

Passover Feast: The Beginning of Your Year
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***"This month shall be the beginning of months for you;
it is to be the first month of the year to you" Exodus 12:2***

When God called Israel out of Egypt, one of the very first things He gave them was a calendar. How we organize a year speaks a great deal to our culture. The names of our days of the week and month speak to the cultures that our society was born through (Roman and Viking days of the weeks and months).

The Passover was the first thing that God wanted Israel to think about every year. It is not just that their year began with the Passover; THEY as a people began through the Passover. There is a lesson in this, in that the things that the Passover represents are still important today, even though we no longer keep the Passover, as Christ is our true eternal Passover (1 Cor. 5:7).

1. SLAVERY:

Israel was not a nation in Egypt, but a slave people. God brought them out of slavery to be a people. This is true of us today. Romans 8:16-23 reminds us that our first sins sold us into slavery. Just like Israel, it was the death of the firstborn set us free. When that even happened, all the people had a choice: do we remain here as slaves, or do we choose to leave slavery? So we too make the decision to allow the blood of the Firstborn to set us free. Too, even after being freed, some wanted to return to Egypt and slavery (Number 14:4). We too can return to the slavery of sin.

2. BE READY TO GO

The Passover was a feast that required them to be prepared to travel (Exodus 12:11). In fact, using unleavened bread was meant to reflect that there was no time to rise. Christians are a people who are called to be ready to go at a moment's notice; ready to go to our promised land of heaven. This constant preparedness is because of the surprise return of Jesus (Matthew 24:44). If we look at our new year as though it is a given, this is a sin (James 4:13-17).

3. BLESSINGS REQUIRE OBEDIENCE

When we consider Exodus 11:7 verses Exodus 12:7, we see that God said He would deliver Israel, but He gave them conditions for this deliverance. While it was the case that they did not have to pay for their freedom (indeed, the Egyptians paid them), since the blood of the first born did that, they did have to obey God's command to receive it. We need to consider that salvation requires obedience. Many fail to understand that God's grace is to OFFER us a paid-for salvation; the offer has "terms and conditions" that we must choose to accept by obedience. Consider Noah (the first person on whom it is mentioned God bestowed grace); Noah found grace, but that was the plan of his salvation (building the ark).

The Nation of Israel was born when they left Egypt. Consider that they believed when they left, but it was not all that happened. They were free when they crossed the sea. In 1 Corinthians 10:2 we are told that this was an antitype to baptism today; we believe, confess and repent, but our sins (slave master) are not washed away until baptism. It was only after that baptism that Israel entered into the covenant of Moses. We today are Born Again by the water and the Spirit. Just like Israel, we are led TO the water BY the Spirit, and our freedom was purchased by blood of the Firstborn.

This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 1 John 5:6