

Exodus 12:1-13:16 – Remember the Saving Works of the Lord

- I. Introduction:
- A. **Fallen Condition Focus:** We are idolaters who easily turn from worshipping the one true God to worshipping created things. We are saved to be holy, not to remain idolaters.
 - B. We are commanded to love God with all of our being and to love others to the same degree that we love ourselves.
 - 1. But we don't do this. Why?
 - 2. Because we turn to love idols which prevent us from loving God and others.
 - 3. Idols always enslave us and move us to trust in them.
 - C. The bible teaches us that idols end up making us like them: blind and stupid and lifeless.
 - 1. **Psalm 115:3-8** ³ Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. ⁴ Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. ⁶ They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. ⁷ They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. ⁸ Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.
 - 2. **Isaiah 44:15-20** ¹⁵ Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" ¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" ¹⁸ They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" ²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"
 - D. What are some of our idols?
 - 1. Hot bodies
 - 2. Boyfriend of girlfriend
 - 3. Convenience and comfort
 - 4. Grades
 - 5. Popularity
 - 6. Success
 - 7. Sex
 - 8. Fun
 - 9. Knowledge
 - 10. Righteousness
 - E. We must remember our identity in Christ if we want freedom from idols and if we are to remain faithful to worshipping God alone. We are saved by Christ in order to be made holy like Christ.
- II. **Proposition:** Christians must remember the saving work of Christ especially in the ways that he commanded us.

- A. The only way we can be freed from our idols is if we remember what Christ has done.
- B. Israel constantly strayed from worshipping YHWH alone. He gave them ways to act out the salvation he brought about.
- C. Israel was always to remember who they were by remembering what God had done, but at special times, they were to celebrate certain rituals to help them remember who they were and what God had done.

III. **Organizational Sentence:** Our text today gives us three ways that God commanded Israel to remember his saving work in the Exodus. So, we are going to look at these three symbolic actions and examine the New Covenant connections along the way.

- A. Before we look at these three acts of remembrance, I want to cover the narrative of the story briefly.
 - 1. God tells Moses that the Jewish calendar starts right now.
 - 2. God gives instructions concerning Passover.
 - 3. God gives instructions concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - 4. Moses goes and tells Israel about the Passover.
 - 5. Israel obeys.
 - 6. God strikes down the firstborn of Egypt.
 - 7. Egypt mourns the deaths of their children.
 - 8. Pharaoh finally relents and sends Israel away.
 - 9. The Israelites quickly leave Egypt with unleavened bread and with riches given to them by the Egyptians.
 - 10. The narrator tells us Israel's size in population and their length of days in Egypt.
 - 11. God give more instructions about Passover to clarify what foreigners should do.
 - 12. The narrator repeats that Israel was obedient.
 - 13. God explains the consecration of the firstborn to Moses.
 - 14. Moses explains the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Israel.
 - 15. Moses explains the consecration of the firstborn to Israel.
- B. Notice that in this passage there is a lot of repetition. Passover is explained 3 times: once by God to Moses, once by Moses to Israel, and once more by God to Moses.
 - 1. It isn't hard to understand why non-Christians who deny God's authorship see this as a human document compiled by different authors.
 - 2. The repeated material raises questions.
 - 3. But, I think there are good explanations. For instance, the final explanation of Passover helps clarify what to do with foreigners in Israel who were just mentioned in 12.38.
 - 4. Other repetitions can be explained by a concern to introduce an event but later clarify or expand on it.
 - 5. So, we will focus on the final form of Exodus rather than speculate about different sources.

IV. **The Passover** (Exodus 12.1-13, 21-28; 13.43-50)

- A. What was Passover?
 - 1. Each Israelite family was to kill a pure lamb or goat and smear the blood over the door of their house and eat the meat of the animal.

2. Each individual in the family was to eat all of the roasted meat that night, or burn what was left. No bone was to be broken.
 3. The family was to eat fully dressed as if they were about to leave on a journey.
 4. The family was to eat bitter herbs to remind them of their bitter slavery in Egypt.
 5. The Passover was given as a permanent ritual to Israel to be practiced yearly.
- B. What is the significance?
1. It was a sacrifice. A pure lamb died in place of the family. Israel deserved death just as much as the Egyptians for their sins of unbelief. (12.27)
 2. It was a sign that the family believed in God's promise not to harm them. (12.13)
- C. Why were they to practice it yearly forever?
1. It was a reminder of their bitter labor in Egypt. (12.8)
 2. It was a reminder of God's deliverance. (12.26-27)
 3. It was a reminder of their quick exit from Egypt. (12.11-12)
 4. It was a reminder of their need for atonement. (12.22-24)
 5. It was a reenactment that helped them remember better.
- D. New Covenant Connections:
1. Jesus – The True Passover Lamb
 - a. The Gospels all highlight that the death of Jesus took place in Jerusalem during Passover.
 - b. Matthew, Mark, and Luke point out that the Lord's Supper was a Passover meal.
 - c. John's Gospel notes that Jesus is a Passover lamb when John the Baptist says, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!' in John 1.29, and when John writes that none of Jesus' bones were broken on the cross so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (19.32-36).¹
 - d. In I Corinthians 5.7, Paul calls Jesus, our Passover lamb who has been sacrificed for us. He also connects the Lord's Supper with the Feast of Unleavened bread and Passover.
 - e. Peter makes a similar connection in I Peter 1.18-19 saying that Christians have been ransomed by the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot.
 2. The Lord's Supper – Our New Covenant remembrance meal
 - a. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper the night before he died as the Passover Lamb.
 - b. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the body and blood of the Lamb.
 - c. The blood that we drink gives us life just as it was shed for us.
 - d. The meal is meant to be eaten in remembrance of God's saving work in Jesus Christ.
 - e. We take this meal as a family, not as individuals.
 - f. It is to be eaten regularly.
 - g. It is only for the people of God who have been baptized and are not unrepentant. (Notice the restriction of the Passover meal to the circumcised.)

¹ Many have objected to the connection of Jesus with the Passover because the timing does not fit perfectly. In the OT, the meal was eaten after the sacrifice whereas in the NT the sacrifice takes place after the meal. It is clear that John is concerned with the connection between Jesus and Passover because of the manner of his death rather than the exact timing. That Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread were going on around the same time is the only timing John was concerned with. The early church made the connection between the redemptive nature of both the Passover for the OT saints and Christ for all saints. For more on this, see T.D. Alexander's From Paradise to Promise Land, pg. 175.

3. **Applications:**
 1. Be baptized so that you can share in this meal of fellowship.
 2. Eat the meal in remembrance.
 3. Reflect on the sacrifice of Christ for your sins to deliver you from slavery.
 4. Acknowledge the atoning nature of Christ's work.
 5. Remember that this meal tells us about our identity as God's people. It symbolizes fellowship with God in a covenant relationship.

V. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** (Exodus (12.14-20; 13.3-10))

- A. What was the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
 1. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are often used interchangeably even though they are distinct rituals which are bound together temporally and in their significance.
 2. It was to be celebrated on the same day as the Passover, but it was to continue for 7 days.
 3. They were to eat unleavened bread for 7 days.
 4. They were to remove all leaven from their houses for the whole week.
 5. They were to gather together as a holy assembly on the first and seventh days, presumably to worship.
- B. What was the meaning of the feast?
 1. It symbolized the haste in which the Israelites had to leave Egypt since there was no time for the bread to rise.
 2. It symbolized the importance of purity as God's people since leaven often symbolized impurity and corruption. (see Luke 12.1, I Cor. 5:7-8)
- C. Why were they to practice it yearly forever?
 1. It was meant to remind them that God delivered them to be his people in haste. (12.17, 13.8-9)
 2. It was meant to remind them that they are to be a holy assembly. *They were saved to be sanctified.*
- D. New Covenant connections:
 1. This feast, which is connected to Passover, shows us that we are saved from sin to be made holy.
 2. In I Corinthians 5:7-8, Paul uses the feast as support for casting out an unrepentant person from the congregation. He also calls the Corinthians to rid themselves of evil and malice.
 3. In the same way that Israel was to cut a person off from Israel if they ate leavened bread, so too we are to cast out unrepentant sinners from the church because tolerance for unrepentant sin spreads into more sin in the church. The church is to be pure.
- E. **Applications:**
 1. Hold one another accountable and do not allow a fellow believer to continue in sin without confrontation. Then lovingly take steps to bring others into the process. Pray for them that they might not be cast out. (Matthew 18:15-20, I Cor. 5)
 2. Seek to be holy by remembering your identity in Christ. Do not grow comfortable in sin. We are saved to be holy. (II Tim. 1.9)
 3. Remember that repentance is the mark of a true Christian.

4. What do you put the most time and energy into in your life? Is it exercising? Studying? Playing? Seeking to know God? Our number one priority must be seeking to cultivate a personal relationship with God in community with God's people.

VI. **Consecration of the Firstborn** (Exodus 13.1-2, 11-16)

- A. What was God's command concerning the consecration of the firstborn?
 1. All first born male children and animals belong to God.
 2. So, Israelites must buy back the first born males from the Lord with money or a sacrifice.
 3. Numbers 18.16 and 3.46-47 give the price of 5 shekels of silver.
 4. Numbers 18 explains also that all first born clean animals were to be sacrificed to God, and all unclean animals were to be ransomed with a clean animal. If you were too poor to give up a clean animal, you would simply kill the unclean animal (like a donkey for instance).
 5. Levite first born were given to serve in the temple. Sometimes non-Levites would give their children to serve God in some way similar.
- B. What was the meaning of this practice?
 1. This too reminded Israel that God saved them in Egypt by passing over their first born children and delivering them from slavery. (13.14-15)
 2. It was a symbolic way that Israel acknowledged God's ownership. First born sons represented the center and future of a family and thus represent the whole family. To buy a child back from God acknowledged that they all belonged to God in the first place.
 3. Like unclean animals, all children were redeemed by the sacrifice of a clean sheep or goat.
- C. New Covenant Connections:
 1. Jesus is called the firstborn over all creation in Colossians 1.15.
 2. Jesus is called the firstborn from the dead in Revelation 1.5.
 3. Jesus is called the 'one and only Son' in John 3.16.
 4. God gave up his firstborn Son to pay for our redemption. We belong to God, and so he gave up his firstborn, the holy Lamb of God, to ransom us.
 5. Peter says in I Peter 1.18-19 that "you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."
 6. Jesus said of himself, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
 7. Paul says that because we have been ransomed by Christ's blood, we do not belong to ourselves but to God. In I Cor. 6.19b he says, "you are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."
 8. Paul says in Romans 8.29, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." Christ is the firstborn of God, but he was given up so that we might become children of God with Christ.
 9. Jesus is the Son of God who shed his blood that we might be ransomed to God.
- D. **Applications:**

1. You are not the owner of your life. You belong to God. We must live for God.
2. Recognize that God bought you with the blood of his Son.
3. Remember that you were in slavery and sin, but he purchased you from bondage and condemnation.

VII. Conclusion: The cure for idolatry -

- A. We must practice the means God has given us to remember Christ's saving work so that we might grow.
 1. Be baptized.
 2. Practice the Lord's Supper.
 3. Always remember your identity in Christ.
- B. We must remember that we are saved from slavery to sin and to slavery to righteousness.
 1. Do not allow sin to remain in your life but remove the leaven.
 2. Be ready to challenge one another when sin is evident. Don't be afraid of church discipline.
 3. Examine where you put the most energy and ask yourself if you spend that much energy cultivating a relationship with Christ in community.
- C. We must remember that we belong to God.
 1. Your goals must be God's goals.
 2. Your values must be God's values.
 3. Your possessions belong to God.
 4. Your very being belongs to God and should be used for holiness.