

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
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DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 10

EXODUS

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

The LORD gave Israel a new commandment that they should consecrate their firstborn of man and animals to the LORD. The idea of dedicating our firstborn or first fruits as practised by many Christians originates from this chapter. A Korean pastor consecrated his firstborn son to God. After completing his tertiary education in the States, the son returned to Korea and told his father that he had no intention of fulfilling his father's wish that he gave his life to serve God full-time. His father replied that he had consecrated him to the Lord. The Lord would not let him out of His will. In the ensuing months as he pursued his own career, he married and had a daughter. Suddenly he became blind. His wife left him with their daughter. Being alone, forsaken, he attempted to commit suicide. But he failed. He then repented and gave his life to the Lord. Through the help and assistance of the street people in the city, he managed to sustain himself and preached and taught

the gospel. Later he went to seminary for his theological studies and graduated. He is now married again and is pastoring a church in Seoul.

The giving of one's children and possessions to the Lord is a personal matter of the heart. It indicates how much God means to us individually and how much we are willing to show in our love and devotion to Him.

Should we consecrate our children and our possession to the Lord? Maybe this chapter can help us to make such a decision.

OUTLINE

A. THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE FIRSTBORN (13:1-2)

1. The command given by the LORD to Moses (v.1)
2. The nature of the command (v.2)

B. THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD (13:3-10)

1. The injunction to keep the feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread in the month of Abib (vv.3-4)
2. The annual observance of the Feast in the land of Canaan (vv.5-10)
 - a. The LORD would fulfil His promise to give them the land of Canaan (v.5)

- b. They should celebrate the Feast for seven days (vv.6-7)
- c. The responsibility of parents to teach their children the significance of the Feast (vv.8-9)
- d. The command to observe the Feast every year (v.10)

C. THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE FIRSTBORN EXPLAINED (13:11-16)

- 1. The LORD would lead them to the land of Canaan (v.11)
- 2. The firstborn males of man and beast were to be set apart unto the LORD (v.12)
- 3. The ass had to be redeemed with a lamb just as the firstborn of man (v.13)
- 4. The children should be taught the meaning and significance of the redemption of the firstborn (vv.14-15)
- 5. The sign on the hand and the forehead (v.16)

D. THE EXODUS TO EGYPT (13:17-22)

- 1. The route God led the people (vv.17-18)
 - a. The dangerous route by the land of the Philistines was avoided (v.17)
 - b. The route by the wilderness of the Red Sea was taken (v.18)

- 2. Joseph's bones were carried to the land of Canaan (v.19)
- 3. The LORD led them in a pillar of cloud and fire (vv.20-22)
 - a. They journeyed from Succoth to Etham (v.20)
 - b. The LORD went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire (v.21)
 - c. The LORD was constantly present with them (22)

COMMENTARY

Consecrating Our First Fruits

It was a new commandment the LORD gave to the Israelites. The LORD commanded them, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn . . . of man and of beast, it is mine" (v.2). The word "sanctify" (Hebrew, root word, *qadash*) has the meaning "to consecrate, to dedicate, to set apart, to separate, to hallow." The sanctification of the firstborn of man and beast is to consecrate or set apart the same specially unto the LORD.

We can understand why the LORD made the claim upon the Israelites. On the night of the Passover, the angel of death destroyed the firstborn of all Egyptians and their animals. The firstborn of the Israelites and their animals were spared because they obeyed what God had told them to do. They killed a lamb and smeared the blood on the two side doorposts and the upper post. Since the firstborn of the Israelites was spared, it was appropriate

that their firstborn be sanctified or set apart for the service of the LORD. In fact, God being the Creator of the Universe and all that are therein, making Him the universal Owner of every human being and all living and non-living things, He can justly claim anyone and anything. But God restricted this command only to the firstborn. While the firstborn animal was to be sacrificed unto the LORD at the altar, the firstborn of sons would be redeemed with a lamb (13:15).

We see a parallel here in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb, who was slain so that those who receive Him are delivered from the penalty of sin, which is death. We have passed from death unto life eternal. Paul brilliantly argues that in view of the mercies of God, we should present our bodies “a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Not only the firstborn but all of us who are in Christ should be sanctified unto the Lord our God for His service. There is no greater pleasure and privilege on earth than to be called to serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

Commemorating the Divine Deliverance

The LORD instructed Moses that the people should commemorate the day of the feast of the Passover. The LORD had in a great and mighty way delivered them from destruction and from their bondage in Egypt. For seven days they were to eat only unleavened

bread and remove all leaven in their homes (v.7). If their children asked them what is the meaning of all these, they must explain the meaning and the significance of the Passover (vv.14-15). It shall be a sign on their hand and a memorial or frontlets on their forehead (vv.9, 16). They were to observe this Feast annually when they entered and settled in the Promised Land of Canaan (vv. 5, 11).

This feast was made into an ordinance, a religious rite or ceremony, in which they were commanded to keep in remembrance of what the LORD their God did in delivering them from bondage in Egypt and leading them to the Promised Land. The reason for imposing this on the people of Israel is quite obvious. Firstly, it is a celebration of joy and freedom from slavery. Secondly, as humans we soon forget the good that others do unto us even God whom we do not see. God instituted this so that they will always remember the day of deliverance, they will be reminded of the greatness and goodness of the LORD their God. Thirdly, God’s people ought to respond with deep gratitude and thankfulness to God. Fourthly, this great event will be an undeniable historic fact that cannot be rejected by unbelief in later generations. It is factually and historically enshrined in the annual celebration by the people.

The same is true of the ministry, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two thousand years ago, there was the man Jesus, whose

name means Saviour, who is the Christ, the promised Messiah in the Old Testament, who is God in flesh, who is the Lamb of God, who came to die so that all men may be delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan (Colossians 1:12-14).¹ The Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, ate the Passover with His disciples, and instituted the Lord's Supper. He commanded His disciples to eat the bread, which symbolises His body, and drink of the cup, which symbolises the New Testament in His blood shed for the forgiveness of sins.² The Apostle Paul commented that as often as we eat of the bread and drink of the cup we do "show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).³ Down through the centuries, the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and all His followers have fondly and faithfully celebrated the Lord's Supper. There is no way anyone can deny the historic fact of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry, death and resurrection which is remembered by the Church from Pentecost till now. Observe the simplicity of the ritual —

bread and wine, and the profound symbolism that they represent — the Body and Blood of Christ. It is simple and solid.

As often as we observe the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of the great and good work, which our Lord Jesus Christ did on our behalf. Our response should be one of deep gratefulness and thankfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to express this gratitude in a practical and God pleasing way by consecrating ourselves to serve the Lord without any reservation.

The celebration of the Passover is not all negative. There is the positive aspect of it. The Israelites celebrated not only their deliverance from bondage but also their hope of entering into the land which the LORD God had promised their forefathers, the land of Canaan which is "flowing with milk and honey" (v.5). Similarly, in keeping and remembering our Lord Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper, we do not only look back at what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for us in delivering us from the penalty of sin, but we look forward to the future redemption of ourselves at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴

Parents Teach Your Children

There is one more important lesson that parents must learn and do. The Israelite parents were instructed to explain to their children the meaning and

¹ Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

² Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

³ 1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

the significance of the Passover. Their children must be taught so that they would know and remember that great event that took place in Egypt. So also when our children ask us what the Lord's Supper is all about. We must explain to them simply, clearly and accurately the meaning and significance of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therein is the gospel of salvation. We trust the Lord God that our children at a young age will understand and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. One can never overemphasised this holy duty of parents to nurture their children in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the children of the Israelites wear those phylacteries on their arm and forehead which contain portions of the Word of God, our children should have the Word of God written in the tables of their heart and manifest in the work of their hands.⁵

God's Guiding and Sustaining Presence

The Lord went before the Israelites "by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (v.21). It was one pillar, the pillar of cloud and fire. This writer took a trip through the Sinai wilderness, about the same route, which the Israelites took. One marvels at the greatness and goodness of God.

⁵ The Jews make small leather pouches which are sewed to leather bands by which they strap round the left arm and on the forehead of boys who attain the age of thirteen. Inside these pouches are strips of parchment on which are written certain passages from the Law, namely, Exodus 13:2-10; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21).

How He had protected and provided for His people against the scorching heat of the midday sun and the penetrating cold of the night in the desert of Sinai. The pillar of cloud gave the much needed shade during the day, thus cooled the places where the Israelites pitched their tents. In the night, when it was very dark and cold, the pillar of fire lighted the whole camp-site and provided the necessary warmth they needed to enable them to have a good night's sleep and rest for the tiring journey across the soft sandy land of the desert. The LORD God knows and He protects and provides in a marvellous way! This is the God whom our Lord Jesus Christ came to reveal in all His glory and majesty! How marvellous is His love, and how wonderful is His grace towards us.

Just as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray "lead us not into temptations (trials and tribulations)", the LORD God did the same to the Israelites. The direct and fastest route to the land of Canaan is by the north-eastern way. But this route passed through the land of the Philistines. The Philistines were a warlike people. The Israelites would be attacked and defeated. Of course, the LORD could have exercised His power in protecting His people by crushing the Philistines. But the LORD would not. So the Lord took them through the wilderness of the Red Sea. It is a south-eastern route but farther. A second and more important reason is that the LORD had told Moses that He would lead the children to the

mount of Sinai where they would serve the LORD (Exodus 3:12).⁶

We learn that God does not always use supernatural means on behalf of His people to fulfil His plan and purposes. In this instance when He could lead the Israelites quickly into the land of Canaan by way of the Philistines, and crushing any Philistine attempt to destroy the Israelites, He did do it. That is not the way of God. How many times we expect God always to use His supernatural power in His providential care over us. God shows us here that His divine providence does not discount the use of natural and careful planning and means. God does use these secondary measures to achieve His plan and purposes.

SUMMARY

We learn that for man to worship and be appreciative of what God is doing in the world, he needs to be constantly reminded of the great and good works of God on his behalf. How true it is that we often and easily forget the good that is done to us by our fellow men whom we can see; what more God whom we cannot see. God's commandment to man is that we love, worship, and serve Him. We must

always remember what He has done for us and the greatest of which is redemption from the bondage and penalty of sin.

We learn too that in His providential activity, God does not always resort to His supernatural power. He often leads us in the natural way that demands from us careful planning and consideration. In this way we learn. We become strong. We become knowledgeable and wise. We learn to depend on Him and love Him when He comes to our aid.

Finally, our children are our precious gifts from God. The most important thing they ought to know is the LORD God. It behoves parents to teach their children the Word of God. This is the top priority. In this respect, they themselves must set the example, for children learn more effectively by observing what their parents say and do.

⁶Exodus 3:12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Exodus 13:1-4; Luke 2:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

TUESDAY: Exodus 13:5-10; Matthew 26:17-30

WEDNESDAY: Exodus 13:11-13; Romans 12:1-8

THURSDAY: Exodus 13:14-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6

FRIDAY: Exodus 13:17-22; Hebrews 13:5-8

Discussion Questions

1. What new commandment did the LORD give to Israel?

2. How do you explain "sanctify" in your own words?

3. How was the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread made a lasting remembrance to be kept by the Israelites (13:1-16)?

4. In what ways is the remembrance of the Passover similar to the Lord's Supper?

5. By claiming all the firstborn of man and animals, does it mean that the rest of their possessions do not belong to the LORD? Why or why not?

6. Are New Testament Christians required to consecrate their firstborn to God? Explain.

8. Why is it important for children to be taught the commandments of God?

7. If the Israelites were commanded to explain to their children the meaning of the Passover Feast, how can we relate this to our observance of the Lord's Supper?

9. God led the people through the longer route, by way of the wilderness. What are the reasons?

10. What do we learn about God that He led the people by the longer route?

Could He not have crushed the enemies and brought His people to the Promised Land in the shortest time?

11. What things impress you about the way God guided the Israelites through the wilderness of Sinai?

12. What have you learned in this chapter that you will change in your life?
