

A New Beginning

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Exodus 12:1-14

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the LORD. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

1. Spending Time with My Brother

Last week, I had a wonderful time with my brother. We visited museums in Washington, D.C. and had a White House tour with my son Chris. A few days later, we went to Canada to see Niagara Falls. When we got into our room, we were able to see the Falls from the hotel room. It was so beautiful to see the Falls. The next day, we went on a boat ride, went to the caves behind the Falls, and walked the side of the Falls. The problem I have is that as times goes on, I've begun to forget just how much fun we had on our trip. For me, I try to take as many pictures as I can whenever I go somewhere or meet

someone. When I see the pictures and the video clips I took of this trip, I remember the excitement and sense of wonder from being at Niagara.

2. The Institution of the Passover

Exodus 12 talks about the institution of the Passover. Exodus 12:14 says, “***This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.***” God wants the people of Israel to remember the Passover deliverance and celebrate it from generation to generation. Isn’t it amazing that even before the Exodus happens, God tells Moses to institute the Passover and not to forget what God would do for them.

As you know, Passover is one of the most important Jewish holidays. Jews celebrate Passover as a commemoration of their liberation by God from slavery in Egypt and their freedom as a nation. This celebration tells us what the Lord did to free God’s people. And the Passover deliverance marks the beginning of Israel as a nation. So, Exodus 12:2 says, “***This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you.***”

Through the Passover celebration, the Jewish people are reminded of their new identity as a people of God. For 400 years, the people of Israel were slaves of Pharaoh but now they had a new relationship with God as His chosen people. So, Exodus 29:46 says, “***who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.***” Even before the people of Israel arrived to the Promised Land, the people could rejoice because the Lord now was with them and dwelt among them.

3. Coming of Jesus Christ

Do we have a Passover experience? John 1:14 says, “***The word became flesh and lived among us.***” The author of John’s gospel asserts that Jesus who was in the beginning became flesh and lived among us. Jesus came to the world to save us from all kinds of troubles. You may not know how grateful I am to my younger brother. I believe that God brought him for me to experience brotherly love. We have been separated for 35 years. He was very faithful to take care of my parents when they were in the hospital. God has been using him like a savior to my family in Korea. He is running a business in Seoul, Korea and very busy with his business, but set aside two weeks for me. I am so thankful to him for coming to spend time with me. It is

my prayer that God may bless him and help him to experience God's amazing love. And I will remember his love and care for me and be thankful.

4. Sunday Worship Service

How often do you think the Jewish people give thanks to the Lord for the Passover? Do you think they celebrate the Passover once a year or every week? Needless to say, they celebrate the Passover once a year. But they also remember the Passover every week. Deuteronomy 5:15 says, ***“Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”*** In addition to their annual celebration of the Passover, on the Sabbath day, the Jewish people remember and celebrate the Passover.

How often are we grateful to Jesus for our salvation? Do we give thanks to God once a year or every week? We worship the Lord every Sunday. We celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus on Sundays. Acts 20:7 says, ***“On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them.”*** Sunday worship service was very important for the early Christians. Some may think today is one of many Sundays. And while it's true that there is more than one Sunday in a year, today is a very unique Sunday because it is the day we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus on Sunday, July 16, 2017. If we miss this Sunday, we can't have this Sunday again. Today is the day we give thanks to God for our salvation and start a new journey for freedom with hope.

5. John Wesley's New Beginning

As the Passover is a new beginning for the Jewish people, we Christians become a new creation when we welcome Jesus as our Lord and savior. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, ***“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”*** Everyone and everything on earth gets older. But the Bible says, if we are in Christ, we can be a new creation. When we are in relationship with the Lord, we have a new beginning every day. One of the best examples for being a new creation or living a new beginning is the case of John Wesley. Wesley came to Georgia from England as a pastor, but his ministry proved to be a failure. When he tried to enforce the disciplines of the “holy club” on his church, the congregation rebelled. A bitter Wesley returned to England. After speaking with a Moravian, Peter Bohler, Wesley concluded

that he lacked what is called saving faith. Though he continued to try to be good, he remained frustrated.

On May 24, 1738, Wesley had an extraordinary experience that changed everything. In his journal, he described the event: "In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Wesley had an experience of assurance of salvation in the Lord. After the Aldersgate Street experience, John Wesley was used mightily for the Lord to reform England. Wesley rode thousands of miles (as many as 20,000 a year) preaching as a man filled with the Holy Spirit could preach. Wherever he preached, lives were changed and manners and morals altered for the better.

6. Conclusion

Just as the Passover reminds the Israelites of God's salvation, we are reminded of God's salvation through Jesus Christ as we worship the Lord every Sunday. As we worship together, we renew our faith in Christ and remind ourselves of our identity as a body of Christ. As long as we are connected with Jesus, we will grow and be renewed in our hearts and minds.

7. Application

There can be a lot of things that may discourage us. But as long as we are reminded that the Lord dwells among us, we can live a new life every day. As the Lord dwells with us, we grow, develop in deeper fellowship with God and with each other, and continue to follow with a passion after the calling that God puts in our lives, to have an impact in our families, in our community, and in this world. As the eleven disciples of Jesus and the apostle Paul turned the world upside down, we can change the world.

The other day I watched a music video of "What a Beautiful Name." I pray that all of us become full of passion for Jesus and begin a new faith journey with him. *"You were the Word at the beginning/ One with God the Lord Most High/ Your hidden glory in creation/ Now revealed in You our Christ/ What a beautiful Name it is/ What a beautiful Name it is/ The Name of Jesus Christ my King/ What a beautiful Name it is/ Nothing compares to this./ What a beautiful Name it is/ The Name of Jesus."* Amen.