

Gleaners Bible Studies c 10

MOSES AND THE EXODUS - A NATION EMERGES

Study 1

THE PASSOVER NIGHT



Exodus chapters 11 & 12

We have noticed already in our studies in Exodus how Pharaoh grew more hardened as the judgements of God on Egypt grew more and more severe. No doubt Moses wondered just how long the conflict was going to continue. Did God really know what He was doing? Where would it end? Would they ever leave Egypt alive? As plague followed plague, God was gradually preparing the way for the final act of deliverance. Remember that God does not hurry His plans. When the time is exactly right He ACTS and His work achieves its end. It did with Pharaoh.

Chapter 11: 1-3 gives a most interesting interlude in the events. It tells us three valuable facts. Firstly, that the crisis point had been reached. The last plague, leading to deliverance, was on its way. God's last word would be spoken. Secondly, the people of Israel were to stock up with possessions from the Egyptians who were ready to give. **"The Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians."** They were to go out with plenty of provisions from their captors. Thirdly, the stature of Moses as a leader and a man of God is seen. All recognised his worth and greatness. Here is a meek man who became great. How wonderful this is, when we think of his unwillingness to serve God in the first place. It was a good thing that God did not accept his excuses.

The night which marked the EXODUS of the children of Israel from Egypt was perhaps the most important in all their history. It brought a crisis of terrible sorrow for Egypt, but for the people of God it was their great EMERGENCE into national status. They saw, in a way they had never seen before, the power of God shown on their behalf alone. Remember that, 430 years before, they had come down into Egypt as a family numbering about 70 altogether. They were now to go out of slavery and begin movements which were to make them a nation to be reckoned with. They had multiplied greatly.

Read **chapter 12** carefully. It tells of an event which is never to be forgotten throughout all the nation's history. The story is simple. The way of deliverance was clearly outlined. The final plague was to be against all the firstborn of the land. God's 'agent' of death was to pass through the land destroying as he went. Every house was open to danger. Humanly speaking there was no ESCAPE. At midnight, doom would descend.

There was, however, a way of escape for Israel. It was the provision of the PASSOVER lamb. Study all that is said about the lamb. "A lamb" had to be taken out of the flock. Selection was essential - it must be absolutely without blemish, a male of the first year. (**Exodus 12: 4-5**) When

chosen, it became **"the lamb"**. It was taken so that all could enjoy God's deliverance. Notice then, that to each household it is described as **"your lamb"** - for them it was the personal association that mattered. It was to become the very basis of their deliverance. After the lamb had been kept and examined it was killed. The blood was caught in a dish and then applied to the lintel and door posts of the house, so that each occupant literally sheltered beneath the blood of the lamb. The destroyer would 'pass over' those who were thus found, protected by the applied blood. It is true that not one firstborn perished if the blood of a pure lamb of the first year had been applied. Those who were not under the blood of the lamb perished. Think about this.

It has been said that there is a Red Line running through the Bible. By this we mean that it is the idea of REDEMPTION BY SACRIFICE. It begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation, where we read quite a bit about the blood of the Lamb. Here in Exodus, God redeemed (that is, bought or claimed back) Israel from the slavery in Egypt. Now, the Lord Jesus is the Lamb of God (**see John 1: 29**). And the Passover is a picture of the way in which the Lord Jesus purchased our redemption through the sacrifice at Calvary. He was truly the Lamb without blemish because He was completely sinless (**see I Peter 1: 19**). The Passover Lamb was slain. We remember that the Lord Jesus was crucified in place of us and for our sin. Israel sheltered beneath the blood that had been shed and was delivered. So it is that by believing in the Lord Jesus, we can be delivered from the power of sin, through His precious blood. Think these things through - they will tell you simply the meaning of the story of redemption from Egypt.

There are several more facts about the Passover that we can notice:

- 1) It was the beginning of a NEW YEAR for the nation. **"this month shall be your beginning of months" verse 2.** Everything for Israel as a nation began with the Passover night. What was left behind when they left Egypt was to be forgotten forever.
- 2) It was the beginning of a NEW RELATIONSHIP between the people and God. **Verse 11** shows this. They were to go out of Egypt as God's purchased people, to walk by His direction and to serve Him alone.
- 3) It marked the beginning of a NEW REVELATION of God's power for the nation. It was always to be celebrated each year as the triumph of the Lord over the enemies of the nation. Look at **verses 24-28**.

There is much more in the chapter for you to study for yourself. But remember this, Genesis tells of CREATION. It tells us that God made us. Sin spoiled God's wonderful work. Exodus tells us of REDEMPTION. We learn, as we consider the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, that every Christian belongs to God - first by Creation, but then again by Redemption through faith in the sacrifice at Calvary.

Study 2

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

Read

Exodus chapters 13-15

These are important chapters in the story of the Exodus. Take time to read them carefully. The people of Israel, with Moses as their leader, set out on their journey from Rameses to Succoth. **Chapter 12: 37-42** tells of the size of the company that moved out of Egypt. They were not free yet, as events soon proved, but the Lord was working out His great plan. After 430 years (**verse 40**) things began to move. We can pause here to notice the accuracy of the Word of God. What He had said would take place, so long before in Abraham's time, was now to be fulfilled. See **Genesis 15: 13-14**. Think about this.

We are going to look at the main point of each chapter:-

Chapter 13. The SIGN of the Passover.

Chapter 14. The SALVATION of the Lord.

Chapter 15. The SONG of deliverance.

1) THE SIGN OF THE PASSOVER. (Chapter 13)

Notice **verse 3** - "**Remember**". The new nation that was to emerge and grow made the Passover the main celebration - the first of their year. This was so that they would be regularly reminded that God had delivered them from slavery. Sadly, there were times when they neglected the Passover, forgot the God who had redeemed them and turned to worship false gods. (If you are keen to learn the history of the Passover, get your concordance out and look up all the references. It is very interesting). **Verse 9** states clearly that it should be a SIGN ... and for a MEMORIAL ... "**for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt**". As the nation went out from Egypt, the people's minds were still fresh concerning the blood of the lamb under which they had sheltered from the destroyer. Even more than this, every succeeding generation had to be instructed in the meaning of the Passover. Notice **verses 8 and 14**. Children heard each year of the mighty deeds of the Exodus - how God had delivered his people out of bondage.

Every Christian has the means of remembering the Lord Jesus and His death, through which deliverance comes. In **Luke 22: 15** we see the Lord Jesus carrying out the commands of our chapter. He ate the Passover meal with His disciples. This was the last significant Passover: it was superseded by a new feast of remembrance. **Verses 19-23** tell us how the Lord instituted this new feast, which would be a memorial of His death at Calvary.

1 Corinthians 11: 23-33 tells how much this feast should mean and how important it is. While those who love the Lord Jesus wait for Him to come again they remember Him in His death and wonderful resurrection. In the early church believers did this on the first day of every week, and many Christians still do today. I wonder if you do? See **Acts 20: 7-12**.

2) THE SALVATION OF THE LORD. (Chapter 14)

The central idea of this chapter is in **verse 13**. "**Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.**" Although Israel had left Egypt behind, God had not finished with Pharaoh. God was to lead His people completely beyond the Red Sea. Read **chapter 13: 17-22** and you will see that He chose the right way for them and

the pillar of cloud and fire was for their guidance. Yet God was once more to harden Pharaoh's heart. (**14: 4**) He first realises that his gang of slaves are gone. It shows also the swift change in the attitude of Israel to God when they became aware of their peril. Notice the way in which they attacked Moses, **verses 11-12**. Their murmuring was to dishonour God all the way through the journey and it began just hours after they left Egypt. It was a question of FEAR or FAITH - the demand upon their faith was to stand still. **Verses 15-31** tell of the dramatic victory of the Lord. The road through the Red Sea opened up for God's people to go through. It closed again to destroy Pharaoh and his hosts. "**So the Lord SAVED Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians.**" (**14: 30**) The victory was the Lord's.

The lesson still applies to us today. In the face of overwhelming danger, the power of God has the answer. "**Salvation is of the Lord.**" (**Jonah 2: 9**)

3) THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE (Chapter 15)

Where people find God's deliverance there is always a song. "**Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord.**" (**verse 1**) This is one of the great songs of the Bible. You will notice two outstanding things about it. The subject of it was the Lord and His great deeds. Especially notice **verse 11**, "**Who is like You, O Lord?**" Deliverance from Egypt and the destruction of Pharaoh convinced them of the Lord's superior power and so they sang about it. It is good to praise the Lord, and if we know His power in our lives - power to deliver us from Satan and his devices - we shall certainly be able to, and will want to, praise Him. The reason for their song was to express their joy in a new-found freedom. There was no song in Egypt. Slaves could never sing about deliverance. Let us make sure that we express our joy to others. Among all the songs of our world today, there is no better one than the song of Christian freedom. So it is that the sight and sorrows of slavery were turned into songs of salvation. Israel was now "on the march" as a nation. Notice **15: 22-27**.

Study 3

JOURNEY TO SINAI

Read

Exodus chapters 16-18

The record of the journey of Israel to the Promised Land is interesting. We notice right from the beginning that God had to cater for the weakness of the people. The very fact that God led them through the Red Sea proved this. **Chapter 13: 17-18** tells us why this was done. It was so that the problems of the Philistines would not weaken them. It tells so clearly that God knew the kind of people He was dealing with, just as He knows all about us. He does consider our weaknesses and failures and makes provision for them. If you have a Bible with a map of the journeyings of Israel; keep it by you as you come across place names in our studies - Succoth, Etham, Pihairoth, then over the Red Sea. Afterwards, they went on to Marah and Elim, then the Wilderness of Sin, **chapter 16: 1**. They were moving on to Mount Sinai where the law of God would be given. Each stage in the journey had some meaningful feature about it. Often the failure of the people of God was demonstrated. God's FAITHFULNESS, however, was always proved.

It must be noticed in any study of the early history of Israel that they could not have reached Canaan very much

earlier than they did. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness, suffering often because of unbelief and failure to trust their God. Eventually, just two of those who left Egypt went into the Land - Caleb and Joshua. You can learn about this by reading **Numbers 14**. Even Moses could only see the land; it was Joshua who led the nation in. This tells us so clearly that it is a dreadful sin to refuse to trust and obey God. It can have disastrous effects.

There are several interesting features about our study passage:

1) FOOD IN THE WILDERNESS (*chapter 16*)

The cry goes up, 'No Food!' It is necessary to look carefully at **verse 3**. This is a dreadful slight on the goodness of God. The whole congregation murmured against Moses. Unbelieving people have short memories. The accusation is that God had brought them out to die. At least in Egypt there was food. God is tremendous in His kindness. **"I will rain bread from Heaven for you,"** **verse 4**. Notice the way in which their unbelief and hardness is met. It was left until later for the judgment to be executed. God gave manna for them to gather. There is something very beautiful about this incident. Each morning the manna was there for the people to gather. **Verse 31** gives a description of it. It seems to have been very palatable - quite good to eat. Six days only it was there; on the seventh day they fed on the surplus of the sixth. So the Sabbath was kept. The manna is a picture of the Lord Jesus, the Bread of Life. Read **John 6** in this connection. Here in Exodus a nation was fed by God while it was being led by Him. God in his abundant care always feeds those whom He leads. It is worth saying here that Christians should gather their spiritual food each day from God's Word. And the morning is a good time to gather it. It is a good habit to begin the day with the Word of God. Notice that in **verse 33** a pot of manna was kept in the Tabernacle as a testimony to God's goodness. Notice also **verse 35**, that for forty years God fed His people with this great food. He did not let them down.

2) FAILURE IN THE WILDERNESS

In these chapters we have three instances in which Israel dishonoured God: **chapter 16: 3 & 27**, and **chapter 17: 3**. Every time they faced difficulty they blamed God. Their approach to Moses was hostile. It is lovely that his spirit of meekness was enough to keep him balanced and secure. He proved many times what a great leader he was. In **16: 10** we read how God came into the congregation with a cloud. The presence of the Lord was a sign of His displeasure. It was not long before the people were paying the price of their folly and disbelief. **Numbers 11: 31-33** tells how through the quails God judged many of the people with death. Let us be careful that we do not criticise God's dealings with us.

3) FIGHTING IN THE WILDERNESS (*Chapter 17: 8-16*)

Israel's relentless enemy was Amalek. In these verses you read how they harassed God's people in Rephidim. This is a great picture of God's power, used to defeat the enemies of His people. It is interesting to see the part Moses played in the victory. While his hands were held high, Israel prevailed. It was as if he were praying for the people and while he did this, events moved on to victory. This is the way victory comes for us in the battle. (Notice that the people of Amalek were always the enemies of Israel). No relaxation was possible. They needed the power of God to conquer. Remember that with all our spiritual foes, there

is one secret of victory. We are **"more than conquerors through Him who loved us"** (**Romans 8: 37**).

Chapter 18 is interesting. We read of the FAITHFULNESS of Moses as God's servant. Read it through carefully. The main point of it is the advice of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. Because Moses carried such a burden as the great counsellor of his people, this burden needed to be shared. Faithfully he sought to teach the statutes and laws of God, until it was far too great a task for one man to undertake. **Verses 25-27** tell how good men were appointed to share in the work. This was a policy carried on throughout the nation's history. Yet we close our lesson with one great statement that is made about Moses as God's servant, **"Moses ... was faithful in all his house, as a servant"** (**Hebrews 3: 5**).

Study 4

AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN

Read Exodus chapter 19

The chapter which we now study is very important in the history of Israel. They come to Mount Sinai, which is known as the Mount of God. If you read **Exodus 3: 12**, you will see that God gave a sign to Moses for the future to confirm to him that He had sent him. After the people had been brought out of Egypt, they would serve God upon this mountain. Moses now could remember the promises of God. It could well be that he felt ashamed of the instances of his unwillingness to trust God. To trust God and to obey Him will never leave regrets - remember this.

The arrival of the people at Mount Sinai marked a crisis in God's dealings with them. It was here, as we shall see that the Law was given. **John 1: 17** tells us that the Law was given by Moses. Just as Abraham is remembered by all Jews as the FATHER of the race, so Moses is remembered as its LAW-GIVER. But this great encounter with God also marked the beginning of a period of time which we know as the age of law. This lasted right up to the coming of the Lord Jesus. Notice that **John 1: 17** ends by saying, **"GRACE and TRUTH came through Jesus Christ"**. In other words, a new age began with the coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that the Law was our "schoolmaster" (tutor) to bring us to Christ. (**Galatians 3: 24**) It showed us our need of Him and pointed us to Him. We will look at this again at the end of our lesson.

We can learn a lot from this chapter about the kind of RELATIONSHIP that was established between God and the nation of Israel. Sinai was a fearful place. Notice some of the things that are said to describe it. **Verse 9** speaks of the thick cloud in which the Lord would come to the people. Then **verses 12 and 13** set the bounds on the people. It would be death to any who broke through the barriers set by God. They had to keep their distance. **Verses 16-21** complete the picture. The thunder and lightning, the smoke and the piercing sound of the trumpet all heralded the fact that **"the Lord came down upon Mt Sinai."** (**19: 20**) The whole atmosphere was one of dread and fear. What was God doing?

As a background to giving His laws to the people, God was revealing to them His holiness and purity. He was telling them that, humanly speaking, there was no meeting place between their SIN and God's HOLINESS. Make sure in studying the place that the law of God had in the life of

Israel, that you understand this. You will find no flaw in it; it is, as Paul says in **Romans 7: 12** - "**holy, just and good**". It was as perfect as the God who gave it. That is why there was such a burning sense of purity about Mount Sinai. It stood for a Law that revealed and demanded perfection. It set a standard that not one sinful man could reach. We remember the statement of **Romans 3: 23** - "**All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" Sad to say, the Law showed what men should be, but left them utterly powerless to attain it. Today, with so much disregard of things that are pure and right, it is necessary to regain in our thinking something of what HOLINESS means.

If you are a Christian, and I do hope you are, you can never be judged for your sin, because Jesus has died for you. A righteousness has been given to those who believe in Christ; so, as a Christian, none of the terror that these people knew need be yours. But this does not mean that you should ever think lightly of SIN. God is still the same; His Law has not changed - but the Lord Jesus has paid the penalty for our sins and we are free. This is wonderful!

But **verses 4-6** tell us of the relationship that God wanted to have with His people. **Verse 4** is very beautiful if you read it properly. God brought them out of Egypt - "**bore them on eagles' wings**" - brought them to Himself. Do you understand how God works? We see even in this severe picture of LAW, the wonder of LOVE. God goes on to say that if they would obey His voice, and keep His covenant, then He would claim them as His special treasure. They would be "**a kingdom of priests**" and "**an holy nation**". (**19: 6**)

It was not very often in their long history that Israel as a nation obeyed their God. Constantly they broke His law. Yet when they obeyed, God kept, His word. They found His blessing, but the onus rested on them. This is the story of the AGE of LAW: "**If you obey...**" (**verse 5**) It all depended on what they could do. Through the Lord Jesus, through FAITH in Him, we, as Christians, enjoy a relationship with God which does not depend upon what we can DO, but upon what He has DONE at Calvary. This is the vast difference between the age of law and the age of grace. Think carefully about it. **Romans 3 and 5** will help you to understand the contrast.

The scene is now set for the giving of the Law. Sinai, the Mount of God, has been reached. Moses and Aaron will now go up into the mountain to meet God on behalf of the people. This marks a great crisis in the nation's history, as it emerges as "the people of God."

Questions

STUDY 1 THE PASSOVER NIGHT

1. How was Pharaoh affected as the judgments of God upon Egypt grew more severe?
2. Why was the exodus from Egypt so important in Israel's history?
3. Give three essentials that had to be satisfied in the Passover lamb.
4. In what way was the Passover lamb a picture of the Lord Jesus and His death at Calvary?
5. Give two of the NEW things that the Passover introduced for Israel as a nation.

STUDY 2 LET MY PEOPLE GO!

1. Who did God tell, many years before it happened, that slavery in Egypt would take place?
2. Of what was the Passover to be a sign to Israel, in years that followed?
3. What has the Passover given way to, for us as Christians?
4. What is the central theme of **Exodus 13**?
5. What are the two outstanding facts about the song of **Exodus 15**?

STUDY 3 JOURNEY TO SINAI

1. What did God continually have to cater for in the journeyings of His people?
2. How long was their journey in the wilderness and why did they suffer?
3. In what way was the manna a picture of the Lord Jesus?
4. 'God feeds those He leads,' - explain how He does this for us as Christians.
5. What did Moses, as God's servant, faithfully seek to do with the people?

STUDY 4 AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN

1. What sign did God give to Moses to confirm to him that He had sent him to the people?
2. What is the Law described as, in relation to us and Jesus Christ?
3. Give three facts that are given to describe the Mount Sinai in this chapter.
4. What does the Law reveal to us:
(a) about God, and
(b) about ourselves?
5. What is the vast difference between the 'Age of Law' and the 'Age of Grace'?