

## The Institution of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

### Exodus 12:1-36

Exodus 12:1-36 - *“Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. **3** Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. **4** And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. **6** Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. **7** And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. **8** Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. **9** Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. **10** You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. **11** And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.*

***12** ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.*

***13** Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

***14** ‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting 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, that person shall be cut off from Israel. **16** On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. **17** So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. **18** In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. **19** For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. **20** You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’”*

***21** Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves*

according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. **22** And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. **23** For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. **24** And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. **25** It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. **26** And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' **27** that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. **28** Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

#### *The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn*

**29** And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. **30** So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

#### *The Exodus*

**31** Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. **32** Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

**33** And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." **34** So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. **35** Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. **36** And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians."

#### **Background Notes**

The tenth and final plague on Egypt was announced in Exodus 11, and in chapter 12 the final plague was carried out—the death of the firstborn. As a result of this plague, Pharaoh finally allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. In fact, the Egyptians *urged* them to leave Egypt, because they were afraid that there would be another plague and *all* the Egyptians would be struck down! And so the Israelites left Egypt, and they left with more than the clothes on their backs. God caused the Egyptians to give them silver and gold and clothing (v35-36).

The people of Israel were protected from the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, because they followed God's instructions of applying the blood of a slain lamb to the doors of their homes. This

lamb was called the **Passover Lamb** for obvious reasons: when the Lord saw the blood, He **passed over** – not passed by, but passed over -- that home, and the judgment of death was averted (v13).

Each year the people of Israel were told to remember God's protection from the tenth plague and the resulting deliverance from Egypt with the celebration of the "**Passover Feast.**" In fact, from that date on, the month in which the Passover Feast was celebrated would become the first month of the year in Israel's sacred calendar (v2). The celebration of Passover continues to this day. In our calendar, Passover comes in March or April of each year. In the Hebrew religious calendar it is celebrated in the first month, Nissan. It is the seventh month in the Jewish civil calendar, but the first month in the religious calendar.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was instituted in verses 15-20. This feast began on the evening of Passover and lasted for seven days. Before this feast all "leaven," which was a symbol of corruption and evil, was swept from all houses in Israel. Getting rid of all leaven is a spiritual picture (or "type") of separating from evil. Believers now under the blood of Christ should live lives of separation from evil and glory to God.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. The Passover Lamb is a spiritual picture of God's Lamb of Sacrifice.**

In John 1:29 John the Baptist proclaimed our Lord to be "*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" And in 1 Corinthians 5:7 we read that "*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.*" So the Passover Lamb is a spiritual picture of our Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. As the Passover Lamb had to be an unblemished male, and had to be proved flawless over a period of time, so our Lord Jesus was born without a sinful nature, and He was proved to be sinless over the period of a lifetime. As the Passover Lamb was slain at twilight, or late afternoon, so our Lord died in the afternoon of Passover. As the blood of the Passover Lamb when applied to each home protected it from death, so the blood of Christ, the true Passover Lamb, when applied by faith protects the believer from eternal death, the penalty of sin. As Hebrews 9:22 says: "*Without the shedding of blood there is NO remission of sin.*" **The Passover Lamb is a spiritual picture of God's Lamb of Sacrifice.**

### **2. The Passover Feast is a spiritual picture of God's Plan of Salvation.**

The Passover Feast commemorated and celebrated Israel's redemption from their bondage and slavery in Egypt. What a picture of our salvation! Egypt is a picture of the world with its bondage and slavery to sin. Before salvation we were slaves to sin and to Satan -- but we've been redeemed! We still have sinful natures, and we're still in this world, but we are **no longer under bondage to sin**, and thus we are no longer *of* this world.

As the applied blood of the Passover lamb was the basis for the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt, so the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, is the basis of our redemption. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says that *“were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

### 3. The Passover Feast is a spiritual picture of God’s salvation.

In Exodus 12:13, God said to the children of Israel, *“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”* Not when I see your good works, or not when I see your good intentions, but **when I see the blood**. What a picture of salvation! Have you applied the blood of Christ to your life? Have you recognized that you are a sinner, and you can be forgiven and saved only because Jesus shed His blood and died for your sins? Have you believed this truth? Have you received Jesus Christ in this way? Until you apply the blood of Christ by faith, you are not a Christian. As the Passover was a new beginning for the children of Israel (v2), so becoming a Christian is a new beginning for the believer. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”* **The Passover Feast is a spiritual picture of God’s Plan of Salvation.**

### Practical Application

#### Don’t carry “types” too far!

The Passover clearly is a “type” — it is an Old Testament spiritual picture of a New Testament truth. It is a wonderful picture of the truth of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ, as we’ve seen.

But it’s possible to carry types too far! For example, in verse 29 and Exodus 11:5 we read that if the blood of the Passover lamb was not applied to the door of the house, the all firstborn of the home would die, including the firstborn of the animals. However, if the blood of the Passover lamb was applied, the firstborn human of the house was protected, and the firstborn animals were saved from death as well.

Now, applying this wonderful type, the fact that the firstborn animals were saved from death by the blood on the doorposts of the home does this indicate that there is salvation for animals, or that animals will be in heaven! Everybody follow? The answer is No! Why not?

The reason is that **types do not determine doctrine; types illustrate doctrine!** Doctrine is determined from the didactic passages of Scripture -- the **teaching passages** of Scripture. Some Christians have made the mistake of carrying types too far, and reading doctrine into types -- doctrine that is not supported by the rest of Scripture.

This is just one example – many more could be given. So be careful in biblical interpretation! **Don't carry types too far!**