

March 21-27, 2022

Exodus 1-6

“I HAVE REMEMBERED MY COVENANT”

Summary: *Exodus 1. The children of Israel multiply—They are placed in bondage by the Egyptians—Pharaoh seeks to destroy the sons born to Hebrew women.*

Exodus 2. Moses is born to Levite parents, is raised by Pharaoh’s daughter, slays an Egyptian in defense of an Israelite, flees to Midian, and marries Zipporah—Israel in bondage cries to the Lord.

Exodus 3. The Lord appears to Moses at the burning bush—Moses is called to deliver Israel from bondage—The Lord identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as the Great I AM—He promises to smite Egypt and bring His people out with great wealth.

Exodus 4. The Lord gives signs to Moses—Aaron is chosen as a spokesman—Israel is the Lord’s firstborn and must be released to serve Him—Moses’ son is circumcised—Moses and Aaron lead Israel in worship.

Exodus 5. Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to free Israel—Pharaoh responds, Who is the Lord?—He places greater burdens upon the children of Israel.

Exodus 6. The Lord identifies Himself as Jehovah—The genealogies of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are listed.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What parallel does the death of babies in Egypt have with the Messiah?

The account of baby

Moses being saved during an extermination order by the Pharaoh parallels the account of the baby Jesus being saved during an extermination order by King Herod. Moses becomes a “type” of the deliverer. He was raised to deliver Israel from bondage. Jesus of Nazareth raised all people from the bondage of physical and spiritual death. He is the real deliverer.

What is the meaning of “Passover?”

The seven-day deliverance feast of Passover is called the “Seder.” It is one of the most important and festive holidays in Judaism. Celebrated on the first full moon after the first day of spring, the first day is a “high day” and is treated as a Sabbath.

To make the point clear, that “high-day Sabbath” can be on any day of the week, depending on the lunar (biblical) calendar. The day before Passover is referred to as the first day of the feast of unleavened bread because it is the preparation day when all leavened products are removed from the home. It is even the custom in Israel for the Chief Rabbi to “sell” all the grain and leavened products to an Arab so that Israelis don’t own anything that has or might “rise.” Passover is to remember “rising” quickly and being delivered from Egyptian slavery. It is also a symbol of a future “rising” or deliverance that would be even greater than the first Passover.

What significance is the date of Passover?

Jesus was born during Passover. There was no 12-month, 365-days calendar when Jesus was born, so, according to

the biblical calendar and because Passover always occurs at the first full moon after the first day of spring, April 6, 1830, the date the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, leads us to look at the biblical date. It was Passover that year! “. . . being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh . . .” (**Doctrine & Covenants 20:1**) The Deliverer was born at the season celebrating the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and celebrating an expectation of an even greater deliverance. The two deliverances are linked by a journey of time through two millennia.

What is the reason for a “Half-Hallel” to be sung at Passover?

The word *Hallel* means praise, and as we celebrate the Exodus deliverance, we are reminded that the pursuing Egyptians perished as the Red Sea closed on them. We are taught not to praise the death of our enemies; they are also children of God. “The Midrash (Jewish Talmudic legends) explains that the reason we don’t recite the entire Hallel on the final days of Passover is that these days commemorate the miracle of the Jews safely crossing the sea while the Egyptian army drowned. G-d Himself declared: “My creatures are drowning in the sea; it is not a time for the full expression of joy.” Since the full Hallel is not said on the final days of the holiday, neither is it recited during the intermediate days (*chol hamoed*), as it is not proper that these days be more joyous than the main days of the holiday.” (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3530453/jewish/Why-Is-Hallel-Sometimes-Whole-and-Sometimes-Half.htm#footnoteRef8a3530453) “On the first day of Passover (the first two days in the Diaspora) the *full Hallel* (full praise) prayer is recited. After that, during *hol hamo’ed*, and on the last day (or days) only part of *Hallel* (half praise) is recited. The

practice differs from *Sukkot* on which the *full Hallel* is chanted every day. The reason given is that freedom was achieved as the result of the death of many Egyptians, and therefore Israel’s rejoicing is not complete.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What heavenly expectation is anticipated at Passover?

“The Sabbath before Passover is known as *Shabbat ha-Gadol*. Tradition connects it with the tenth of Nisan, the day on which the Israelites in Egypt set aside the lamb that they were to slaughter on the first Passover (**Exodus 12:3**). On *Shabbat ha-Gadol*, a special *haftarah*, (reading from the Prophets) taken from the Book of Malachi and referring to the day on which Elijah the Prophet will reappear as forerunner of the great day of the Lord, is read.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) At the Passover meal, a door is opened for Elijah, a seat is reserved for him and songs are sung in expectation of Elijah. During Passover, on April 3, 1836, while millions of Jews were going through the festive ritual of anticipating Elijah, he came to Joseph Smith the prophet in Kirtland, Ohio. “After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come -- To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse -- Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (**Doctrine & Covenants 110:13-16**)

How did the “first” and the “last” plagues include the “Alpha and Omega?”

The Passover story includes plagues brought on the Egyptians. The first and last plague parallel miracles of the Savior. His first miracle was changing of water into new wine (better than the old) is opposite of the Egyptian’s water turning to undrinkable “blood.” The ten ancient plagues are mentioned in the Passover meal. (Some can be compared to modern plagues). “According to Exodus the plagues were: **1) BLOOD.** The river Nile, the main source of water for ancient Egypt, turned to blood. Its pollution was disastrous: the river stank, fish died, and the Egyptians searched desperately for fresh water. **2) FROGS.** They covered the land, and found their way into the people’s homes, clothing, and food. **3) LICE.** “As thick as the dust of the earth,” they attacked both man and beast. **4) SWARMS OF FLIES,** which “ruined all the land of Egypt.” **5) PESTILENCE.** The livestock of the Egyptians perished from virulent diseases. **6. BOILS.** They afflicted men and animals causing much discomfort. **7) HAIL AND FIRE** of such intensity that they destroyed not only plant life, but also beasts and men. **8) LOCUSTS,** so numerous that they “darkened the land,” and ate every growing thing that had survived the hail. **9) DARKNESS,** a pitch darkness that lasted for three days and nights. It was so thick that the lamps lit by the Egyptians could not penetrate it. **10) DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN.** (It was) the last and most terrible of the plagues. Every firstborn child of man and beast perished in one night at midnight. (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The last plague symbolizes a lamb had to die so we could live. That parallels the death of the “First-born Lamb of God,” and His gift of resurrection to all mankind.

How did the performance of the eternal ordinance of the sacrament anticipate the future?

During the Passover meal, the master of the house will pour and bless wine (it should be “new Wine”) three different times. He sips first, and then everyone else may sip. After each occurrence of wine there is a breaking and blessing of bread (unleavened) three different times. Again, each time the master blesses and eats a broken piece, then everyone else eats a piece. The remarkable exception is that at the beginning of the meal the middle of the three bread pieces is broken in two and a broken piece (largest of the two) is hidden for the children to find later in the Seder service. When it is found that piece (fourth time bread is used) is blessed, broken, and the master eats the first part, then everyone follows his example. The fourth cup of wine is then poured full (more than the previous three “sips”) and the master instructs everyone to “drink all of it.” The present Jewish Passover feast is in fact an annual event to remember Israel’s deliverance. In a religious Jewish home, a weekly reminder of the first Passover is done with a “*Kiddush*.” The master of the house always pours the wine with an appropriate blessing, sips first, followed by everyone else sipping the wine. This is followed by the “*Motzi*,” he breaks a piece of bread and after the appropriate blessing, eats the first piece with everyone following his example. The prayers said include a promise that in the future another deliverance would occur greater than the first Passover.

How does the performance of the eternal ordinance of the sacrament become a remembrance of the past?

Weekly, Latter-day saints take a “sacrament” that consists of bread that is

broken, blessed and the presiding Elder partakes first, then water (nowadays, water instead of wine) is blessed. Again, the presiding authority partakes first and then everyone follows. This is done in “remembrance” of the greater deliverance provided by the Savior’s atonement. It

should be considered that symbolically, the Jews take wine and bread in anticipation of a greater deliverance while Christians take bread and wine in remembrance of that great deliverance – a chiasma – with the Savior’s atonement in the middle.