

Parashah 15

Bo



“Go”

Exodus 10:1 – 13:16

Torah Together



The plagues that God inflicts on Egypt continue in this week's *Parashah*, culminating with the tenth and final plague. Pharaoh finally relents and let's the Israelites go, but not before events occur that set the stage for all future workings of God with His people, including us.

1. The plague of Locusts - 10:1-20

a) Before this eighth plague, God tells Moses that He is hardening the hearts of Pharaoh and his officials for what purpose? What did He want Pharaoh to do?

b) How did Pharaoh's officials (or advisors) respond? What was their view of the battle between God and Pharaoh?

c) When Pharaoh spoke to Moses and Aaron again, what was his question? What was his proposed compromise? What 'evil' did he suspect them of?

Egypt's gods: Seth

The Egyptian god, Seth, was the god of storms and disorder. He was associated with crops because of the connection between storms and crops. Or perhaps the locust-headed god, Senehem, was intended here. During the plague, the locusts were so thick that the earth was darkened. The sun god, Ra, would have been shown to be impotent if he could not make it light during the middle of the day.

Pharaoh's Obstinacy

It's clear that Pharaoh still did not fear or respect the God of the Israelites. He did not hesitate to lie and not keep his word to God. Do you think that Pharaoh thought that he was more powerful than the Israelite God?

Egypt's gods: Amon-Ra

The sun god, Ra, was the chief of all the Egyptian gods. Pharaoh called himself "the son of the Sun" and thus claimed to be Ra's representative on earth. This then was the ultimate humiliation when neither Ra nor Pharaoh could overcome the profound darkness that God brought upon Egypt.

Egypt's gods: Pharaoh

Pharaoh himself was also worshiped in Egypt (as the son of Ra). By killing the firstborn son of all Egyptians, Pharaoh's eldest son and the presumed heir to the throne would be shown to be not only mortal, but subject to the will of the Israelite God. This would be God's final plague.

Scripture Link:

Does **Proverbs 16:18-19** seem to be a good description of Pharaoh's actions?

d) Describe this plague. What was Pharaoh's response? Do you think his confession of sin was heartfelt? How do you think he viewed YHWH?

2. The plague of darkness - 10:21-29

a) This ninth plague seemed to come without forewarning Pharaoh. What impact do you think this plague had on the Egyptians' concept of Ra, the sun god?

b) This time, what was Pharaoh's offer to Moses? How did Moses respond? Do you think Pharaoh understood that the Israelites would not return?

3. The plague on the Firstborn - 11:1-10

a) How does God indicate to Moses that this would be the last plague? What special instruction does He give the people? Had God told this same thing to Moses before?

b) Moses gives Pharaoh a full description of this plague and the results. Why do you think Pharaoh still refused to let Israel go?

4. The Passover - 12:1-30

a) God instructs Israel to arrange their calendar around the month in which this plague occurs. Which month was this and what days were to be observed?

b) Detail the process of choosing, preparing, and consuming the Passover lamb. Note especially the times for these actions. What was to be done with the lamb's blood?

c) Verses 14 - 20 describe the companion festival to Passover. What is it called and when and how is it to be observed?

“ . . . He will see the blood on the top and sides of the door frame and will pass over that doorway, . . . ”

Exodus 12:23

d) What reason did Moses give for setting Passover up as a “lasting ordinance”? Why is this important? Is this still done today?

e) As this plague proceeded, who suffered? Why do you think the death of the Egyptians' firstborn sons might have been a suitable punishment for Egypt?

Origin of “Passover”

The English word “Passover” was coined as a translation for the Hebrew word “*Pesach*.” (Can you see why it was a good choice?) Passover is arguably the oldest continuously celebrated holiday in the world.

Spring Begins the Year

From other clues in this story, we know that these events occurred in the spring. In the original Hebrew calendar, the month of spring was known as “*Aviv*” or “*Abib*,” the Hebrew word for spring. In **Exodus 12:2**, God declares *Aviv* to be the first month of the year. (During the Babylonian Captivity, the month names were changed and *Aviv* became *Nisan*.)

Important Traditions

Traditions, like the celebration of holidays, serve at least two functions for a society. First, a time is set aside specifically to remember something important that happened in the history of the people. Second, since traditions can last many generations, the collective history of the society is preserved. This is certainly the case for Passover.

Planning Future Events

In addition to celebrating past events, all of God's "Holy Days" also foreshadow future events. (We'll learn more about this when we study Leviticus.) So while many of the actions commanded by God may have seemed unusual, they all had a reason behind them. However, this would not become apparent until later in history.

Scripture Link:

When God first appeared to Moses at the burning bush, He told him that the Israelites would "plunder" the Egyptians (**Exodus 3:21-22**). God **always** keeps His word.

A Mixed Multitude

According to **Exodus 12:38**, "many other people went up with them..." when they left Egypt. Given the devastating nature of the ten plagues, do you think it was likely that at least some of the general population would want to join the Israelites and their God?

f) Why do you think God prescribed all these actions to be taken by the Israelites in preparation for the Passover? What do you think the Israelites thought of this?

5. The Exodus - 12:31-42

a) When Pharaoh finally told Moses and Aaron that the Israelites could go, did he have any conditions? Why do you think he wanted their blessing (verse 32)?

b) Why do you think the Egyptians were in a hurry to see the Israelites leave? What was significant about their bread? How did they 'plunder' the Egyptians?

c) About how many total Israelites do you think left Egypt? Who else do you think went with them? Why?

d) How long had the Israelites spent in Egypt? Why do you think they were there so long?

6. Passover Restrictions - 12:43-51

a) What four restrictions did God place on celebrating the Passover?

b) How do these restrictions foreshadow the Messiah? Do you think they still apply today?

7. Consecration of the Firstborn - 13:1-16

a) What does the term “consecrate” mean? How were the firstborn males of the livestock to be consecrated to God?

b) Were the firstborn sons of Israel also to be consecrated? How was this different than the consecration of the livestock?

c) What was the purpose of the consecration of the firstborn? Does this still apply today? How does this foreshadow the Messiah?

Scripture Link:

According to **Genesis 17**, circumcision was the sign that one was in covenant with the God of Abraham. In **Romans 2:25-29**, Paul explains that circumcision (participation in the covenant) is a matter of the heart. So as believers, we may celebrate Passover.

The Price of Salvation

Because of their obedience in applying the blood of the Passover lamb to their doorposts, the firstborn sons of the Israelites were spared death. However, these firstborn sons owed God their lives – they now “belonged” to God. This concept of belonging to God will be developed much more as we continue our *Torah* study.

Pidyon Ha’ben

The Hebrew term *Pidyon Ha’ben* literally translates to “redemption of the son.” In **Exodus 13:2**, God clearly states that the “first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.” In the case of clean animals, the first offspring are offered up as sacrifices. For unclean animals and for humans, the firstborn may be “redeemed” by paying a redemption price. This is a powerful lesson in the meaning of redemption, a concept central to God’s plan for mankind.

Digging deeper

1. The elaborate process of Passover was not for God, but for future generations. The celebration was meant to be a prophetic picture of God's plans, pointing to *Yeshua*. List all the parallels you can find between the Passover celebration and *Yeshua*'s life.

The Passover was a key event in the lives of the Israelites and in God's plan for mankind. When they first arrived in Egypt as Jacob's extended family, they were just a nomadic tribe. As they left Egypt, they were a nation and on the way to fulfill their destiny, to play their role in God's grand plan. Passover also clearly foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah. And some believe that another "exodus" will occur in the future as God gathers His people from around the world to implement His Kingdom under the reign of the Messiah.

2. Not only did Passover foreshadow *Yeshua*, but *Yeshua* actually "became our Passover" (**John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7**). From God's perspective, why was this necessary? (See **Hebrews 9:22, 28, 10:4; 1 Peter 1:18-20**)

For further study, see

Haftarah : Jeremiah 46:13-28

Brit Hadashah : Luke 2:22-24; John 19:31-37; Acts 13:16-17;
Revelation 8:6 – 9:12; 16:1-21