

**I. Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:1-28; 42-50; 13:3-10)**

- The Lord gives Moses and Israel instruction regarding the first and subsequent observances of “Passover” (Pesach in Hebrew and Judaism). Passover will be observed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the year (lunar calendar, starting in spring around the vernal equinox). The month is known as “Abib” (Canaanite) and later as “Nisan” (Babylonian). No uncircumcised people are to participate in the Passover.
- From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of that same month, the Feast of Unleavened Bread shall be observed. No leaven can be in the houses of Israel. Anyone with leaven will be cut off from their people.
- They Israelites are told to select an unblemished lamb (sheep or goat) on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month and slaughter it on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, roast the meat and eat all of it. Any leftovers are to be burned up the next morning. Families are to invite and share the meal with neighbors who have no animals. They are to eat it while dressed to leave right away.
- Blood from the lamb is to be spread on the doorposts and lintel of their houses. This will be a sign for God’s Destroyer to pass by that house when the first born of Egypt are killed.
- As a side note, Passover and Easter celebrations are not bound together in any way. Passover is celebrated based on the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the first NEW moon of the lunar year. The secular holiday of Easter is observed on the first Sunday following the first FULL moon after March 21<sup>st</sup> (day after astronomical vernal equinox).

**II. The Final Plague, Exodus and Miracle at the Sea (Exodus 12:29-40; 13:17-14:30)**

- At midnight that night (the 14<sup>th</sup> day would have begun at twilight), God (or His “destroyer”) passes through Egypt and the firstborn of every Egyptian household, man and beast, dies. The Bible says that there is no home without death.
- Pharaoh allows, no, commands the Israelites to leave, taking their all their flocks and people and go worship. Technically, he does not “free” the Israelites. The Israelites also plunder the possessions of the beleaguered and mourning Egyptians.
- The Bible says that over 600,000 Israelite men, not counting women and children, leave Egypt. There is debate about this, but the numbers seem to be reinforced in Exodus 38:26; Numbers 1:46; 2:32; 11:21 and 26:51.
- The departure ends 430 years in Egypt and they depart on the same day they entered as 66 people.
- God does not lead them the route of the Philistines to avoid war (strange that they do not fear war with Amalek in ch. 17.).
- They are led by a cloud during daylight and a pillar of fire by night.
- The Lord hardens Pharaoh’s heart and the king regrets his decision (likely realizing he has been duped as well). The chariots, horses and armies of Pharaoh are dispatched to bring them back. How sizeable an army did Egypt have to corral and return maybe 2 million plus people?
- The people are frightened and begin to bewail the situation. Were there no graves in Egypt to bury us in? Didn’t we say leave us alone? They deem it better to serve as slaves than to die. Why would Pharaoh kill the workforce he regrets letting go?
- Moses informs them that the Lord will fight for them. God tells Moses to hold his staff out over the sea. It will part and the Israelites will escape on dry land. The Lord places the cloud pillar between Israel and the Egyptian forces, causing the Egyptian side to be in darkness, but the side of Israel was illuminated at night. The sea is divided and an east wind dries the ground up during the night. The sides of the sea are like “walls”.
- The Egyptians give chase and once they are in the midst of the sea, the Lord closes the water back in on them, destroying the armies of Pharaoh. The Bible says that the Lord confused the wheels of the chariots and disrupted the progress of the army just before the waters come back on them.
- Upon witnessing God’s mighty power, the Israelites are in a strong spiritual state. (14:30, 31)

### III. The Lord Provides (Exodus 15:22-17:7)

- It doesn't take long for the grumbings to start. A little travel and dry throats combined with only bitter (brackish?) water to drink stir the former slaves to grumble. Moses cries out to God and is shown a tree to throw into the water to make it drinkable.
- Interestingly inserted into the narrative is the promise of verse 26.
- A month into their journey, hunger pangs begin (it must be assumed that any provisions taken from Egypt are exhausted). They make a point that at least in Egypt they had meat and bread to eat.
- They are provided a type of bread each morning (except the Sabbath day) that they call "manna" ("what is it"). For at least one day, they are provided quail in the evening (must eat it all or it will spoil). They are to gather the manna first thing in the morning before the sun melts it away like the dew. On the eve of the Sabbath day, they are to gather twice as much. Some do not listen and have nothing to eat on the Sabbath day. Aaron is to keep a sample for posterity.
- Moving again, they camp at Rephidim and water is again scarce, but the complaints are plentiful. Moses is directed to strike a rock and water will come out. The place is named Massah (temptation) and Meribah (strife).
- In 17:8-14, a brief attack comes to the rear guard of Israel (Deuteronomy 25:17, 18). They are defeated by Joshua and the Israelites because Moses raises his hands above the battle. Aaron and Hur help the weary Moses by placing a stone under him and supporting his arms.

### IV. Wise Counsel (Exodus 18:1-27)

- Moses' father-in-law Jethro comes out to meet Moses after getting word of all that has happened. He brings Moses' wife Zipporah and his two children, Gershom and Eliezer out to their father.
- Moses recounts the story to his father-in-law and Jethro praises God and makes sacrifices (10-12).
- Jethro observes Moses working himself to death trying to be a judge and mediator for all the disputes of the people. Jethro sees that Moses needs wise counsel and offers advice to him. Moses should busy himself with teaching the people the statutes and laws of God, while appointing judges (men who hate dishonest gain) over subdivisions of the people (1000s, 100s, 50s and 10s). They can settle smaller disputes and save big issue for Moses.
- Jethro explains that this will benefit both Moses and the people. Moses heeds the advice of Jethro and it appears to work.