

February 28

Scriptures: Read Exodus 13

Key Verse: Sanctify to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and animal; it is Mine. (13:2)

Overview

After the Lord struck down all the first-born Egypt and redeemed the first-born of the Israelites (those covered by the blood of the sacrificial lamb), He asked that they be sanctified unto Him, meaning they were to be consecrated, or set apart for His service. The Israelites were to do this as a constant reminder and also as an act of gratitude to God for having had their first-born preserved by Him in His act of grace. God is speaking to a people redeemed by the blood, so they all must be set apart for Him; set apart from sin and the world to be dedicated to the Lord and to enjoy the life of redemption by fellowship with Him. God has called us, as believers in the Lord Jesus and the “church of the first-born (Hebrews 12:23) to a life with a deeper relationship with Him. He calls us to be sanctified and separated from the sin of the world to live a more consecrated and holy life, which is pleasing to Him.

The unleavened bread was also to serve as a reminder of the haste in which they left Egypt (12:34), for they did not have time to let the yeast work so the bread would rise. In the Bible yeast came to be a symbol for sin, and a corrupting influence (Matthew 13:33; 16:6; 1 Cor. 5:6-8) which must be removed from one’s life to see the deliverance of the Lord accomplished.

The Lord commanded them to teach their children from generation to generation so that His mighty hand in delivering them would always be remembered even as a sign on the hand and a memorial (or a reminder) on the forehead (13:9). The religious orthodox Jews of today have taken this part of the verse literally and so often in prayer they actually tie segments of the Law in little boxes around their hand and on their forehead, however, these are figurative expressions meaning to keep it in remembrance, just as the figurative expression in the same verse, “the Lord’s law may be in your mouth” means to always keep it in conversation.

The Lord not only saved them, but also stayed with them. His presence was among them to guide and protect on their journey by the pillar of cloud in the day. In the night this same pillar was seen as fire, expressing His kindness and care toward them. In His wisdom and understanding, God led them in the way of the wilderness, rather than through the hostile territory of the Philistines which was the closer and more direct way to Canaan. When the people were ready, and all in God’s timing, they would enter the land of Canaan as He promised them. However it was not until after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness that they were finally ready to enter their Promised Land. After this time of testing and being humbled, they learned discipline, patience in hardships, and adherence to God’s commandments as they trusted in Him (see Deuteronomy 8:24). The Lord never forsook them, and since He was with them no power could stand against them.

We see again that this story is linked with Genesis, when Moses took Joseph’s bones in fulfillment of his request given about 350 years before when he prophesied that God would

surely come and help them out of Egypt (Genesis 50:24,25). The Passover was in the plan of God and the means by which He delivered them out of bondage. Today we continue to see that the Lord is faithful in delivering us from sin, in keeping His promises and in taking care of His people, the Church.

Prayer

O Lord, as You were with Israel, be with us. We need You as our cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Lead and guide in Your way.