

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JULY 6-12

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 6-7

"Now You Will See What I Will Do to Phar'aoth"

(Exodus 6:1) So Jehovah said to Moses: "Now you will see what I will do to Phar'aoth. A mighty hand will force him to send them away, and a mighty hand will force him to drive them out of his land."

(Exodus 6:6, 7) "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and rescue you from their slavery, and I will reclaim you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.' ⁷ And I will take you in as my people, and I will be your God, and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah your God who is bringing you out from under the burdens of Egypt."

it-2 436 ¶3

Moses

There was a marked change in the men of Israel also. They had at first accepted Moses' credentials, but after experiencing harder working conditions at the order of Pharaoh, they complained against him to the point that Moses in discouragement appealed to Jehovah. (Ex 4:29-31; 5:19-23) The Most High at that time strengthened him by revealing that He was now going to fulfill that for which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had looked, namely, the full revealing of the meaning of his name Jehovah in delivering Israel and establishing it as a great nation in the land of promise. (Ex 6:1-8) Even then the men of Israel did not listen to Moses. But now, after the ninth plague, they were solidly behind him, cooperating so that, after the tenth plague, he could organize them and lead them

out in an orderly way, "in battle formation."—Ex 13:18.

(Exodus 7:4, 5) But Phar'aoth will not listen to you, and I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring my multitudes, my people, the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt with great judgments. ⁵ And the Egyptians will certainly know that I am Jehovah when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them."

it-2 436 ¶1-2

Moses

Before Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses and Aaron were now key figures in a 'battle of the gods.' In the persons of the magic-practicing priests, the chiefs of whom were apparently named Janes and Jambres (2Ti 3:8), Pharaoh summoned the power of all the gods of Egypt against the power of Jehovah. The first miracle that Aaron performed before Pharaoh at Moses' direction proved Jehovah's supremacy over the gods of Egypt, even though Pharaoh became more obstinate. (Ex 7:8-13) Later, when the third plague occurred, even the priests were forced to admit, "It is the finger of God!" And they were so severely stricken by the plague of boils that they were altogether unable even to appear before Pharaoh to oppose Moses during that plague.—Ex 8:16-19; 9:10-12.

Plagues do softening and hardening work.

Moses and Aaron became the announcers of each of the Ten Plagues. The plagues came as announced, proving Moses' commission as Jehovah's representative. Jehovah's name was declared and much talked about in Egypt, accomplishing both a softening and a hardening toward that name—softening the Israelites and some of the Egyptians; hardening Pharaoh and his advisers and supporters. (Ex 9:16; 11:10; 12:29-39) Instead of believing that they had offended their gods, the Egyptians *knew* that it

was Jehovah who was judging their gods. By the time nine plagues had been executed, Moses too had become “very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh’s servants and in the eyes of the people.”—Ex 11:3.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 6:3) And I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but with regard to my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them.

it-1 78 ¶3-4

Almighty

Jehovah used the title “God Almighty” (*’El Shad-dai’*) when making his promise to Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac, a promise requiring that Abraham have great faith in God’s power to carry out that promise. It was thereafter used when God was spoken of as the one who would bless Isaac and Jacob as heirs of the Abrahamic covenant.—Ge 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3.

In harmony with this, Jehovah could later say to Moses: “I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty [*be’El’ Shad-dai’*], but as respects my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them.” (Ex 6:3) This could not mean that the name Jehovah was unknown to these patriarchs, since it was frequently used by them as well as by others before them. (Ge 4:1, 26; 14:22; 27:27; 28:16) In fact, in the book of Genesis, which relates the lives of the patriarchs, the word “Almighty” occurs only 6 times, whereas the personal name Jehovah was written 172 times in the original Hebrew text. Yet, while these patriarchs had come to appreciate by personal experience God’s right to and qualifications for the title of “the Almighty One,” they had not had opportunity to appreciate the full meaning and implications of his personal name, Jehovah. In this regard, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 1, p. 572) comments: “The former revelation, to the Patriarchs, con-

cerned promises belonging to a distant future; it supposed that they should be assured that He, Yahweh, was such a God (*’el*) as was competent (one possible meaning of *sadday*) to fulfill them. The revelation at the bush was greater and more intimate, God’s power and immediate and continuing presence with them being all wrapped up in the familiar name of Yahweh.” —Edited by J. D. Douglas, 1980.

(Exodus 7:1) Jehovah then said to Moses: “See, I have made you like God to Phar’ao, and Aaron your own brother will become your prophet.

it-2 435 ¶5

Moses

Moses not disqualified because of diffidence. But Moses showed diffidence, arguing that he was unable to speak fluently. Here was a changed Moses, quite different from the one who had, of his own accord, offered himself as Israel’s deliverer 40 years earlier. He continued to remonstrate with Jehovah, finally asking Jehovah to excuse him from the task. Although this aroused God’s anger, he did not reject Moses but provided Moses’ brother Aaron as a mouthpiece. Thus, as Moses was representative for God, so Moses became as “God” to Aaron, who spoke representatively for him. In the ensuing meeting with the older men of Israel and the encounters with Pharaoh, it appears that God gave Moses the instructions and commands and Moses, in turn, relayed them to Aaron, so that Aaron did the actual speaking before Pharaoh (a successor of the Pharaoh from whom Moses had fled 40 years previously). (Ex 2:23; 4:10-17) Later, Jehovah spoke of Aaron as Moses’ “prophet,” meaning that, as Moses was God’s prophet, directed by him, so Aaron should be directed by Moses. Also, Moses was told that he was being made “God to Pharaoh,” that is, given divine power and authority over Pharaoh, so that there was now no need to be afraid of the king of Egypt.—Ex 7:1, 2.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 6:1-15) So Jehovah said to Moses: “Now you will see what I will do to Phar’ao. A mighty hand will force him to send them away, and a mighty hand will force him to drive them out of his land.” ² Then God said to Moses: “I am Jehovah. ³ And I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but with regard to my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them. ⁴ I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Ca’naan, the land in which they lived as foreigners. ⁵ Now I myself have heard the groaning of the people of Israel, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I remember my covenant. ⁶ “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and rescue you from their slavery, and I will reclaim you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ And I will take you in as my people, and I will be your God, and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah your God who is bringing you out from under the burdens of Egypt. ⁸ And I will bring you into the land that I swore with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as something to possess. I am Jehovah.’” ⁹ Moses later gave this message to the Israelites, but they did not listen to Moses because of their discouragement and because of the harsh slavery. ¹⁰ Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: ¹¹ “Go in and tell Phar’ao, Egypt’s king, that he should send the Israelites away out of his land.” ¹² However, Moses replied to Jehovah: “Look! The Israelites have not listened to me; how will Phar’ao ever listen to me, as I speak with difficulty?” ¹³ But Jehovah again told Moses and Aaron what commands to give to the Israelites and to Phar’ao, Egypt’s king, in order to bring the Israelites out of the land of

Egypt. ¹⁴ These are the heads of the house of their fathers: The sons of Reu’ben, Israel’s firstborn, were Ha’noch, Pal’lu, Hez’ron, and Car’mi. These are the families of Reu’ben. ¹⁵ The sons of Sim’e-on were Jem’u’el, Ja’mín, O’had, Ja’chin, Zo’har, and Sha’ul, the son of a Ca’naan·ite woman. These are the families of Sim’e-on.

JULY 13-19

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EXODUS 8-9

“Proud Pharaoh Unwittingly Serves God’s Purpose”

(Exodus 8:15) When Phar’ao saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and he refused to listen to them, just as Jehovah had said.

it-2 1040-1041 Stubbornness

In his dealings with humankind, Jehovah God has patiently allowed individuals and nations, although deserving of death, to continue in existence. (Ge 15:16; 2Pe 3:9) Whereas some have responded favorably to this by putting themselves in line for receiving mercy (Jos 2:8-14; 6:22, 23; 9:3-15), others have hardened themselves to an even greater degree against Jehovah and against his people. (De 2:30-33; Jos 11:19, 20) Since Jehovah does not prevent persons from becoming stubborn, he is spoken of as ‘letting them become obstinate’ or ‘making their hearts hard.’ When he finally does execute vengeance upon the stubborn ones, this results in a demonstration of his great power and causes his name to be declared. —Compare Ex 4:21; Joh 12:40; Ro 9:14-18.

(Exodus 8:18, 19) The magic-practicing priests tried to do the same and produce gnats by their secret arts, but they could not. And the gnats came on man and beast. ¹⁹ So

the magic-practicing priests said to Phar'aoth: "It is the finger of God!" But Phar'aoth's heart continued to be obstinate, and he did not listen to them, just as Jehovah had said.

(Exodus 9:15-17) For by now I could have thrust my hand out to strike you and your people with a devastating plague, and you would have been wiped out from the earth. ¹⁶ But for this very reason I have kept you in existence: to show you my power and to have my name declared in all the earth. ¹⁷ Are you still behaving arrogantly against my people by not sending them away?

it-2 1181 ¶3-5

Wickedness

Additionally, Jehovah God makes use of circumstances in such a way that the wicked themselves unwittingly serve his purpose. Though they oppose God, he can restrain them to the extent necessary for the preserving of his servants in their integrity, and can cause the actions even of such persons to bring his righteousness to the fore. (Ro 3:3-5, 23-26; 8:35-39; Ps 76:10) This thought is expressed at Proverbs 16:4: "Everything Jehovah has made for his purpose, yes, even the wicked one for the evil day."

A case in point is the Pharaoh on whom Jehovah, through Moses and Aaron, served notice for the release of the enslaved Israelites. God did not make this Egyptian ruler wicked, but he did allow him to continue living and also brought about circumstances that caused Pharaoh to manifest himself as being wicked and deserving of death. Jehovah's purpose in doing this is revealed at Exodus 9:16: "For this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth."

The Ten Plagues visited upon Egypt, climaxed by the destruction of Pharaoh and his military forces in the Red Sea, were an impressive

demonstration of Jehovah's power. (Ex 7:14-12:30; Ps 78:43-51; 136:15) For years afterward the nations round about were still talking about it, and God's name was thus being declared throughout the earth. (Jos 2:10, 11; 1Sa 4:8) Had Jehovah killed Pharaoh immediately, this grand display of God's power to His glory and for the deliverance of His people would not have been possible.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 8:21) But if you do not send my people away, I will send on you, your servants, and your people and into your houses the gadfly; and the houses of Egypt will be full of gadflies, and they will even cover the ground they stand on.

it-1 878

Gadfly

There is some uncertainty as to the particular insect designated by the original Hebrew word appearing in the Scriptures with reference to the fourth plague upon Egypt, the first from which the Israelites in Goshen were spared. (Ex 8:21, 22, 24, 29, 31; Ps 78:45; 105:31) 'A-rov' has been variously rendered "gadfly" (*JB, NW, Ro*), "beetle" (*Yg*), "flies" (*AS, KJ, RS*), "gnats" (*AT*), and "dog fly" (*LXX*).

The English designation "gadfly" includes the various kinds of horseflies and botflies. Female horseflies pierce the skin of animals as well as man and then suck their blood. In the larval stage botflies live as parasites in the bodies of animals and man; those that infest humans are found in the tropics. A plague of gadflies would, therefore, have brought great suffering to the Egyptians and their livestock and, in certain cases, even death.

(Exodus 8:25-27) Finally, Phar'aoth called Moses and Aaron and said: "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." ²⁶ But Moses said: "It is not proper to do so, because what we would

sacrifice to Jehovah our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. If we would make a sacrifice that was detestable to the Egyptians right before their eyes, would they not stone us? ²⁷ We will make a three-day journey into the wilderness, and there we will sacrifice to Jehovah our God, just as he has said to us.”

w04 3/15 25 ¶19

Highlights From the Book of Exodus

8:26, 27—Why did Moses say that Israel’s sacrifices would be “detestable to the Egyptians”? Many different animals were venerated in Egypt. The mention of sacrifices thus added force and persuasiveness to Moses’ insistence that Israel be allowed to go away to sacrifice to Jehovah.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 8:1-19) Then Jehovah said to Moses: “Go in to Phar’aoh and say to him, ‘This is what Jehovah says: “Send my people away so that they may serve me. ² If you keep refusing to send them away, I will plague all your territory with frogs. ³ And the Nile River will swarm with frogs, and they will come up and enter into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants and on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading troughs. ⁴ On you, on your people, and on all your servants, the frogs will come up.”’” ⁵ Jehovah later said to Moses: “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, the Nile canals, and the marshes, and make the frogs come up over the land of Egypt.’” ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs began to come up and to cover the land of Egypt. ⁷ However, the magic-practicing priests did the same thing by their secret arts, and they too made the frogs come up over the land of Egypt. ⁸ Phar’-

aoh then called Moses and Aaron and said: “Plead with Jehovah to remove the frogs from me and my people, as I want to send the people away so that they may sacrifice to Jehovah.” ⁹ Then Moses said to Phar’aoh: “I leave to you the honor of telling me when I should plead to have the frogs removed from you, your servants, your people, and your houses. Only in the Nile River will they be left.” ¹⁰ To this he said: “Tomorrow.” So he said: “It will be according to your word so that you may know that there is no one else like Jehovah our God. ¹¹ The frogs will depart from you, your houses, your servants, and your people. They will be left only in the Nile.” ¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Phar’aoh, and Moses pleaded with Jehovah about the frogs that He had brought upon Phar’aoh. ¹³ Then Jehovah did as Moses asked, and the frogs began to die in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. ¹⁴ They were piling them up in countless heaps, and the land began to stink. ¹⁵ When Phar’aoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and he refused to listen to them, just as Jehovah had said. ¹⁶ Jehovah now said to Moses: “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, and it must become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” ¹⁷ And they did this. Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and the gnats came on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magic-practicing priests tried to do the same and produce gnats by their secret arts, but they could not. And the gnats came on man and beast. ¹⁹ So the magic-practicing priests said to Phar’aoh: “It is the finger of God!” But Phar’aoh’s heart continued to be obstinate, and he did not listen to them, just as Jehovah had said.

JULY 20-26

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 10-11

“Moses and Aaron Demonstrate Great Courage”

(Exodus 10:3-6) So Moses and Aaron went in to Phar'aoh and said to him: “This is what Jehovah the God of the Hebrews has said, ‘How long will you refuse to submit to me? Send my people away so that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you keep refusing to send my people away, here I am bringing locusts within your boundaries tomorrow. ⁵ And they will cover the surface of the earth, and it will not be possible to see the ground. They will eat up what escaped the hail and was left for you, and they will eat all your trees that are growing in the field. ⁶ They will fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all Egypt to an extent that your fathers and your grandfathers never saw from the time they have been in this land until today.’” With that he turned and went out from Phar'aoh.

w09 7/15 20 ¶6

Imitate Jesus—Preach With Boldness

⁶ Think, too, of the boldness that Moses showed in speaking to Pharaoh, a ruler who was viewed, not as a mere representative of the gods, but as a god himself, the son of the sun god Ra. It may be that he, like other Pharaohs, worshipped his own image. Pharaoh's word was law; he ruled by decree. Powerful, arrogant, and stubborn, Pharaoh was not accustomed to having others tell him what to do. It was before this man that Moses, a meek shepherd, appeared repeatedly—unbidden and unwelcome. And what did Moses foretell? Devastating plagues. And what did he demand? Permission for several million of Pharaoh's slaves to leave the country! Did Moses need boldness? Absolutely!—Num. 12:3; Heb. 11:27.

(Exodus 10:24-26) Phar'aoh then called Moses and said: “Go, serve Jehovah. Only your sheep and your cattle will remain behind. Even your children may go with you.” ²⁵ But Moses said: “You yourself will also provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings, and we will offer them to Jehovah our God. ²⁶ Our livestock will also go with us. Not an animal will be allowed to remain, because we will be using some of them to worship Jehovah our God, and we do not know what we will offer in worship to Jehovah until we arrive there.”

(Exodus 10:28) Phar'aoh said to him: “Get out of my sight! Make sure that you do not try to see my face again, for on the day you see my face, you will die.”

(Exodus 11:4-8) Moses then said: “This is what Jehovah has said, ‘About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, ⁵ and every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Phar'aoh who is sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the slave girl who is working at the hand mill, and every firstborn of the livestock. ⁶ Throughout all the land of Egypt, there will be a great outcry such as has never occurred nor will ever occur again. ⁷ But not even a dog will bark at the Israelites, at the men or their livestock, so that you may know that Jehovah can make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.’ ⁸ And all your servants will certainly come down to me and prostrate themselves to me, saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” With that he went out from Phar'aoh in the heat of anger.

it-2 436 ¶4

Moses

Courage and faith required to face Pharaoh. It was only in the strength of Jehovah and due to the operation of his spirit upon them that Moses and Aaron proved equal to the task set

before them. Picture the court of Pharaoh, the king of the undisputed world power of that time. Here was unparalleled splendor, the haughty Pharaoh, supposed to be a god himself, surrounded by his advisers, military commanders, guards, and slaves. Moreover, there were the religious leaders, the magic-practicing priests, chief among Moses' opposers. These men were, aside from Pharaoh himself, the most powerful men in the realm. All this impressive array was aligned to back up Pharaoh in support of the gods of Egypt. And Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh, not once, but many times, Pharaoh's heart getting harder each time, because he was determined to keep his valuable Hebrew slaves under his domination. In fact, after announcing the eighth plague, Moses and Aaron were driven out from before Pharaoh, and after the ninth plague they were ordered not to try to see Pharaoh's face again on pain of death.—Ex 10:11, 28.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 10:1, 2) Then Jehovah said to Moses: "Go in to Phar'aoh, for I have allowed his heart and the hearts of his servants to become unresponsive, so that I may display these signs of mine right before him, ² and in order that you may declare to your sons and your grandsons how severely I have dealt with Egypt and what signs I have performed among them; and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah."

w95 9/1 11 ¶11

Witnesses Against the False God

¹¹ While the Israelites were still in Egypt, Jehovah sent Moses to Pharaoh and said: "Go in to Pharaoh, because I—I have let his heart and the hearts of his servants become unresponsive, in order that I may set these signs of mine right before him, and in order that you may declare in the ears of your son and your son's son how severely I have dealt with Egypt and my signs

that I have established among them; and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah." (Exodus 10:1, 2) Obedient Israelites would tell their children of Jehovah's mighty acts. Their children, in turn, would tell of them to their children, and so it would be done from generation to generation. Thus, Jehovah's powerful deeds would be remembered. Likewise today, parents have the responsibility of witnessing to their children. —Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6.

(Exodus 11:7) But not even a dog will bark at the Israelites, at the men or their livestock, so that you may know that Jehovah can make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.'

it-1 783 ¶15

Exodus

So by a spectacular display of power Jehovah exalted his name and delivered Israel. Safe on the E shore of the Red Sea, Moses led the sons of Israel in a song, while his sister Miriam, the prophetess, took a tambourine in her hand and led all the women with tambourines and in dances, responding in song to the men. (Ex 15: 1, 20, 21) A complete separation of Israel from their foes had been effected. When they went out from Egypt they were not allowed to suffer harm from man or beast; no dog even snarled at the Israelites or moved its tongue against them. (Ex 11:7) While the Exodus narrative does not mention that Pharaoh personally went into the sea with his military forces and was destroyed, Psalm 136:15 does state that Jehovah "shook off Pharaoh and his military force into the Red Sea."

Bible Reading

(Exodus 10:1-15) Then Jehovah said to Moses: "Go in to Phar'aoh, for I have allowed his heart and the hearts of his servants to become unresponsive, so that I may display these signs of mine right before him, ² and

in order that you may declare to your sons and your grandsons how severely I have dealt with Egypt and what signs I have performed among them; and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah.” ³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Phar’ao and said to him: “This is what Jehovah the God of the Hebrews has said, ‘How long will you refuse to submit to me? Send my people away so that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you keep refusing to send my people away, here I am bringing locusts within your boundaries tomorrow. ⁵ And they will cover the surface of the earth, and it will not be possible to see the ground. They will eat up what escaped the hail and was left for you, and they will eat all your trees that are growing in the field. ⁶ They will fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all Egypt to an extent that your fathers and your grandfathers never saw from the time they have been in this land until today.’” With that he turned and went out from Phar’ao. ⁷ Then Phar’ao’s servants said to him: “How long will this man continue to menace us? Send the men away so that they may serve Jehovah their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt has been ruined?” ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Phar’ao, and he said to them: “Go, serve Jehovah your God. But just who will be going?” ⁹ Then Moses said: “We will go with our young people, our old people, our sons, our daughters, our sheep, and our cattle, because we will hold a festival to Jehovah.” ¹⁰ He said to them: “If I ever send you and your children away, then Jehovah is indeed with you! It is clear that you intend to do something evil. ¹¹ No! Only your men may go and serve Jehovah, for that is what you requested.” With that they were driven out from before Phar’ao. ¹² Jehovah now said to Moses: “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the

locusts, so that they may come up over the land of Egypt and eat up all the vegetation of the land, everything that the hail has let remain.” ¹³ At once Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and Jehovah caused an east wind to blow on the land all that day and all night. The morning came, and the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled down on the whole territory of Egypt. It was extremely severe; never before had there been so many locusts, nor would there ever be so many again. ¹⁵ They covered the surface of the entire land, and the land grew dark with them; they devoured all the vegetation of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left; nothing green was left on the trees or on the vegetation of the field in all the land of Egypt.

JULY 27–AUGUST 2

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EXODUS 12

“The Passover—Its Significance for Christians”

(Exodus 12:5-7) Your sheep should be a sound, one-year-old male. You may choose from the young rams or from the goats. ⁶ You must care for it until the 14th day of this month, and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel must slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ They must take some of the blood and splash it on the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway of the houses in which they eat it.

w07 1/1 20 ¶4

“You Must Become Nothing but Joyful”

⁴ Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E. In Israel, Nisan 14 was the joyous day of the Passover celebration. Each year on that day, families

shared a meal that included a young, unblemished lamb. In this way, they remembered the role that the blood of a lamb played in the deliverance of the Israelite firstborn when the angel of death slew the firstborn of the Egyptians on Nisan 14, 1513 B.C.E. (Exodus 12:1-14) The Passover lamb foreshadowed Jesus, of whom the apostle Paul said: “Christ our passover has been sacrificed.” (1 Corinthians 5:7) Like the blood of the Passover lamb, Jesus’ shed blood provides salvation for many.—John 3:16, 36.

(Exodus 12:12, 13) For I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night and strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast; and I will execute judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am Jehovah. ¹³ The blood will serve as your sign on the houses where you are; and I will see the blood and pass over you, and the plague will not come on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

it-2 583 ¶6 **Passover**

Certain features of the Passover observance were fulfilled by Jesus. One fulfillment lies in the fact that the blood on the houses in Egypt delivered the firstborn from destruction at the hands of the destroying angel. Paul speaks of anointed Christians as the congregation of the firstborn (Heb 12:23), and of Christ as their deliverer through his blood. (1Th 1:10; Eph 1:7) No bones were to be broken in the Passover lamb. It had been prophesied that none of Jesus’ bones would be broken, and this was fulfilled at his death. (Ps 34:20; Joh 19:36) Thus the Passover kept by the Jews for centuries was one of those things in which the Law provided a shadow of the things to come and pointed to Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God.”—Heb 10:1; Joh 1:29.

(Exodus 12:24-27) “You must observe this event as a lasting regulation for you and your sons. ²⁵ And when you come into the land that Jehovah will give you just as he has stated,

you must keep this observance. ²⁶ And when your sons ask you, ‘What does this observance mean to you?’ ²⁷ you must say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Passover to Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he plagued the Egyptians, but he spared our houses.’” Then the people bowed low and prostrated themselves.

w13 12/15 20 ¶13-14

‘This Is to Be a Memorial for You’

¹³ As new generations grew up, important lessons would be emphasized, passed on by father to son. One was that Jehovah could protect his worshippers. The children learned that he is not some vague, abstract deity. Jehovah is a real, living God who is interested in his people and who acts in their behalf. He proved this at the time he protected the Israelite firstborn “when he plagued the Egyptians.” He kept the firstborn alive.

¹⁴ Christian parents do not each year recount to their sons and daughters the meaning of that Passover. Do you, however, teach your children this same lesson—that God protects his people? Do you convey to them your deep conviction that Jehovah is still a real Protector of his people? (Ps. 27:11; Isa. 12:2) And do you do that, not in the form of a cold lecture, but in an enjoyable conversation between you and your children? Make an effort to include that lesson to stimulate your family’s spiritual growth.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 12:12) For I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night and strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast; and I will execute judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am Jehovah.

it-2 582 ¶2 **Passover**

The Ten Plagues upon Egypt all proved to be a judgment against the gods of Egypt, especially

the tenth, the death of the firstborn. (Ex 12:12) For the ram (male sheep) was sacred to the god Ra, so that splashing the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorways would be blasphemy in the eyes of the Egyptians. Also, the bull was sacred, and the destruction of the firstborn of the bulls would be a blow to the god Osiris. Pharaoh himself was venerated as a son of Ra. The death of Pharaoh's own firstborn would thus show the impotence of both Ra and Pharaoh.

(Exodus 12:14-16) “‘This day will serve as a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to Jehovah throughout your generations. As a lasting statute, you should celebrate it. ¹⁵ Seven days you are to eat unleavened bread. Yes, on the first day you are to remove the sourdough from your houses, because anyone eating what is leavened from the first day down to the seventh, that person must be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you will hold a holy convention, and on the seventh day, another holy convention. No work is to be done on these days. Only what every person needs to eat, that alone may be prepared for you.

it-1 504 ¶1 **Convention**

A unique feature of all of these “holy conventions” was that during them the people were to do no laborious work. For instance, the first and seventh days of the Festival of Unfermented Cakes were “holy conventions,” concerning which Jehovah stated: “No work is to be done on them. Only what every soul needs to eat, that alone may be done for you.” (Ex 12:15, 16) However, during “holy conventions” the priests were busy offering sacrifices to Jehovah (Le 23:37, 38), certainly no violation of any command against doing normal daily work. These occasions were not periods of idleness for the people in general either but were times of great spiritual benefit. On the weekly Sabbath day,

the people met together for public worship and instruction. They were then edified by the public reading and explanation of God's written Word, as in the later synagogues. (Ac 15:21) Therefore, while the people did not do laborious work during the Sabbath day or the other “holy conventions,” they would then devote themselves to prayer and meditation on the Creator and his purposes.—See ASSEMBLY.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 12:1-20) Jehovah now said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ² “This month will be the beginning of the months for you. It will be the first of the months of the year for you. ³ Speak to the entire assembly of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth day of this month, they should each take for themselves a sheep for their father's house, a sheep to a house. ⁴ But if the household is too small for the sheep, they and their nearest neighbor should share it between themselves in their house according to the number of people. When making the calculation, determine how much of the sheep each one will eat. ⁵ Your sheep should be a sound, one-year-old male. You may choose from the young rams or from the goats. ⁶ You must care for it until the 14th day of this month, and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel must slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ They must take some of the blood and splash it on the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ “‘They must eat the meat on this night. They should roast it over the fire and eat it along with unleavened bread and bitter greens. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, cooked in water, but roast it over the fire, its head together with its shanks and its inner parts. ¹⁰ You must not save any of it until morning, but any of it left over until morning you should burn with fire. ¹¹ And this is how you should eat it, with

your belt fastened, sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you should eat it in a hurry. It is Jehovah's Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night and strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast; and I will execute judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am Jehovah. ¹³ The blood will serve as your sign on the houses where you are; and I will see the blood and pass over you, and the plague will not come on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ "This day will serve as a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to Jehovah throughout your generations. As a lasting statute, you should celebrate it. ¹⁵ Seven days you are to eat unleavened bread. Yes, on the first day you are to remove the sourdough from your houses, because anyone eating what is leavened from the first day down to the seventh, that person must be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you will hold a holy convention, and on the seventh day, another holy convention. No work is to be done on these days. Only what every person needs to eat, that alone may be prepared for you. ¹⁷ "You must keep the Festival of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day, I will bring your multitudes out of the land of Egypt. And you must keep this day throughout your generations as a lasting statute. ¹⁸ In the first month, on the 14th day of the month, in the evening, you are to eat unleavened bread until the 21st day of the month, in the evening. ¹⁹ No sourdough is to be found in your houses for seven days, because if anyone eats what is leavened, whether he is a foreigner or a native of the land, that person must be cut off from the assembly of Israel. ²⁰ You should not eat anything leavened. In all your homes, you are to eat unleavened bread.'"