

Ex. 13:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 13:2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it is mine.

The LORD speaks to Moses again. All the firstborn of man and beast in Israel are to be sanctified (made holy / clean—set apart) for God.

Ex. 13:3 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place*: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

Then Moses reminds the people how by “strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place.” This place of Egypt has been a house of bondage (slavery). They are to remember this and not eat leavened bread during the seven days set aside for this feast of Passover each year.

Ex. 13:4 This day came ye out in the month Abib.

Ex. 13:5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

Ex. 13:6 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

Ex. 13:7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

They are to observe the Passover on the day and month (Abib) they were delivered from Egypt. Even when they enter the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites (the promised land), a land flowing with milk and honey (no shortage of wonderful things to eat), they are to keep the Passover feast. They are to eat nothing with leaven in it for the seven days of the feast. The seventh day is to be celebrated as a feast unto the Lord. Reminder: Leaven represents sin.

Ex. 13:8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

Ex. 13:9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD’S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

Ex. 13:10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

One of the main purposes of the yearly Passover was to provide an opportunity to teach the young people about God’s mighty hand of deliverance from Egypt to ensure that they did not forget God’s mighty power and protection on their behalf. (Remembrance and repetition are important tools for learning.) Verse 9 makes me think about the phylacteries, which haven’t come into use yet at this time. When I looked up the word for *hand*, it indicated the open hand as a symbol of power. Their own hands acting in obedience to God’s command were a reminder of the power of Almighty God.

“A memorial between thine eyes” I think is referring to placing this event as an important memory in the brain; to ensure that these events aren’t forgotten, they will celebrate with feasting every year as a reminder. By observing the Passover according to God’s instructions, they are given opportunity to teach their children the importance

of obeying God. Emphasis is made that it is GOD who is bringing them out of Egypt. This is a landmark event in the history of the nation of Israel that is to be celebrated every year to remind them of God's power and protection.

Ex. 13:11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee,

Ex. 13:12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males *shall be* the LORD'S.

Ex. 13:13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

Verse 11 again emphasizes when (not if) the LORD brings them into Canaan, they are to set apart to the LORD the firstborn male of every beast. The firstborn of an ass could be redeemed with the sacrifice of a lamb—if not, they were to break the neck of the firstborn ass. The firstborn males among the children were also to be redeemed. (This is all pointing to the fact that God's only Son (firstborn) would be the sacrifice for the redemption of man.)

Ex. 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *is* this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:

Ex. 13:15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

"matrix" = womb

As the children questioned their fathers in generations to come, they were to use the opportunity to teach them how the LORD had delivered their people from bondage in Egypt. They were to tell them how stubborn Pharaoh was about letting them go. Then they were to explain how God killed all the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt. That is why the firstborn male beasts are sacrificed, and the firstborn male children are redeemed. Through God's mercy and provision, the firstborn of Israel were spared.

Ex. 13:16 And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

The message is repeated as given in verses 8-10 above I believe because of the importance that God places on the observance of the Passover in obedience to Him. It is to serve as a reminder; tokens and frontlets are representative of something—in this case the Passover and God's mighty deliverance of His people. He knows our every weakness. We generally learn much more easily when things are taught using visual methods and involving all our senses.

Ex. 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

Ex. 13:18 But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

As the people left Egypt, God took them on a roundabout path. The quickest way out would have been to go through the land of the Philistines, but God knows His people. He knew they weren't ready to face the Philistines in battle. If confronted, they would probably have headed straight back to Egypt. So He led them through the wilderness of the Red Sea. The word "harnessed" in verse 18 indicates that the people were able bodied men. I would assume that having worked such hard labor for so long would have allowed them to develop their strength and muscle and fitness.

Ex. 13:19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Ex. 13:20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

Moses also took the bones of Joseph with them. Joseph had known that God would take His people from the land of Egypt, and he made his sons swear to take his bones with them. It's pretty impressive to me that 400 years later his request has been remembered and honored. It is interesting though that it is stated that Moses took the bones of Joseph. I would assume that Joseph's request was widely known among the people, but it wouldn't surprise me to know that the LORD Himself reminded Moses not to forget Joseph. They continued their journey through the wilderness (desert) from Succoth to Etham, at the edge of the wilderness, where they camped.

Ex. 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

Ex. 13:22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from before the people.*

The LORD guided them on their journey with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They were never inhibited as to when they could travel because of the light provided by the pillar of fire. This pillar was always in front of the people—leading them as God directed.

Often, I have been very jealous of the direct methods God used to communicate with the Old Testament saints. I know part of the reason He was so verbal and visual in Old Testament times was to establish His identity in so certain a manifestation for a period of time as to leave the people a wonderful legacy to hand down to generations to come to bolster their faith. It was laying a strong foundation for their trust in Him. God provided so many miraculous events throughout history through so many types of messengers that you really can't ignore Him without making a determined effort to do so. It still doesn't keep me from sometimes wanting to be able to hear God tell me personally what His will is concerning certain choices/decisions/steps in new directions—verbally, father to daughter.