generations into this saving reality. These instructions are thus given for Israel’s continued life and blessing. The concern is not that God be properly thanked but that the redemptive experience be a living reality for each Israelite in every age.

The basis for the celebration is set forth in v. 3b: “because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten.” The Israelites were to remember that only by divine intervention were they able to escape slavery in Egypt. In



Egypt they were slaves; in exodus they became a liberated people on the way to becoming a nation. The difference: God's intervention in their behalf. The celebration was intended to be a reminder of this for all times.

The time of the annual observance is specified: "Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out" (v. 4), and "...you shall keep this observance in this month" (v. 5b). Abib, "literally, 'a green ear,' and hence the month Abib is the month of green ears, corresponding to the middle of our March. It was the best season for undertaking a journey to the desert region of Sinai, especially with flocks and herds; for then the winter torrents had subsided, and the wadies were covered with an early and luxuriant verdure." (R. Jamieson, *ICC*).

The specific instructions for the observance are



rather simple: "6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival to the Lord. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen in your possession, and no leaven shall be

seen among you in all your territory." (vv. 6-7). Unleavened simply meant "without yeast" and represented bread baked in a hurry without taking time for it to rise before baking. For six days -- Sunday through Friday -- they were to eat unleavened bread (=Matzo). Then on Saturday (actually, sundown Friday to sundown Saturday), was to be the festive aspect of celebration of God's deliverance.

Its meaning is defined in vv. 8-9: "8 You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt." The children were to be involved in the celebration. In later years, a ritual developed where children posed rehearsed questions, to which the father would supply the answers based on these scripture texts. Thus the celebration began as a family worship experience, although later the role of the temple and corporate worship would bring some significant changes in how this was celebrated, as is noted *Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible*:

What was once a family observance in the home is transformed into a national pilgrimage festival. This shift brought several changes in the observance of Passover and Unleavened Bread. First, the time of the slaughter of the animal was shifted to an earlier time of the day (Deut. 16:6; cf. Exod. 12:6). This made it easier for the pilgrims to arrive and the sacrifices to

be offered in a timely fashion. In addition, this allowed the Passover sacrifice to mark the beginning of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Second, the Israelites could now choose either sheep or cattle for sacrifice (Deut. 16:2; cf. Exod. 12:3). Third, the method of cooking was changed from roasting to boiling (Deut. 16:7; cf. Exod. 12:9). Fourth, the observance is now constructed in terms of a national experience. This does not, however, preclude a family from eating together at the pilgrimage site. Finally, it is probable that Passover and Unleavened Bread were first linked at the time of the Deuteronomic reforms..

The OT provides limited insight into how this festival was observed subsequent to these instructions. *Harper's Dictionary of the Bible* ("Passover") provides a brief summation:

The first is to the Passover of the Exodus (Exod. 12:1-13:16), generally seen to be a pastiche of sources, the dominant one being P, the Priestly source. Since Exod. 12 starts out with a reference to the partaking of the paschal lamb in the first month of the year (vv. 2-10), Abib (March-April; 13:4), some scholars think that the Passover was originally a spring New Year festival, similar to the autumnal Feast of Tabernacles. On the 10th of the month each family was to choose a lamb (v. 3) to be slaughtered at twilight on the 14th (v. 6). The blood was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintel of the house (v. 7), which God would see and thus spare the inhabitants from the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn (vv. 12-13). The apotropaic (protective) nature of the rite is thus indicated. After roasting, all of the flesh of the animal was to be eaten in the house that night, but only by the Israelites and their circumcised slaves; the remnants were to be burned in the morning (vv. 8-10, 43-47). The people were to eat the sacrifice hurriedly, dressed to flee Egypt (v. 11). This day would be a memorial feast in perpetuity (v. 14). From the evening of the 14th until that of the 21st the Israelite houses would be clean of leaven, and only unleavened bread, *matzot*, would be eaten (vv. 14, 18-20). These days too would be celebrated yearly, although there is confusion on whether it would be celebrated already in the desert (implied in v. 17?), or only upon entering Canaan (13:5-7[E], and v. 10). The 1st and 7th days of eating the *matzot* would be shared assemblies, with no work allowed (12:16). The festival of *matzot* was also conceived as a memorial to the Exodus (12:17; 13:3, 9). It is incumbent upon parents to explain the significance of these feast days to children (12:26-27; 13:8; cf. 13:14).

The next reference is to the second year of the Exodus (Num. 9:1-14, identified as P and therefore late by most scholars): the Passover sacrifice and its attendant rites are kept in the wilderness of Sinai (vv. 3, 5). Those who were defiled by a corpse (vv. 6, 10)

or too far away (vv. 10, 13) would keep the Passover with *matzot* and bitter herbs on the 14th day of the second month. A non-Israelite who dwelled among the tribes would also be required to observe the Passover (v. 14). The lateness of this passage is evidenced by the reference to the 'too distant way' (v. 10), which assumes a central sanctuary (cf. Deut. 12:21; 14:24). After entering Canaan in the days of Joshua (Josh. 5:10-12), at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho the Israelites performed the Passover sacrifice (v. 10), and on the following day they ate *matzot* and parched corn (v. 11; cf. Lev. 2:12). There is controversy over the dating of this passage. Those who see it as early contend that here is evidence of the unification of the Passover sacrifice with the eating of *matzot* within an historicized memorial to the Exodus already at Israel's incursion into Canaan. Those who see this passage as late (influenced by Deuteronomy) understand the reference as anachronistic.

A fourth reference is to the time of the judges and Samuel. In the midst of a description of Joshua's Passover, 2 Kings 23:22 and 2 Chron. 35:18 allude to an exemplary Passover of earlier times.

Another refers to the time of Solomon, implied by 1 Kings 9:25 and stated in 2 Chron. 8:13 (the feast of *matzot*) and 31:26.

A sixth reference is to the days of Hezekiah (727-698 B.C.; 2 Chron. 30:1-27, not recorded by Kings): a Passover kept by royal decree in the second month due to impurity of the priests (v. 3), which was kept by Judah and some of the remnants of the northern tribes in Jerusalem (vv. 11-13). The priests purified the people (v. 16), and the Levites oversaw the slaughter of the paschal lamb (v. 17). The Passover was succeeded by the seven-day *matzot* festival accompanied by praise of God and music (v. 21). Three facts have convinced some scholars of the unhistorical nature of this passage: first, Kings records no such event; second, it appears to contain elements of Solomon's dedication and Josiah's Passover (2 Chron. 35:1-18); and, third, Hezekiah, like Josiah later, is seen to be concerned to make reforms in the north (2 Kings 23:15-20; 2 Chron. 34:33). However, 2 Kings 18:4 does depict Hezekiah's broad religious reforms, which would be consistent with an attempt at a proper Passover celebration.

A seventh reference is to the days of Josiah (639-609 B.C.; 2 Kings 23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1-19). In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, as part of his reforms based upon the newly found book of the covenant (2 Kings 23:21; cf. 22:8, 11; 23:2-3), he decreed the observance of the Passover in Jerusalem (cf. Deut. 16:2, 5-6), which is viewed by the historian as extraordinary (2 Kings 23:22-23). The author of Chronicles' expanded account (2 Chron. 35:1-19) adds that the Levites slaughtered and flayed the thirty thousand lambs and kids for the *pesach* given by the

king and the twenty-six hundred given by the princes, as well as the cattle for the sacrifices (vv. 6-11). The priests purified the people with the sprinkling of the blood (v. 11). The *pesach* was roasted, but the other animals destined for the sacrifices were boiled (v. 13). Thus, Chronicles reconciles the discrepancies between Exod. 12:8-9, which commands roasting, and Deut. 16:7, which states that the *pesach* should be boiled. The seven-day feast of *matzot* accompanied the *pesach* (2 Chron. 35:17). The uniqueness of the event is reemphasized (v. 18).

A final reference is to the days of Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:19-22). After the dedication of the rebuilt Temple, during the sixth year of Darius (515 B.C.; Ezra 6:15-17), the returned exiles from Babylon observed the Passover. The purity of the community is emphasized (Ezra 6:20-21), in keeping with the concern for reinstating proper worship after the Exile. As in 2 Chronicles 35, the Levites slaughter the *pesach* (v. 20). The seven-day feast of *matzot* was kept with great joy (v. 22).

Although dates are not adduced, it is apparent that the command in Deut. 16:2, 5-7 to observe the *pesach* 'at the place which the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it' indicates a transition from the house ceremony (Exod. 12:46) to that of the Temple. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the date of this transition, scholarly conjecture notwithstanding.

The connection of all this to us today? Several things come to mind. First, we are reminded of the backdrop against which we as Christians celebrate the Lord's Supper as a corporate worship experience. Without understanding this heritage our understanding of why we celebrate communion would be much poorer.

Secondly, we are challenged by the Israelite tradition of celebrating their past, not just recalling it. Sometimes our present cultural orientation on the present, to the exclusion of both past and future, leaves us without understanding of our roots. How many of us know about our heritage as Baptists? How our Baptist forefathers struggled to preserve their deep commitment to historic Christian beliefs as well as those that distinguish us as Baptists? How often do we celebrate this heritage, much less recall it? Even more personally, how many of us know about the religious heritage of our own family two, three or more generations back down our family tree? I must confess very limited un-





derstanding of that when I go past three generations. And I am impoverished as a consequence.

We would be more grounded and stable in our religious orientation were we to find ways to not only

understand this heritage, but find ways to celebrate and re-live it as did the Israelites.

### b. Consecration of the Firstborn, vv. 11-16

#### LXX

<sup>11</sup>καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἂν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χανααναίων ὃν τρόπον ὤμοσεν τοῖς πατράσιν σου καὶ δώσει σοι αὐτήν <sup>12</sup>καὶ ἀφελεῖς πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν τὰ ἀρσενικά τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν ἐκ τῶν βουκολίων ἢ ἐν τοῖς κτήνεσίν σου ὅσα ἂν γένηται σοι τὰ ἀρσενικά ἀγιάσεις τῷ κυρίῳ <sup>13</sup>πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν ὄνου ἀλλάξεις προβάτω ἂν δὲ μὴ ἀλλάξης λυτρώση αὐτό πᾶν πρωτότοκον ἀνθρώπου τῶν υἱῶν σου λυτρώση <sup>14</sup>ἂν δὲ ἐρωτήσῃ σε ὁ υἱός σου μετὰ ταῦτα λέγων τί τοῦτο καὶ ἐρεῖς αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐν χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς κύριος ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας <sup>15</sup>ἦνίκα δὲ ἐσκλήρυνεν Φαραὼ ἐξαποστεῖλαι ἡμᾶς ἀπέκτεινεν πᾶν πρωτότοκον ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ ἀπὸ πρωτοτόκων ἀνθρώπων ἕως πρωτοτόκων κτηνῶν διὰ τοῦτο ἐγὼ θύω τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν τὰ ἀρσενικά καὶ πᾶν πρωτότοκον τῶν υἱῶν μου λυτρώσομαι <sup>16</sup>καὶ ἔσται εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρός σου καὶ ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγέν σε κύριος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου

#### NASB

D brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD. 13 But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14 And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 'It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring of every womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16 So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

#### NRSV

11 When the Lord has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your ancestors, and has given it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your livestock that are males shall be the Lord's. 13 But every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. Every firstborn male among your children you shall redeem. 14 When in the future your child asks you, "What does this mean?" you shall answer, "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human firstborn to the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord every male that first opens the womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem." 16 It shall serve as a sign on your hand and as an emblem on your forehead that by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

#### NLT

11 And remember these instructions when the LORD brings you into the land he swore to give your ancestors long ago, the land where the Canaanites are now living. 12 All firstborn sons and firstborn male animals must be presented to the LORD. 13 A firstborn male donkey may be redeemed from the LORD by presenting a lamb in its place. But if you decide not to make the exchange, the donkey must be killed by breaking its neck. However, you must redeem every firstborn son. 14 And in the future, your children will ask you, 'What does all this mean?' Then you will tell them, 'With mighty power the LORD brought us out of Egypt from our slavery. 15 Pharaoh refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and animals. That is why we now offer all the firstborn males to the LORD – except that the firstborn sons are always redeemed.' 16 Again I say, this ceremony will be like a mark branded on your hands or your forehead. It is a visible reminder that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt with great power."



## Notes:

The issue of the firstborn was an ancient custom throughout the ancient world, as Michael Hildenbrand ("Firstborn," *Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible*) describes:

The first male offspring of both animals (also called "firstlings") and humans. They were regarded as belonging to God (Exod. 22:29–30 [MT 28–29]); this was a reflection of the Passover when the firstborn males of Israel were spared during the final plague against Egypt (13:2, 14–15). In later times, the Levites were set aside for the service of the sanctuary in place of all firstborn Israelites (Num. 3:12–13). Israel was regarded as the firstborn of God among the nations (Exod. 4:22; cf. Jer. 31:9 [8]).

Neither firstborn humans nor animals were to be released for secular purposes without redemption. There was to be a substitution (Exod. 13:12–13; 34:20; Lev. 27:26ff.; Num. 18:15). Firstborn impure and blemished animals were to be redeemed (by paying the assessed value of the animal plus one fifth; Lev. 27:26–27 [cf. vv. 9–13]; Exod. 34:20). Firstborn sacrificial animals were to be sanctified as either a burnt offering or a peace offering (Num. 18:17; Deut. 15:20). There is little solid evidence of the regular sacrifice of firstborn humans, in either the ancient Near East or the Bible; the incident of 2 Kgs. 3:27, where the king of Moab sacrificed his firstborn, is exceptional. The firstborn of humans were assigned a double portion of the inheritance from the father (Deut. 21:15–17). A father could not disregard birth order in assigning the firstborn's portion of his possessions. Though the firstborn could lose his birthright either by the act of God (1 Chr. 28:4; 1 Kgs. 2:15) or by selling it (Gen. 25:31–34), the firstborn never lost the title.

The firstborn is presented first in genealogies (e.g., 1 Chr. 6:16–30 [1–14]). The family line is maintained through the firstborn, even if other sons are named (1 Chr. 7:1–4). The firstborn is the base of reference for the rest of the family (cf. Gen. 36:22), indicating his status. The right of the firstborn was never extended to firstborn daughters.

In the NT Jesus is presented as the firstborn (Gk. *πρωτότοκος*) of Mary (Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7) and of God (Heb. 1:6). Elsewhere he is regarded as the "firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15), i.e., a mediator of creation (cf. vv. 16–17), and as the "firstborn from the dead" (v. 18; Rev. 1:5), indicating his primacy in the order of resurrection. Jesus is the "firstborn of many brethren" (i.e., those who would be conformed to his image; Rom. 8:29–30). The term occurs once with regard to the "destroyer of the firstborn" in Egypt (Heb. 11:28; cf. Exod. 11:5ff.). Finally, the Church is seen as an assembly of "firstborn" people who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:23).

Some additional insights are offered by Terrence

Fretheim (*Interpretation*, iPreach):

Some general comments about the firstborn phenomenon are in order. The first child born into a family had an important role in many ancient societies, including a special status and inheritance rights. This is still true in some modern cultures (cf. Jewish practice). In addition, the firstlings of domestic animals and the first fruits of crops were set apart. The Israelites took over this custom and gave it a special import (see Ex. 22:29-30; 23:19; 34:19-26; Lev. 27:26-27; Num. 3:13, 40-46; 8:17-18; 18:15-17; Deut. 15:19). God was believed to be the giver of life, and the life of the firstborn was consecrated to God in gratitude. While various means were provided for their "redemption" through an offering, God used that as a vehicle to pour life back into ever new creations. Hence the law of the firstborn is an integral part of Israel's creation theology; by this means, God was believed to bring continued life and blessing into the community.

This practice is transposed into a new key in view of Israel's Passover experience, but without losing the creational aspect. Verses 15-16 sharpen this historical connection in a somewhat surprising way. But, first, the larger context should be brought into consideration.

The emphasis upon the firstborn in verses 11-16 links back to verses 1-2 which introduce this material: "1 The Lord said to Moses: 2 Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine." Thus, this theme provides a literary context for interpreting the feast of unleavened bread section in verses 3-10. The fundamental concept is that the firstborn males belong exclusively to God, and apart from redemption must be devoted to Him in some special way. Generally this applied to everything connected to the Israelites, but our passage stresses both animals and humans. Firstborn animals and plants were to be offered in sacrifice to God (Num. 18:17). Verse 13 makes an exception for the firstborn male donkey. It is to be redeemed rather than sacrificed, most likely since it was not a sacrificial animal (Num. 18:15) and served as a beast of burden for the owner (Exod. 9:3).

To "redeem" a donkey or male meant substituting something acceptable in its place. For the donkey, a sheep was an acceptable substitute (v. 13; also Exod. 34:20). The text doesn't specify the acceptable substitute for the firstborn human male; just that this individual must be redeemed. Evidently, various substitutions for the firstborn male evolved over time among the Israelites. Eventually, the Levites became something of a substitute firstborn for the entire nation of the Israelites. Abraham experi-

enced this early on with the command to sacrifice his son of promise, Isaac. On the mountain God provided a male sheep as a substitute sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-19). Thus God took the unusual step of “redeeming” Isaac in behalf of Abraham.

The theological principle here is that “firstborn” is a vivid reminder to the Israelites of their indebtedness to God as both their Creator and Redeemer from Egyptian slavery. God owned everything, but the Israelites owed Him back their “firstborn” as an acknowledgment of their indebtedness to Him.

The instructional aspect of this ritual is stressed in verses 14-16. Note the instructional twist: “*when in the future your child asks you...you shall answer...*” Gradually, this developed into a rehearsed liturgy at Passover celebration where the firstborn male would pose this question during the Passover festival celebration. The father would then answer with the Biblical answer here and in other similar texts. Note the similar emphasis in [12:24-27](#): “*24 You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. 25 When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. 26 And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this observance?’ 27 you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed down and worshiped.*”

An interesting twist forms part of the answer to be given to the child’s question in vv. 15-16: The death of the Egyptian firstborn, because of the pharaoh’s stubborn refusal to let the Israelites leave, is central to the remembrance of the celebration. This is intended to be a perpetual reminder as verse 16 declares. Thus the Egyptian children’s death became the means of deliverance of the ancestors of the Israelite children. The Israelite children are not to lose sight of this.

Modern Judaism has extended and adapted the ancient celebration as is described in the web site [Judaism 101](#). This one question has been expanded into [four questions](#), following the lead-in question



“Why is this night different from all other nights?” (*Mah Nishtanah*): **1**) “Why is it that on all other nights during the year we eat either bread or matzoh, but on this night we eat only matzoh?”; **2**) “Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only bitter herbs?”; **3**) “Why is it that on all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once, but on this night we dip them twice?”; **4**) “Why is it that on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we eat in a reclining position?”

How does this relate to us?

First, the concept of [firstborn](#) points us directly to Jesus as the “firstborn” son of Mary: Lk. 2:7, 23. He is the one consecrated to God as holy. Paul will use this image in a variety of ways in regard to Jesus: 1) Rom. 8:39, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the **firstborn within a large family**”; 2) Col. 1:15, “He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn of all creation**”; 3) Col 1:18, “He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**, so that he might come to have first place in everything.”

Heb. 1:6 will speak of Jesus as the firstborn who is to be the object of worship: “And again, when he brings **the firstborn** into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’” But Heb. 12:23 will take the idea of consecration and apply it to God’s redeemed: “and to **the assembly of the firstborn** who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.” Rev. 1:5 will affirm Jesus as the firstborn of the dead: “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood.”

The idea of dedication to God becomes the basic concept and thus the extension of it to both Jesus and the people of God in the new covenant. The implication is clear. As the new covenant people of God we all must be consecrated to God in holy living.



**LXX**

Ἔειπεν δὲ Μωυσῆς πρὸς τὸν λαόν· μνημονεύετε τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐξήλθατε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγεν υμᾶς κύριος ἐντεῦθεν καὶ οὐ βρωθήσεται ζύμη ἔν γὰρ τῇ σήμερον ὑμεῖς ἐκπορεύεσθε ἐν μηνὶ τῷ νύεων· καὶ ἔσται ἡνίκα ἔαν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χανααναίων καὶ Χετταίων καὶ Ευαίων καὶ Γεργεσαίων καὶ Αμορραίων καὶ Φερεζαίων καὶ Ιεβουσαίων ἣν ὤμοσεν τοῖς πατράσιν σου δοῦναί σοι γῆν ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι καὶ ποιήσεις τὴν λατρείαν ταύτην ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τούτῳ· ἔξ ἡμέρας ἕδεσθε ἄζυμα τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἑορτὴ κυρίου· ἄζυμα ἕδεσθε τὰς ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας οὐκ ὀφθήσεται σοι ζυμωτόν οὐδὲ ἔσται σοι ζύμη ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου· καὶ ἀναγγελεῖς τῷ υἱῷ σου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ λέγων διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησεν κύριος ὁ θεός μοι ὡς ἐξεπορευόμην ἐξ Αἰγύπτου· καὶ ἔσται σοι σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρός σου καὶ μνημόσυνον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου ὅπως ἀνγένηται ὁ νόμος κυρίου ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγέν σε κύριος ὁ θεός ἐξ Αἰγύπτου·<sup>10</sup> καὶ φυλάξεσθε τὸν νόμον τοῦτον κατὰ καιροῦς

**NASB**

3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. 4 On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. 5 It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month. 6 For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. 8 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.' 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. 10 Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year

**NRSV**

3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. 5 When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this observance in this month. 6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival to the Lord. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen in your possession, and no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory. 8 You shall tell your child on that day, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt." 9 It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 10 You shall keep this ordinance at its proper time from year to year. 11 When the Lord

**NLT**

3 So Moses said to the people, "This is a day to remember forever – the day you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. For the LORD has brought you out by his mighty power. (Remember, you are not to use any yeast.) 4 This day in early spring will be the anniversary of your exodus. 5 You must celebrate this day when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. This is the land he swore to give your ancestors – a land flowing with milk and honey. 6 For seven days you will eat only bread without yeast. Then on the seventh day, you will celebrate a great feast to the LORD. 7 Eat only bread without yeast during those seven days. In fact, there must be no yeast in your homes or anywhere within the borders of your land during this time. 8 "During these festival days each year, you must explain to your children why you are celebrating. Say to them, 'This is a celebration of what the LORD did for us when we left Egypt.' 9 This annual festival will be a visible reminder to you, like a mark branded on your hands or your forehead. Let it remind you always to keep the LORD's instructions in your minds and on your lips. After all, it was the LORD who rescued you

ώρων ἀφ' ἡμερῶν εἰς ἡμέρας

<sup>11</sup>καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἂν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χαναναίων ὃν τρόπον ὤμοσεν τοῖς πατράσιν σου καὶ δώσει σοι αὐτήν <sup>12</sup>καὶ ἀφελείς πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν τὰ ἀρσενικά τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν ἐκ τῶν βουκολίων ἢ ἐν τοῖς κτήρεσίν σου ὅσα ἐὰν γένηταί σοι τὰ ἀρσενικά ἀγιάσεις τῷ κυρίῳ <sup>13</sup>πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν ὄνου ἀλλάξεις προβάτω ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀλλάξης λυτρώσῃ αὐτό πᾶν πρωτότοκον ἀνθρώπου τῶν υἱῶν σου λυτρώσῃ <sup>14</sup>ἐὰν δὲ ἐρωτήσῃ σε ὁ υἱός σου μετὰ ταῦτα λέγων τί τοῦτο καὶ ἐρεῖς αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐν χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς κύριος ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας <sup>15</sup>ἦνίκα δὲ ἐσκλήρυνεν Φαραὼ ἐξαποστεῖλαι ἡμᾶς ἀπέκτεινεν πᾶν πρωτότοκον ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ ἀπὸ πρωτοτόκων ἀνθρώπων ἕως πρωτοτόκων κτηνῶν διὰ τοῦτο ἐγὼ θύω τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν τὰ ἀρσενικά καὶ πᾶν πρωτότοκον τῶν υἱῶν μου λυτρώσομαι <sup>16</sup>καὶ ἔσται εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρός σου καὶ ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ κραταιᾷ ἐξήγαγέν σε κύριος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου

to year.

11 Now when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD. 13 But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14 And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 'It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring of every womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16 So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your ancestors, and has given it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your livestock that are males shall be the Lord's. 13 But every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. Every firstborn male among your children you shall redeem. 14 When in the future your child asks you, "What does this mean?" you shall answer, "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human firstborn to the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16 It shall serve as a sign on your hand and as an emblem on your forehead that by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

from Egypt with great power. 10 So celebrate this festival at the appointed time each year.

11 And remember these instructions when the LORD brings you into the land he swore to give your ancestors long ago, the land where the Canaanites are now living. 12 All firstborn sons and firstborn male animals must be presented to the LORD. 13 A firstborn male donkey may be redeemed from the LORD by presenting a lamb in its place. But if you decide not to make the exchange, the donkey must be killed by breaking its neck. However, you must redeem every firstborn son. 14 And in the future, your children will ask you, 'What does all this mean?' Then you will tell them, 'With mighty power the LORD brought us out of Egypt from our slavery. 15 Pharaoh refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and animals. That is why we now offer all the firstborn males to the LORD – except that the firstborn sons are always redeemed.' 16 Again I say, this ceremony will be like a mark branded on your hands or your forehead. It is a visible reminder that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt with great power."



## Hebrew Text

3 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יִצְאֲתֶם  
מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֹאכַל חֶמְצָה: מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם  
4 הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בְּחָדָשׁ הָאֲבִיב  
5 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִבְאֵךְ יְהוָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעַנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהֵאמְרוּ  
אֶת־הָעֲבָדָה הַזֹּאת בְּחָדָשׁ הַזֶּה: וְהַחֲנִי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לֵתֵת לְךָ אֶרֶץ זָבַת  
חֶלֶב וְדִבְשָׁן וְעֲבָדָת׃  
6 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצֹּת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי חָג לַיהוָה  
7 מִצֹּת יֹאכַל אֶת שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים וְלֹא־יִרְאֶה לְךָ חֶמְצָן  
וְלֹא־יִרְאֶה לְךָ שָׂאֵר בְּכָל־גִּבְלֶךָ׃  
8 וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי  
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם׃  
9 וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עַיִנֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה  
תּוֹרַת יְהוָה בְּפִיךָ כִּי בִיד חֲזָקָה הוֹצִיאָךְ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם׃  
10 וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ אֶת־הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֲדָהּ מִיָּמִים יָמִימָה ס  
11 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִבְאֵךְ יְהוָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעַנִי פֶּאֶשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְךָ  
וְלְאַבְרָהָם וְנִתְּנָה לְךָ׃  
12 וְהָעֲבָדָת כָּל־פֶּטֶר־רַחֵם לַיהוָה וְכָל־פֶּטֶר׃ שֹׁגֵר בְּהֵמָה  
אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ הַזְּכָרִים לַיהוָה׃  
13 וְכָל־פֶּטֶר חֲמֹר תִּפְדֶּה בְּשֵׁה וְאִם־לֹא תִּפְדֶּה וְעִרְפָּתוֹ וְכָל־  
בְּכוֹר אֲדָמָה בְּבִנְיָךְ תִּפְדֶּה׃  
14 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּנֶךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה־זֹּאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו  
בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים׃  
15 וַיְהִי כִּי־הִקְשָׁה פָּרְעֹה לְשַׁלְּחָנוּ וַיַּהֲרֹג יְהוָה כָּל־בְּכוֹר  
הַזְּכָרִים וְכָל־בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי אֶפְרָיִם: בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכוֹר אֲדָמָה וְעַד־בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה עַל־פְּנֵי אֲנִי  
זָבַח לַיהוָה כָּל־פֶּטֶר רַחֵם׃  
16 וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְכָה וּלְטוֹטְפַת בֵּין עַיִנֶיךָ כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד

Exodus 13:1 - 22 Transliterated Hebrew

<sup>BHT</sup> Exodus 13:1 wayəḏabbēr yhw(ʔādōnāy) ʔel-mōše<sup>h</sup> llē<sup>ʔ</sup>mōr <sup>2</sup> qaddeš-lî kol-bəḵōr peṭer kol-reḥem bibnē yiśrāʔel bāʔādām ūbabbəhēmā<sup>h</sup> lî hū<sup>ʔ</sup> <sup>3</sup> wayyō<sup>ʔ</sup>mer mōše<sup>h</sup> ʔel-hā ām zākōr ʔeṭ-hayyôm hazze<sup>h</sup> ʔāšer yəšā<sup>ʔ</sup>tem mimmišrāyim mibbêt ʔbādīm kî bəḥōzeq yād hōšī<sup>ʔ</sup> yhw(ʔādōnāy) ʔeṭkem mizze<sup>h</sup> wəlō<sup>ʔ</sup> yēʔākēl ḥāmēš <sup>4</sup> hayyôm ʔatem yōš<sup>ʔ</sup>im bəḥōdeš hāʔābīb <sup>5</sup> wəhāyā<sup>h</sup> kî-yəbī<sup>ʔ</sup>ākā yhw(ʔādōnāy) ʔel-ʔéreš ḥakkəna ʔnî wəhaḥittî wəhāʔemōrî wəhaḥiwwî wəhayəbūsî ʔāšer nišba laʔəbōṭe<sup>ʔ</sup>kā lāteṭ lāk ʔéreš zābaṭ ḥālāb ūdəbāš wə ʔbadtā ʔeṭ-hā ʔbōdā<sup>h</sup> hazzō<sup>ʔ</sup>t baḥōdeš hazze<sup>h</sup> <sup>6</sup> šib at yāmîm tō<sup>ʔ</sup>kal maššōṭ ūbayyôm haššəbî î ḥag lyhw(laʔdōnāy) <sup>7</sup> maššōṭ yēʔākēl ʔeṭ šib at hayyāmîm wəlō<sup>ʔ</sup>-yērā<sup>ʔ</sup>e<sup>h</sup> ləkā ḥāmēš wəlō<sup>ʔ</sup>-yērā<sup>ʔ</sup>e<sup>h</sup> ləkā šəʔōr bəkol-gəbūlēkā <sup>8</sup> wəhiggadtā ləbinkā bayyôm hahū<sup>ʔ</sup> lē<sup>ʔ</sup>mōr ba ʔbūr ze<sup>h</sup> ʔsā<sup>h</sup> yhw(ʔādōnāy) lî bəšəʔtî mimmišrāyim <sup>9</sup> wəhāyā<sup>h</sup> ləkā ləʔōṭ al-yād<sup>h</sup>ka ūləzikkārôn bēn ʔne<sup>ʔ</sup>kā ləma an tiye<sup>h</sup> tōraṭ yhw(ʔādōnāy) bəpīkā kî bəyād ḥazāqā<sup>h</sup> hōšī<sup>ʔ</sup>ākā yhw(ʔādōnāy) mimmišrāyim <sup>10</sup> wəšāmartā ʔeṭ-haḥuqqā<sup>h</sup> hazzō<sup>ʔ</sup>t ləmō ʔdāḥ miyyāmîm yāmîmā<sup>h</sup> s <sup>11</sup> wəhāyā<sup>h</sup> kî-yəbī<sup>ʔ</sup>ākā yhw(ʔādōnāy) ʔel-ʔéreš ḥakkəna ʔnî kaʔāšer nišba ləkā wəlaʔəbōṭe<sup>ʔ</sup>kā ūnəṭānāḥ lāk <sup>12</sup> wəha ʔbartā kol-peṭer-reḥem lyhw(laʔdōnāy) wəkol-peṭer šēger bəhēmā<sup>h</sup> ʔāšer yiye<sup>h</sup> ləkā hazzəkārîm lyhw(laʔdōnāy) <sup>13</sup> wəkol-peṭer ḥāmōr tīpde<sup>h</sup> bəše<sup>h</sup> wəʔim-lō<sup>ʔ</sup> tīpde<sup>h</sup> wa ʔraṭō wəkōl bəḵōr ʔādām bəbāne<sup>ʔ</sup>kā tīpde<sup>h</sup> <sup>14</sup> wəhāyā<sup>h</sup> kî-yiś<sup>ʔ</sup>olkā binkā māḥār lē<sup>ʔ</sup>mōr ma<sup>h</sup>-zzō<sup>ʔ</sup>t wəʔāmartā ʔelāyw bəḥōzeq yād hōšī<sup>ʔ</sup>ʔnū yhw(ʔādōnāy) mimmišrāyim mibbêt ʔbādīm <sup>15</sup> wayəḥî kî-hiqšā<sup>h</sup> p̄ar ō<sup>h</sup> ləšalləḥēnū wayyahārōg yhw(ʔādōnāy) kol-bəḵōr bəʔéreš mišrāyim mibbəkōr ʔādām wə ad-bəḵōr bəhēmā<sup>h</sup> al-kēn ʔnî zōbē<sup>ʔ</sup>ḥ lyhw(laʔdōnāy) kol-peṭer reḥem hazzəkārîm wəkol-bəḵōr bānay ʔepde<sup>h</sup> <sup>16</sup> wəhāyā<sup>h</sup> ləʔōṭ al-yād<sup>h</sup>ka ūləṭōṭāpōṭ bēn ʔne<sup>ʔ</sup>kā kî bəḥōzeq yād hōšī<sup>ʔ</sup>ʔnū yhw(ʔādōnāy) mimmišrāyim s <sup>17</sup> wayəḥî bəšallah par ō<sup>h</sup> ʔeṭ-hā ām wəlō<sup>ʔ</sup>-nāḥām ʔelōḥîm dērek ʔéreš pəlištîm kî qārōb hū<sup>ʔ</sup> kî ʔamar ʔelōḥîm pēn-yinnāḥēm hā ām bir<sup>ʔ</sup>ōṭām milḥāmā<sup>h</sup> wəšābū mišrāymā<sup>h</sup> <sup>18</sup> wayyassēb ʔelōḥîm ʔeṭ-hā ām dērek hammidbār yam-sûp waḥāmūšîm ʔlū bənē-yiśrāʔel mēʔéreš mišrāyim <sup>19</sup> wayyiqqaḥ mōše<sup>h</sup> ʔeṭ-ašmōṭ yōsēp immō kî ḥəšbē<sup>a</sup> ḥiśbî<sup>a</sup> ʔeṭ-bənē yiśrāʔel lē<sup>ʔ</sup>mōr pāqōd yipqōd ʔelōḥîm ʔeṭkem wəha ʔlîtem ʔeṭ-ašmōṭay mizze<sup>h</sup> ʔittəkem <sup>20</sup> wayyis ū missukkōṭ wayyahānū bəʔeṭām biqšē<sup>h</sup> hammidbār <sup>21</sup> wyhw(waʔdōnāy) hōlēk lipnēhem yômām bə ammūd ʔnān lanəḥōṭām hadderek wəlaylā<sup>h</sup> bə ammūd ʔēš ləhāʔir ləhem lələket yômām wəlaylā<sup>h</sup> <sup>22</sup> lō<sup>ʔ</sup>-yāmîš ammūd ḥe ʔnān yômām wə ammūd ḥəʔēš laylā<sup>h</sup> lipnē hā ām p