

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

8-12-20

Exodus 13

Consecration of the Firstborn - Verses 1-3

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal."

13:2 Consecrate means to sacrifice something or to set something apart as belonging to God. This dedication practice described in 13:11-16 was to remind the people of their deliverance through God.

13:2 They were to consecrate their firstborn sons because these belonged to God. It doesn't mean that the rest didn't belong to God, but these belonged to God in a special way. They were spared judgment and saved because of God's mercy. Also there is a general biblical principle that people are to give the first and best to the Lord. See Proverbs 3:9-10.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread - Verses 3-10

³ Then Moses said to the people, "Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. ⁴ Today, in the month of Aviv, you are leaving. ⁵ When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey—you are to observe this ceremony in this month: ⁶ For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. ⁷ Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. ⁸ On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' ⁹ This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that this law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. ¹⁰ You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year.

13:1-5 These verses are yet another reminder to them to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread as a memorial for all generations. Remember that when they were leaving Egypt the bread didn't have time to ferment/leaven, so this festival was a way to recall their thoughts back to the Exodus. They celebrated the feast not actually by feasting, but by essentially fasting from the better food. This was a way to focus their thoughts on what God had done for them. As Christians, what should we remember? What kind of effect might it have on us if we remember God saving us from our former lives of sin?

13:6-9 The Festival of Unleavened Bread marked the Hebrews as a unique people—as though they were branded on their hands and foreheads. What do you do that marks you as a follower of God? The way you raise your children, demonstrate love for others, show concern for the poor, and live in devotion to God—these actions will leave visible marks for all to see. While national groups are marked by customs and traditions, Christians should be marked by loving one another (John 13:34-35).

The Firstborn - Verses 11-16

¹¹ "After the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he promised on oath to you and your ancestors, ¹² you are to give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. ¹³ Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons. ¹⁴ "In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.' ¹⁶ And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand."

13:12-14 Why did the Israelites need to "redeem" all their firstborn sons? During the night the Israelites escaped from Egypt, God spared the oldest son of every house with blood marking the doorframes. Because God saved the lives of the firstborn, he had a rightful claim to them. But God commanded the Israelites to buy their sons back from him. This ritual served three main purposes: (1) It was a reminder to the people of how God had spared their sons from death and freed them all from slavery; (2) it showed God's high respect for human life in contrast to the pagan gods who, their worshipers believed, demanded human sacrifice; (3) it looked forward to the day when Jesus Christ would buy us back by paying the price for our sin once and for all.

13:15-16 As believers, we are to be sanctified. This is the NT word similar to the OT concept of consecration. Both have the concept of being set apart to the Lord. We are to be set apart to the Lord, to live our lives for Him in everything we do. 1 John 2:15. We belong to Him. We can never pay the debt back, but we can faithfully serve Him because of what He has done for us. We should not have forgetful memories though. Many of the same Israelites that were saved by God from Egypt shortly afterward started complaining and doubting.

The Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire - Verses 17-22

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle. ¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." ²⁰ After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹ By day

the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

13:17-18 God doesn't always work in the way that seems best to us. Instead of guiding the Israelites along the direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land, he took them by a longer route to avoid fighting with the Philistines. If God does not lead you along the shortest path to your goal, don't complain or resist. Follow him willingly and trust him to lead you safely around unseen obstacles. He can see the end of your journey from the beginning, and he knows the safest and best route.

13:17-18 When did the Hebrews leave Egypt? There are two main theories. The early theory says the Exodus occurred around 1446-1445 B.C. The late theory suggests the Exodus happened between 1300 and 1200 B.C. Those who hold to the earlier date point to 1 Kings 6:1, where the Bible clearly states that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the Hebrews left Egypt. Since almost all scholars agree that Solomon began building the temple in 966, this puts the Exodus in the year 1446. But those who hold to the later date suggest that the 480 years cannot be taken literally. They point to Exodus 1:11, which says that the Hebrews built the store cities of Pithom and Rameses, named after Pharaoh Rameses II, who reigned around 1290 B.C. Regardless of which date is correct, the fact is that God led the Hebrews out of Egypt, just as he had promised. This showed his great power and his great love for his people.

13:21-22 God gave the Hebrews a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire so they would know day and night that God was with them on their journey to the Promised Land. What has God given us so that we can have the same assurance? The Bible—something the Israelites did not have. He also has given us the Holy Spirit to remind us of what the Bible says and to guide us each day (John 14:26). Look to God's Word for reassurance of his presence. As the Hebrews looked to the pillars of cloud and fire, we can look to God's Word day and night to know he is with us, helping us on our journey.

13:21-22 The pillars of fire and cloud were examples of theophany—God appearing in a physical form. In this form, God lighted Israel's path, protected them from their enemies, provided reassurance, controlled their movements, and inspired the burning zeal that Israel should have for their God.

13:21-22 God led them. God would not leave or abandon them. He didn't just get them out of Egypt and then say, "Now you are on your own. Good luck." God finishes what He starts. This applies to our salvation and it applies to His plans for our lives and it applies to His creation of the world. He said that He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Start to follow Him and you will not be disappointed. Also this is a physical examples of the many promises in the Bible that tell us God will lead and guide us. He may not use a pillar of cloud or fire today, but the Bible and Holy Spirit are even better.