

God Calls People to Remember

Key Verse: *“Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.”*
—Deuteronomy 16:1

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 16:1-8

GOD DESIRED THAT ISRAEL

not forget the bondage they had suffered at the hand of the Egyptians, and also that they remember the manner in which he had delivered them. As we recall, this had been accomplished by means of the tenth plague—the death of all the firstborn throughout Egypt. (Exod. 11:5,6) Israel, however, was ‘passed over’ by the angel of death because they followed the instructions given by God, recorded in Exodus 12, concerning the killing of an unblemished lamb on the 14th day of the first month, Abib, and the sprinkling of the lamb’s blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses as a sign of their obedience. Thus were the Israelites delivered from Egyptian bondage.

The Key Verse states God’s further instruction to Israel that they observe an annual remembrance of this momentous event by keeping the Passover feast at its proper time. In addition to the Passover feast, and for seven days immediately following it, the Israelites were commanded to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. “Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith; . . . for thou camest

forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.”—Deut. 16:3

Leaven is used in the Bible as a picture of sin. Unleavened bread, then, is a fitting representation of that type of food, nourishment, which is pure and sinless, that which comes from God. Israel was to remember that their sustenance, even life itself, was from God. During this seven-day feast, the Israelites were instructed to completely rid their houses of any leaven. (Deut. 16:4) Although they literally did this, the more important lesson was that they seek to rid themselves, their heart, mind, words, and actions, of the leavening influences of sin, as much as possible.

The call to remembrance for the nation of Israel was with regard to both their deliverance by God as well as their responsibility to live according to his righteous, ‘unleavened’ principles. These same lessons apply to spiritual Israel today. Apostle Paul said, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—I Cor. 5:7,8

The above verses tell us that Jesus has provided the means by which we have been able to come out from bondage to sin and death, our ‘Egypt,’ through his death as our Passover lamb. In fact, all mankind will soon receive the benefits of this lamb in Christ’s coming kingdom. At the present time, it is the firstborn—the prospective church—who specially benefit from the sacrifice of Jesus. With this comes special responsibility, chiefly that of ‘purging’ the leaven of sin from our lives and conduct, replacing it with unleavened characteristics, such as ‘sincerity and truth.’ Unlike natural Israel this is not the work of a seven-day feast, but of a lifetime of following after the principles of truth and righteousness. ■