

God's New Year

Exodus 12

Scripture: Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 “This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. 3 “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. 4 ‘Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. 5 ‘Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 ‘And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. 7 ‘Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 ‘And they shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9 ‘Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. 10 ‘And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. 11 ‘Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste — it is the LORD’S Passover. 12 ‘For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. 13 ‘And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 ‘Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.

Intro: Permit me to wish each of you a Happy New! Today is the day that many will make New Year’s resolutions only to break them before the day is over. Some will begin a new diet, or perhaps a new exercise program. While all of these may be good goals for us to implement in our lives, I want to focus on becoming more Godly in 2017. What is New Years truly about from God’s point of view? What does God want from us this New Year?

I would like for us to answer this question from the story in **Exodus 12**, which records the time when God instituted a New Year for the people of Israel. This was the time God intervened in Israel's history and started a New Year. The story is recorded in Exodus 12, our Scripture reading for this morning. I would invite you to open your Bible to Exodus 12 and follow along as we look at God's New Year. God's New Year celebration is far different from the world's celebrations that took place in cities all over the world last night.

In Exodus 12 and verse 2 God instructed Moses, and it happened to be the seventh month of their year; God said, "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you." God, in His infinite and sovereign will, commanded Moses in the seventh month to change Israel's calendar and make this month to be the beginning of the year. God changed April from the seventh month to the first month of the year. The obvious question is why did God change Israel's New Year. What is the significance behind this divine change of Israel's New Year? What can we learn from this passage in Exodus 12 that can help us to live more for God this New Year?

I. A Time Of Redemption

The first thing we learn from this passage is that God's New Year provided His people, Israel, with redemption. This New Year revision was to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The nation Israel was in bondage in Egypt. According to Genesis 46:11 Jacob had entered Egypt with 70 persons in all. We read in Exodus 1 that a new king/Pharaoh arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. This new Pharaoh afflicted the sons of Israel, and placed them under cruel bondage. The LORD raised up Moses to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage, in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:3-4. The children of Israel had been in bondage 430 years, to the very day, when the LORD led them out of Egypt (Exod. 12:41).

God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a command to release His people from bondage, but Pharaoh refused. God inflicted Egypt with a series of severe plagues, but Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his heart and refused to let God's people go. This brings us to Exodus 12 and God's Tenth and final plague against Egypt. We read in **Exodus 11:1** "The LORD sent Moses and Aaron to announce His final plague to Pharaoh. **11:4** "And Moses said, Thus says the LORD, About midnight I am going out in the midst of Egypt and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, both man and beast." This judgment from God was to be upon the Egyptians and not the children of Israel. In chapter 12 of Exodus God

reveals to Moses and Aaron how they were to be delivered from this divine judgment. **v. 3** God commands Moses to have the people of Israel take a lamb or a goat on the tenth day of the month. **v. 5** the lamb or goat had to be an unblemished male a year old. **v. 6** They were to keep the lamb or goat for 4 days, perhaps to examine the animal to insure that it was without blemish. God said, “On the fourteenth day of the month all the people of Israel are to kill it at twilight (between 3-5 p.m.)” **v. 7** “Moreover, you shall collect some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which you eat the lamb. God says in **v. 13**, “When I pass over Egypt in judgment, I will see the blood on your houses, and I will pass over you and the plague will not harm you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

This deliverance, known as Passover, was a great deliverance for the nation of Israel. God commands the people to observe this event as a perpetual celebration for them and their children forever (**v. 24**). **v. 26** “And in the future when your children ask you “What does this celebration mean to you?” Tell them “It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.”

Passover on the first month of the Year was the commencement of Israel’s great deliverance from bondage. The Jew’s redemption from death that night, the night God passed over the houses covered in blood, became for them redemption from bondage and death. God’s revision of Israel’s calendar was to commemorate Israel’s redemption. God’s New Year is a time of redemption.

God’s redemption of His people Israel from Egyptian bondage and death serves as the backdrop for the redemption Jesus Christ has provided of us believers. The Apostle Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 5:7** “Christ our Passover was slain for us.” The correlation of Christ as our Passover Lamb with Israel’s Passover experience in Exodus 12 is remarkable. Israel’s deliverance from bondage and death as the Angel of the LORD passed over Egypt killing all the first-born of man and beast, looked forward to the redemption from bondage and death that the Lord Jesus Christ has provided through His death on the cross. He is our Passover Lamb. John the Baptist pointed to Christ in **John 1:29** and said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Apostle Peter reminds us that “We were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Jesus Christ, is our Passover Lamb. The sinless Son of God offered up Himself as our Passover Lamb.

The good news this New Year's day brothers and sisters is that Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb. He died in our place. He is our substitutionary Lamb. He bore the penalty of our sin. He paid the debt we could never pay. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 5:21** "He (God the Father) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin. Jesus' death in our place has provided deliverance from bondage to sin, and deliverance from the penalty of eternal death, which our sin deserves.

As we begin a New Year I encourage each of you to recommit your life to God. Ask God to forgive you for not spending time in His Word everyday. Make a New Year's resolution to love and serve Him everyday this New Year. If you are here this morning and have never invited Christ to come into your heart, we would encourage you to receive Christ this morning. Just as the Israelites had to take the blood of the lamb and in faith apply it to the doorposts of their homes, so the blood of Jesus Christ our Passover must be applied to our sinful hearts by faith. When we come to realize that Jesus Christ died in our place, and place our trust in Him and receive Him as our Savior, then the blood of Christ washes us clean from sin and condemnation. If you have any doubt in your heart that Christ is your Savior, then invite Him to come into your heart this New Year. It is my sincere prayer that 2017 might be the year in which each of us submits our lives fully to God and His program for our lives.

God's New Year not only provided redemption from bondage, it also provided refreshment, vv. 8-10

II. A Time Of Refreshment (v. 8-10)

8 "And they shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."

After each family killed their Passover lamb and applied the blood to the door posts and lintels of their houses, they were to eat their lamb. Read on, verse 9 'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. The Jews were instructed to roast the lamb and eat it. They were strictly forbidden in v. 10 "not to leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire." The people were commanded to eat all of the sacrifice. If the lamb was too large for one family then they were to share with a neighbor (v. 4).

The Passover meal would provide the people of Israel with nourishment for the journey they were about to begin. In addition, the Passover meal provides fellowship, a time of spiritual refreshment with God and with one another.

As Christians we can experience spiritual refreshment by spending time with Christ. Do you spend time in God's Word daily? How is your prayer life? The only way to grow spiritually, and to enjoy spiritual refreshment from God, is to spend time with Him. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity and blessings.

God's New Year Passover celebration provided redemption and refreshment, but also called for readiness, v. 11

III. A Time Of Readiness (v. 11)

11 "Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste — it is the LORD'S Passover.

The Israelites were commanded to eat the LORD'S Passover in a state of readiness. The Angel of the LORD struck down every first-born in Egypt of both man and beast at midnight (v. 29). We read in v. 31 Pharaoh arose in the night and called for Moses and Aaron and commanded them to rise up and take the people of Israel and their flocks and get out of Egypt. v. 34 So the people took their unleavened dough, with their kneading bowls and headed out of Egypt.

God wants us believers to be ready to follow His will for our lives. We need to be ready and willing to do whatever He directs us to do. As we reflect on the price Christ paid to redeem us from sin and death, we should be willing to serve Him. God wants us to seek Him and His plan for our life. Ask Him to show you what He has for you to do for His glory.

God's New Year Passover celebration provided redemption and refreshment, and called for readiness, but is also called for remembrance, v. 14

IV. A Time Of Remembrance (v. 14, 24-27)

14 "Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance."

God's New Year Passover was to serve as a memorial celebration and feast of thanksgiving to the LORD; to be observed throughout Israel's generations. The people were commanded to observe this Passover meal as a perpetual celebration for them and their children forever (v. 24). Israel's New Year continues to serve as a reminder of the great deliverance God provided from their cruel bondage in Egypt. Each successive generation is to explain the meaning of God's Passover to their children. **v. 26** "And in the future when your children ask you "What does this celebration mean to you?" Tell them "It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes." The Passover meal is to serve as a perpetual reminder of how God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

As believers we commemorate the deliverance Christ has provided for us by regularly partaking of the Lord's Supper. We commemorate Christ's death for our sin, and look forward with anticipation for His return for us. May we each give thanks to God for His New Year, and commit ourselves afresh to spend time daily with Him in His Word and in prayer. I am convinced that many Christians are suffering in their lives because they do not spend time daily with God. God wants this New Year, 2017 to be a time of spiritual refreshment. God wants to provide refreshing to your soul. Are you experiencing God's peace and joy in your soul? The only way to experience the peace and joy of God is to spend time in His presence. Spend time in His Word, and bow before Him in prayer. Will you ask God to refresh and renew your fellowship with Jesus Christ this New Year?

Lord's Supper: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Play Communion Song

Closing prayer: Thank you God for another New Year. Forgive us Lord for not walking with You as closely as we should. May Your Holy Spirit help us to spend time in Your Word and in prayer every day of this New Year. Refresh our souls Father, and help us to grow in godliness as we spend time in Your presence by daily studying Your Word, and communing with You in prayer. Help us to pray for opportunities to share Jesus Christ with someone on a regular basis.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Passover Lamb and Savior, will you accept Him this morning? God wants you to experience His New Year!