



LIBERATION

God provides deliverance for those willing to trust Him.

EXODUS 12:1-13

Throughout our lives we make decisions that have implications for our identity. One part of our identity is formed by whom or with what we associate. The people with whom we choose to associate and the type of activities in which we invest our time form who we are and communicate to those around us what we value. In some instances, immediate decisions have lasting effects on our identity.

What are some of the common identity markers that define us and communicate who we are to others?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

EXODUS 11:1–13:16

In the Christian life it is important to understand that our actions reveal our identity. When we act in faith against the internal pressures of our fears and the outside influences of those around us, it sets us apart. This is why it is important to remember not only who God is, but also what He has called us to do. In the narrative of the Passover, we remember God's saving power and grace toward His people. Moreover, we see that Israel was called to act in faith according to God's promised actions. In many ways, their actions identified them as God's chosen people.

The exodus event is central to the identity of God's people. Time and time again, God called Israel to look back and remember their salvation and deliverance from Egypt. Jesus, when instituting the Lord's Supper, commanded the church to look back: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). God's salvation is important for our formative memory and our ongoing identity.

God told Moses He would bring one final plague upon the Egyptians, after which Pharaoh would drive the Israelites out. He instructed Moses to tell the people to ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver jewelry. He knew that the Egyptians, having seen God's power, would give the Israelites whatever they requested. God revealed that He would pass through Egypt about midnight, killing the firstborn males in every Egyptian family, flock, and herd, but sparing the Israelites (Ex. 11:1-10).

God then told Moses and Aaron how to prepare for His deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, giving specific instructions for celebrating the Passover on that night and from then on. The animal blood smeared on the doorposts would mark the Israelites and would be a sign for God's angel to pass over the house without killing the firstborn. God instructed the Israelites to remove yeast from their houses and to hold a sacred assembly on the first and seventh days of the festival. After Moses and Aaron instructed the Israelite leaders, the Israelites worshiped God and did as He commanded (12:1-28).

At midnight, God killed the firstborn of all Egyptian families and livestock. Pharaoh summoned Moses and ordered the Israelites to leave. God granted the Israelites favor with the Egyptians, and the Egyptians gave the Israelites gold and silver (12:29-42).

God stated that no uncircumcised individuals could participate in the Passover. He then commanded that every firstborn son and male animal should be consecrated to Him, stating that after the Israelites arrived in Canaan they must redeem every firstborn male, both human and animal. When children of later generations asked the reason for the redemption of the firstborn, the parents were to explain that the custom was based on God's deliverance of His people from Egypt (12:43–13:16).

Read Exodus 12:1-13 in your Bible. Notice what distinguishes the households of Israel from those of Egypt. What is the significance of how they are distinguished?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

PREPARED (EX. 12:1-5)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: ⁴ And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

VERSES 1-2

The Israelites left Egypt in the month of Abib [AY bib], referred to later as Nisan [NIGH san]. In our modern calendar this date falls around March–April. The exodus from Egypt is so significant for Israel's identity as a people that the month became **the first month** of the year. For His people, history is defined by God and His actions on their behalf. While there was only one Passover day, Israel commemorated this day with the Passover festival as a

memorial to the Lord's salvation and judgment (12:14). This weeklong festival included the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which served the purposes of remembrance and instruction (12:15-20; 13:3-10).

Remembrance was an important aspect of Israel's sustaining their identity as a distinct and set-apart people, especially in recalling the work of God on their behalf. The same is true of Christians today, particularly with the Lord's Supper. The Gospel accounts show Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper during an observance of Passover with His disciples (Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-30). In the New Testament, the Lord's Supper serves as a new festival established for God's people for remembrance and instruction (1 Cor. 11:23-26). While the Passover was a celebration of God's covenant with Israel, the Lord's Supper celebrates the new covenant established with the church by the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20).

BIBLE SKILL: *Use a Bible dictionary (either in print or online) to learn more about the Passover lamb.*

In a Bible dictionary, look up "Passover" and "Lamb of God." Review the biblical passages listed in the entries. How does the Passover lamb point to Christ? Having contemplated the nature of the Passover lamb, write a brief description of how Jesus fulfilled that role for us.

VERSES 3-5

In the tenth day of this month, Israelite families were to select a spotless lamb to be sacrificed on behalf of their household. Since the animal would not be slaughtered until the fourteenth day of the month (v. 6), each household would have to care for the animal for four days. God wanted no last-minute preparations for the commemoration.

Not all Israelite families would be able to eat an entire animal in one night. God allowed neighboring families to join together and share one animal. A meal with too many people would be better than a meal



with too few. The Passover meal was not meant to encourage gluttony or to feed a family or several families for several days. The meal commemorated the fact that the Israelites were leaving Egypt quickly.

By eating together, the Israelites symbolized their unity under God and their commitment to obey Him. We do the same when we participate in the Lord's Supper. Through this ordinance, believers remember Christ's death for us, experience unity, and reaffirm our commitment to Him.

Families could select either a lamb or a goat from the flock as long as the animal was **without blemish, a male of the first year**. Sickly or injured animals could not rightly symbolize the perfect deliverance of His people by the perfect God.

It is important to note that unless Israel believed the word of God and followed all of His directions, all of their firstborn would die with the firstborn of Egypt. This was not only a call to trust in God's word—believing He would do what He said—it was also a call to act in faith. Therefore, we see that the lamb's blood covered those who believed, and by their obedience to God's word they avoided judgment.

These instructions given to Israel find their ultimate fulfillment in the New Testament through the redemptive and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb (John 1:29,36; 1 Cor. 5:7). The New Testament presents Jesus as the Lamb of God without blemish (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Further, the New Testament teaches that in Christ the church is presented as spotless and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). In other words, the church's purity and righteousness are found in Him alone (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore, as Christians, we can be confident that we are cleansed from sin and stand blameless before God's throne in Him (Jude 24). In Luke 9:31, Jesus' death is called an exodus ("decease"), indicating the inauguration of a new exodus from bondage to freedom.

How does preparation for a tradition or event add to the significance of that tradition or event? What preparations help you better see the significance of a practice like the Lord's Supper?

SACRIFICED (EX. 12:6-7)

⁶ And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. ⁷ And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

VERSES 6-7

God instructed Moses and Aaron to lead all of Israel to sacrifice the Passover lambs at twilight on ***the fourteenth day*** of Nisan and to ***take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post*** of their houses. Placing the blood of a spotless lamb on the doorpost would indicate that the members of the household followed God's instructions and were thus set apart to Him. The blood of the slain lamb became a stark reminder that a life had to be sacrificed in their place.

Blood represents life. Once again, deliverance through the blood of a lamb pointed forward to the coming of Jesus Christ—the perfect and spotless Lamb of God—to obtain final salvation for God's people through His substitutionary death. Like Israel, Christian redemption involves not only release from slavery but also escape from judgment by the blood of the lamb. Just like the lambs for Israel's household, Jesus is the only hope for those in the household of God.

How would you describe the importance of applying blood to the doorposts? How does the sacrifice of the lamb point to Jesus?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Son*

In His substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus made provision for the redemption of men from sin.



HURRIED (EX. 12:8-11)

⁸ And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. ¹⁰ And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. ¹¹ And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.

VERSES 8-11

God told Moses and Aaron that the Passover lamb was to be eaten in an urgent fashion with everyone ready to travel. The Passover lamb was to be consumed with **unleavened bread**. The unleavened bread related to the fact that Israel exited Egypt so swiftly that they had to leave before their dough was fermented (v. 34). The command to eat **bitter herbs** would be a reminder of the bitter slavery they once experienced in Egypt. In the same way, we should often reflect on the bitterness of sin from which God has saved us through the death of His Son. As Thomas Watson once said, "Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet."

The Israelites were to prepare their Passover lambs by roasting them over the fire, and then they were to burn up any part of them that remained before morning. The reference to the meal as **the LORD's** specified that it was to be treated as holy. This meal was set apart from other meals, to be remembered from generation to generation.

For the same reason they were instructed to use unleavened bread (v. 8), Israel was to partake in the Passover meal dressed for travel. Note the urgency of obedience and participation in God's work. Each person was to be dressed and ready to depart at any moment for the journey. This is a powerful reminder that God's people must be ready to follow Him at a moment's notice.

How does the manner in which the Israelites ate the sacrifice serve as a demonstration of faith in God? What does this teach us about obedience to God?

DELIVERED (EX. 12:12-13)

¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. ¹³ And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

VERSES 12-13

We must remember that the Lord had made clear that the primary purpose of the plagues was for both Egypt and Israel to know who He is (see 7:5,17). For the Israelites, the plagues were signs that Yahweh is the only true God of heaven and earth and that He was acting on their behalf. For the Egyptians, the Passover was a solemn demonstration of God's righteous judgment because of their king's persistent rejection of Him. In these acts of judgment it became clear that Israel's God was infinitely greater than all the power of Pharaoh and his kingdom.

The Passover, therefore, highlights both judgment and salvation. Egypt was judged with death, and the spotless lamb was judged for Israel in that God passed over Israel as they were protected by the blood of the lamb (12:13,23). When we read the New Testament, we see that Jesus' death was the event in which salvation and judgment were fulfilled (1 Cor. 1:18). The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus' death was the once-for-all sacrifice that delivered His people from judgment and death (Heb. 10:10-14). The gospel is the good news that God offered His own Son in our place to pay the price for our sin.

What does this passage teach about God's judgment and salvation? Can you have judgment without salvation or salvation without judgment? Explain.



IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers can be thankful that God provided the perfect sacrifice in the form of His Son.
- All of God’s commands should be followed with urgency and anticipation.
- Only by trusting in Jesus’ redemptive and sacrificial death on the cross can we be delivered from the consequences of our sin.

Reflect on the truth that God provided the perfect sacrifice for our salvation in His Son. How does that truth impact how you live your life today? Take time to thank God for sending His Son and for making it possible for you to have salvation.

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your level of preparedness to do what God calls you to do and to go where God calls you to go. Identify your reasons for rating yourself as you did. What do your reasons reveal about your trust in God? What action do you need to take to demonstrate complete trust in Him?

Read Exodus 13:3. Ask God to help you remember all the great things that He has done for you, especially your deliverance through Christ. Memorize this verse this week.

Prayer Needs
