

The Beginning of Passover

***Key Verse: “This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.”
—Exodus 12:14***

***Selected Scripture:
Exodus 12:1-14***

TEN PLAGUES FELL UPON

the Egyptians before the nation of Israel was released from bondage. Prior to the last plague, God gave detailed instructions to Moses and Aaron so the Israelites would be protected from the great calamity of the slaying all the firstborn males that was to come upon their captors. On the tenth day of the first month, a lamb, an unblemished yearling, was to be chosen by each household, and on the fourteenth day at evening each

Jewish family was to slaughter their lamb and spread its blood on the two door posts and lintel of their home. This would ensure that the destroying angel would pass over their dwelling, and all the firstborn therein would be spared.—Exod. 12:3-7,12

When Jacob and his family arrived in Egypt many years earlier, Joseph wisely had them continue their normal employment as herdsmen rather than place them in positions of prominence in the royal court. Furthermore, he said, “every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” (Gen. 46:34) Perhaps this

attitude prevailed because the Israelites killed and ate their flocks while the Egyptians adored these creatures and worshipped them as gods.—*Matthew Poole, Commentary of the Holy Bible*, vol. 1, p. 103

If the Egyptians considered livestock as sacred, at the time of the Exodus the Jews would need to exercise courage by slaughtering the lambs the Egyptians venerated. By applying the blood to the doorposts and lintel as directed, the Israelites would give evidence of their faith in God's power to deliver them. "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."—Exod. 12:13

Our Key Verse indicates that, as a consequence of the deliverance of Israel's firstborn thousands of years ago in Egypt and the subsequent liberation of the entire nation, Jews around the world were to commemorate this event perpetually as a memorial.

The New Testament indicates that the Passover, as well as other features of the Law Covenant, were designed to bring the Israelites to an acceptance of Christ as the Lamb of God, the true Passover lamb, who was sacrificed on their behalf to take away sin.—John 1:29; I Cor. 5:7,8; Gal. 3:24

Spirit-begotten believers during the Gospel Age have been "passed over" from the plague of Adamic condemnation resting upon the remainder of mankind. Paul wrote, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1:24) What a magnificent opportunity has been provided for the church—the antitypical firstborn—to have a share in the sin offering now and to assist Christ in blessing all the families of the earth in God's kingdom, soon to be established on earth! ■