

ISRAEL IN EGYPT AND THE PASSOVER – SPIRITUAL LESSONS FOR US

- *Israel in bondage and affliction in Egypt.* God had told Abraham that his descendants would be in a strange land and suffer affliction for 400 years. God also promised that He would deliver them from their bondage and judge the nation that afflicted them (Gen. 15:13-14). The children of Israel came to Egypt as a result of Joseph (the son of Jacob) being sold into slavery by his brothers (see Gen. 37, 39-46). The people of Israel cried out to God for deliverance and God called Moses to this work, speaking to him from the burning bush (Ex. 3, Acts 7:30-35). Moses had previously failed to deliver the people by his own plan and power, but now God would be his power (Ex.2:11-15; Acts 7:22-30). Here we see the spiritual lesson that our service to the Lord must be in dependence upon Him and according to His will and plan. God declared that it was He Himself who would deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians and would also bring them into the land according to His covenant with Abraham (Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-12).

- *The Passover and deliverance from Egypt.* Ex. 7-11 record the plagues God brought upon Egypt in order to force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. In Scripture we may see that Egypt pictures this world system with Satan (like Pharaoh) being the ruler of this world (Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 5:19). All are under his dominion until they believe in the gospel and are delivered (Acts 26:16-18). All of Egypt, their people and their gods, were under the judgment of God. So, in the last plague God passed through the land to kill all the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast (Ex. 12:12). The firstborn represented the whole race. This judgment pictures the condemnation of God upon the whole world of sinful men (Rom.3:9-20; 5:16, 18). But, the Israelites were spared from this judgment because at God's word they took a lamb, killed it and placed its blood on the doorway. God said that when He saw the blood, He would pass over the house and those inside would be spared the judgment (Ex. 12:1-30). The lamb that was killed was a picture of the coming Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). The hyssop plant used to place the blood on the doorway pictures our faith, used to apply the blood to our sinful lives (Ex. 12:22). Without the blood, there is no forgiveness of sins, but with the blood of Christ, we are redeemed, bought back from the bondage and guilt of our sins (Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). The blood of Christ protects us from God's wrath with the penalty of eternal death for sins (Rom. 6:23). This event was the most significant event in the ancient history of the people of Israel. Therefore, God told them that it should be remembered every year by them as a memorial of God's redemption (Ex. 12:23-27; Lev. 23:4-5). When Jesus was crucified, He fulfilled in reality the Passover as the Lamb of God sacrificed on the day of Passover. The NT declares: "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). When Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples on the night before His crucifixion, He instituted this meal as the Lord's Supper for the church. The bread symbolizes His body given for us, and the wine symbolizes His blood shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:26-28; Lk. 22:14-20). It declares that the church shares in the blessings of forgiveness of the New Covenant God made with Israel (Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). After God's judgment on Egypt, Moses led the people out of Israel through the Red Sea. This great and miraculous deliverance pictures spiritual truth: Moses pictures Christ, and Israel going through the sea pictures our spiritual baptism into Christ (1 Cor. 10:2; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4); Pharaoh's armies drowned in the sea pictures the defeat of Satan's forces at the cross (Jn. 12:31; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14); God's people crossing through the sea indicates their separation from the world (Jn. 17:16; Gal. 6:14; 1 Jn. 5:4).

- *The giving of the Law.* God gave the Law to Moses within a few weeks after the people left Egypt (Ex. 19-24). This Law was a covenant with God (the Mosaic Covenant or the Law). It stipulated that the children of Israel must obey in order to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:4-6). The OT history of the Israelites shows that they could not obey and often turned away from God's Law. The NT declares that the Law was given to show men the problem of sin and thus it was a tutor to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:16-26).