

NEW BREAD FOR A NEW PEOPLE

EXODUS 12:29-51

TOBY SUMPTER

TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH - MOSCOW, ID

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INTRODUCTION

Last time, we considered the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Removing leaven from the houses of Israel was a sort of corporate circumcision of Israel, a cutting off of Egyptian influence and strength (cf. Mt. 16:12). Yahweh will provide new bread/new life for His new people.

THE EXODUS

The down payment of God's provision for His people is the tenth plague which strikes all of the firstborn of Egypt (12:29-30). Yahweh cuts off the strength of Egypt and shows the gods of Egypt to be nothing (cf. 12:12). Now there is a "great cry" in Egypt like there was in Israel (12:30, cf. 3:7, 9). And Pharaoh orders Israel to go and serve Yahweh (12:31). If the confusion and mixing of Egypt and Israel is indicated by the arrival of a pharaoh "who did not know Joseph" (1:8), then Pharaoh's request that Moses "bless" him is a return to the relationship that the previous pharaoh had with Joseph (Gen. 47:7). The Egyptians urge the Israelites to leave with a mixture of fear and favor (12:33, 35-36).

THAT VERY NIGHT

Some six hundred thousand "feet of men" went out of Egypt (12:37). This description is probably a military designation, like "foot soldiers" (cf. Num. 11:21, Jdg. 20:2). A "mixed multitude" went up with them from Egypt which means that Egyptians went with them, and they ate the unleavened bread on their journey in obedience and haste (12:34, 38-39). They left Egypt after 430 years, to the very day (12:40). Remember Paul indicates that this period of time began with the covenant made with Abraham in Canaan (Gal. 3:17, Gen. 15:13-16). It was on that very day that all the "armies of Yahweh" went out of Egypt (12:41, 51). Therefore this is a "night of watching/guarding" for Yahweh (12:42).

NO FOREIGNERS

Finally, a last regulation is mentioned regarding the Passover meal: only covenant members are to eat it (12:43-45). This may be a regulation that applies to all subsequent celebrations. And this assumes that this would be an issue, that is, there would continue to be foreigners, strangers, and other uncircumcised people in this "mixed multitude" of Israel. Yahweh says that there is to be one law for the native-born and the stranger who dwells with Israel (12:49), if they want to eat the feast all the males of their household must be circumcised (12:44, 48). This final restriction on Passover is the basis for our practice of inviting individuals to participate in the Eucharist after they have been baptized.

APPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS:

The point of these final restrictions seems to be at the center of the passage: there Passover is to be eaten in “one house” and “all the congregation of Israel shall keep it” (12:46-47, cf. 12:6). This is the birth of Israel as a nation, and all those who join in this birth/re-birth must come into the house, must come under the blood. This is not exclusion so much as it is an invitation to unity. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed in his seed (Gen. 22:18), and this is fulfilled in the New Covenant (Gal. 3:8). The gospel is good news for all nations, all peoples, all families: in the Exodus of Christ there is a new family, a new house, a new way of being human. And it is all centered on a meal, a meal that unites and equips, a meal that remakes slaves into armies.



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