

# Exodus 13 Commentary

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| Summary Chart of<br>The Book of Exodus       |                            |  |                                     |                                   |                                    |                                      |                          |                             |                           |
|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| DELIVERANCE<br>FROM OPPRESSION               |                            |  |                                     |                                   |                                    | PREPARATION FOR<br>WORSHIP           |                          |                             |                           |
| Redemption from Egypt<br>Ex 1:1-18:27        |                            |  |                                     |                                   |                                    | Revelation from God<br>Ex 19:1-40:38 |                          |                             |                           |
| Getting Israel Out of Egypt                  |                            |  |                                     |                                   |                                    | Getting Egypt Out of Israel!         |                          |                             |                           |
| Narration                                    |                            |  |                                     |                                   |                                    | Legislation                          |                          |                             |                           |
| Birth of<br>Moses<br>Ex 1-2                  | Call of<br>Moses<br>Ex 3-6 | Conflict<br>with<br>Pharaoh<br>Ex 7-10 | Exodus<br>from<br>Egypt<br>Ex 11-12 | Red<br>Sea<br>Crossed<br>Ex 13-15 | Journey<br>To<br>Sinai<br>Ex 16-18 | Law<br>Given<br>Ex 19-24             | Tent<br>Plan<br>Ex 25-31 | Idol<br>Worship<br>Ex 32-34 | Tent<br>Built<br>Ex 35-40 |
| Subjection                                   |                            |  | Redemption                          |                                   |                                    | Instruction                          |                          |                             |                           |
| Suffering and Liberation<br>of People of God |                            |  | Guidance<br>of God                  |                                   |                                    | Worship<br>of God                    |                          |                             |                           |
| Moses and<br>Burdens of Israel               |                            | Pharaoh and<br>Plagues Upon Egypt      |                                     | Red Sea<br>Deliverance            | Wilderness<br>Provision            | Sinai<br>Instructions                |                          |                             |                           |
| Bondage<br>and Oppression                    |                            |  | Deliverance<br>and Provision        |                                   |                                    | Law Pattern<br>and Construction      |                          |                             |                           |

|                                       |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |              |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| Israel in Egypt<br>Ex 1:1-13:16       |  |  |  | Israel to Sinai<br>Ex 13:17-18:27         |  | Israel at Sinai<br>Ex 19:1-40:38         |  |  |              |
| God's People<br>Enduring<br>Bondage   |  |  |  | God's Grace<br>Revealed<br>in Redemption  |  | God's Glory<br>Manifested<br>in Worship  |  |  |              |
| Egypt<br>430 Years<br>(15% of Exodus) |  |  |  | Wilderness<br>2 Months<br>(30% of Exodus) |  | Mt Sinai<br>11 Months<br>(55% of Exodus) |  |  |              |
| From<br>Groaning                      |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  | To<br>Glory! |

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| GENESIS                   | EXODUS                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| human effort and failure  | divine power and triumph   |
| word of promise           | work of fulfillment        |
| a people chosen           | a people called            |
| God's electing mercy      | God's electing manner      |
| revelation of nationality | realization of nationality |

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 13:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Let's summarize Exodus 13:1-16 - **First for context** recall Ex 12:50-51 especially since Ex 13:1 begins with "**then**" which usually indicates [sequence](#) and thus marks that which is next in order of time, soon after that, following next after in order of position, narration or enumeration, being next in a series. So Ex 12:50-51 tells us what has just transpired.

"Then all the sons of Israel did so; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. And on that same day the LORD brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts."

There we see that the sons of Israel did their part and Jehovah did His part. The people killed the lamb and covered their doors with blood. The LORD saw the blood and protected the firstborn in the household. The death of the firstborn in the Egyptian households prompted Pharaoh and the Egyptians to compel Israel to leave, and thus we see how death of the firstborn resulted in deliverance of Israel from bondage. Now that Israel's deliverance is a certainty, in Exodus 13:1-16 the Spirit turns Israel's attention to the future and specifically to two truths or symbols, (1) the firstborn and (2) the feast of unleavened bread. The Spirit knows that the recall of these two truths would in turn enable Israel to remember what Jehovah did for them in delivering them from Egyptian bondage. At first reading Exodus 13 can be somewhat confusing but on closer observation can be divided as follows:

- Exodus 13:1-2 God to Moses - Firstborn
- Exodus 13:3-10 Moses to People - Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Exodus 13:11-16 Moses to People - Firstborn Continued
- Exodus 13:17-22 Israel's Departure from Egypt Begins

So as you read and study chapter 13 keep this simple outline in mind. At risk of being redundant, let me emphasize the main points

- (1) God gives two symbols as "memory aids" of His great deliverance - first the concept of the firstborn and second the celebration of the feast of unleavened bread
- (2) The firstborn discussion is in two sections - Ex 13:1-2 and Ex 13:11-16.
- (3) The feast of unleavened bread discussion is in one section - Ex 13:3-10

Therefore it might be helpful to read the first verses 1-2 and then skip down to verses 11-16. Then come back and read the middle section Ex 13:3-10.

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### Matthew Henry summarizes Exodus 13...

#### I. The commands God gave to Israel,

1. To sanctify all their firstborn to Him (Ex 13:1, 2).
2. To be sure to remember their deliverance out of Egypt (Ex 13:3, 4),
3. In remembrance of it, to keep the feast of unleavened bread (Ex 13:5-7).
4. To transmit the knowledge of it with all possible care to their children (Ex 13:8-10).
5. To set apart unto God the firstlings of their cattle (Ex 13:11-13),
6. To explain that also to their children (Ex 13:14-16).

#### II. The care God took of Israel, when he had brought them out of Egypt.

1. Choosing their way for them (Ex 13:17, 18).
2. Guiding them in the way (Ex 13:20-22).

#### III. Their care of Joseph's bones (Ex 13:19).

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**David Thompson** - As we come to Exodus 13, God gave specific information about what He wanted Israel to do when she got into the Promised Land. He wanted to remind her of His deliverance every time any firstborn thing was born. He wanted His salvific program to be remembered so He demanded that the firstborn of everything had to be dedicated to Him. This included the firstborn of humans and the firstborn of animals. That blood that covered the door kept the firstborn from being killed. This redemptive point is so significant that God established another ordinance to remind Israel of this very point. All of the firstborn belonged to God because God redeemed all firstborn from death by that blood on the door (Ex. 12:12-13). **GOD WANTED ISRAEL TO ALWAYS REMEMBER THE SALVIFIC REALITY OF THE BLOOD SACRIFICE BY THE DEDICATION OF ALL THE FIRSTBORN CHILDREN.** This is the very point that Israel has overlooked. When Jesus Christ came to this earth, Israel could not conceive of the idea that she needed a righteousness that could only be found in His shed blood. Israel was religious, but she thought her own works and law religion would make her right with God. **She forgot about the blood. Had she gone back to this book of Exodus, that would have never happened** and (**ED: AT LEAST IN THEORY**) she would never have rejected Jesus Christ. The Israelites needed to recognize God saved their firstborn by the blood of a lamb or sheep. God purchased her and thus He owns her and deserves the first and the best. In whatever God gave to Israel, whether children, animals, spoils of war or harvests, God wants the first and the best. He deserves it because He gave it. Now think about this for a moment. The only reason Israel is in a position to have anything is because of God. In amazing grace, God literally saved the nation and without that national salvation she would have been nothing. **APPLICATION** - God never wanted Israel to forget about her great salvation experience, and neither should we. God saved us and without that we are nothing. God give us physical life, spiritual life, skills and many wonderful things. We owe Him everything. Certainly we should give Him the best of what we have and are. We should give Him the first and the best of ourselves, our possessions and our money. ([Sermon](#))

**Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying** - God gave this firstborn instruction directly to Moses, who in turn had the responsibility to speak to the people.

**Thompson** applies the fact that God **spoke to Moses** - There is an elder of a church I know who stood against home gatherings on Sunday night rather than corporate meetings. He took a stand as an elder and said, "If God has truly given the gift of pastor/teacher to the church, why would we want to spend Sunday night listening to someone without that gift?" "If God has given the gift of pastor/teacher to the church, why would you want to sit in some home meeting listening to someone ramble about what he thinks it means to him, when you actually have someone who could accurately dissect what it means?" Can you imagine Moses saying to the people, all of you go home and try to figure out what this Passover and firstborn thing means?

No, he stood up and taught it to the people. Moses predicted another prophet would come through Israel and you better listen to Him (Deut. 18:18-19). It is the job of the spokesman of God to accurately teach the people the Word of God and there are many ministers today who are shirking their responsibilities.

**Exodus 13:2 "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."**

- **Sanctify** - Ex 13:12-15 Ex 4:22 Ex 22:29,30 Ex 23:19 Ex 34:19,20 Lev 27:26 Nu 3:13 Nu 8:16,17 Nu 18:15 Dt 15:19 Lu 2:23 Heb 12:23
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PERPETUATE THE REMEMBRANCE: SANCTIFY THE FIRSTBORN

**Sanctify** - This is a command to set apart the first for Jehovah. The Septuagint uses the Greek verb [hagiozo](#) ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just do it!"), which describes that which is set apart from the profane or common and unto the Lord for His use. This reminds me of the words of Jesus high priestly prayer to His Father to "**Sanctify** (His disciples) in the truth, Your Word is truth." (Jn 17:17).

**Matthew Henry** - Of the preservation of Israel's firstborn, when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain. In memory of that distinguishing favour, and in gratitude for it, the firstborn, in all ages, were **to be consecrated** to God, as his peculiars (Ex 13:2), and **to be redeemed**, Ex 13:13. God, who by the right of creation is proprietor and sovereign of all the creatures, here lays claim in particular to the firstborn of the Israelites, by **right of protection** (ED: WHY "PROTECTION?" RECALL THAT THE VERB **PASS OVER** WAS NOT ONLY A VERB OF DIVINE "OMISSION" BUT ALSO AND PERHAPS PREDOMINANTLY A VERB SIGNIFYING DIVINE *PROTECTION* - See preceding comments ).

**Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me** - **Sanctify to Me** because God had in a sense purchased them with the blood of the blemish-free lamb. They were alive because of His will. They were alive because of His grace and mercy. It is only fitting that they belonged to Him. And so they were to be set aside, consecrated, dedicated to Jehovah.

Remember that Moses picks up this discussion of the firstborn with [more explanation](#) in Ex 13:12, 13.

**Matthew Henry** - The parents were not to look upon themselves as interested in their **firstborn**, till they had first solemnly presented them to God, recognized his title to them, and received them back, at a certain rate, from him again....God, who is the first and best, should have the first and best, and to Him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable. The **firstborn** were the joy and hope of their families. "*Therefore they shall be Mine*," says God. By this it will appear that we love God best (as we ought) if we are willing to part with that to Him which we love best in this world. (ED: I PRAY YOU ARE AS CONVICTED AS I AM!)

The deliverance from Egypt was to be commemorated not only by the feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread but also by the acknowledgement of the redemption of the firstborn by payment of blood. God had earlier claimed Israel as His **firstborn** "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, "**Israel** is My son, My **firstborn**.'" (Ex 4:22+). At the same time, He predicted the death of the firstborn of Egypt ("Behold, I will kill your son, your **firstborn**." Ex 4:23+). Thus He provided a way for the **firstborn** of His people to be spared the death of all the **firstborn** in Egypt. On this basis, He claimed that Israel belonged to Him. Jehovah reiterates His claim in Numbers declaring "For all the **firstborn** of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every **firstborn** in the land of Egypt I **sanctified** them for Myself" (Nu. 8:17). Note that phrase "for Myself," which speaks of personal possession. Jehovah set Israel aside as His personal possession and for His specific purposes.

**Sanctify** (06942) ([qadash](#)) means to set apart for a specific use. Removed from common use. To be holy. To show one's self to be holy. To consecrate or dedicate. To set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use. **Webster's Dictionary** definition for consecrate is convicting - "make or declare sacred; especially **devote irrevocably to worship of God** by a solemn ceremony." **Qadash** could refer to anything reserved exclusively for God (Ex 13:2, 12, 13; Nu 18:15) **Qadash** signifies an act or a state in which people or things are set aside for use in the worship of God, i.e., they are consecrated or made sacred for that purpose. They must be withheld from ordinary (secular) use and treated with special care as something which belongs to God (Ex 29:21). Otherwise, defilement makes the sanctified object unusable (cf. Dt 22:9; Eze 44:19; 46:20, cf 2 Ti 2:21).

**Sanctify** is translated here in the Septuagint with [hagiazō](#), a verb calling for believers to be holy and it is apropos for we like the firstborn of Israel who was redeemed by the blood of the lamb, are also the firstborn who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God!

**Qadash** is used with various objects: THESE ARE THINGS WHICH ARE SET APART.

- people of Israel - Ex 19:10, 14; Joshua 7:13
- altar in the Temple - Ex 29:36; 1Ki 8:64
- priests - Ex 28:41; 29:1; 1Sa 7:1
- mountain - Ex 19:23
- Sabbath - Ge 2:3; Ex 20:8
- new building - Neh 3:1
- fast - Joel 1:14; 2:15

**THOUGHT** - The adjective [hagios](#) is related to [hagiazō](#) and in essence is the description of every believer ("saint"). As believers we have all be sanctified by faith in the Lamb (Acts 26:18+) but are now called to live sanctified, separated, holy (cf "unleavened") lives as Peter says "As obedient children, do not be conformed ([suschematizo](#) [also in Ro 12:2+] - command in [present imperative with a negative](#) see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **be** ([aorist imperative](#) - see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because (EXPLAINS WHY WE ARE TO LIKE OUR FATHER!) it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (1 Peter 1:14-16+).

**J Vernon McGee** - The gods of Egypt had always claimed the **firstborn** as their own, and now God claims the **firstborn** of Israel as His own. He wants the first from believers today, also. Many Christians do not give Him the first place. God claims our best, our very best; God claims the first in everything. Even though He wants first place in our lives, many believers put Him last, and that creates a problem. If we have time, we work for the Lord, but most of our time is spent on personal interests and amusements. We usually give the Lord what is left over. (Thru the Bible) (Corollary thought - On what or where you spend most of your time is what you really value and love and cherish. How sad that so few Christians take time each day to read the Bible, the Word of and from God, like a love letter from a parent to his child in an alien country!)

**Wiersbe** - Not only once a year at **Passover** were the Jews reminded of God's grace and power, but each time a **firstborn** male, man or beast, came into the world, that **firstborn** issue had to be redeemed (ED: THE ACT CARRYING OUT THE REDEMPTION OF THE FIRST BORN WAS A CLEAR REMINDER OF GOD'S GREAT ACT OF REDEMPTION OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL, HIS "FIRSTBORN." cf Ex 4:22+). Because of God's mighty acts in protecting and redeeming His people and saving the **firstborn** of humans and livestock from death (Ex 12:12-13), all the **firstborn** belonged to God. They were **sanctified**, that is, set apart for God's exclusive possession. (Be Delivered)

**ESV Global Study Bible** - In Exodus 4:22-23, God announced to Pharaoh that Israel was "my firstborn son." In the worldview of ancient Egypt, the firstborn son of a king would inherit the throne and would be under obligation to manifest the rule of the supreme deity of his father upon earth. Pharaoh thought of himself as the son and appointed representative of the supreme god of Egypt, and he believed that his own firstborn son would inherit this role. Israel became the Lord's adopted firstborn son, and so was under obligation to manifest the Lord's rule upon earth. The original calling of humanity to be God's image-bearers, his appointed representatives, who establish and extend God's heavenly rule upon the earth, is now to be carried forward through the chosen people of Israel. Although Israel largely failed in this mission, Jesus ultimately suffers the punishment deserved by God's people and secures the success of this mission through God's new people, the church (Matt. 28:18-20).

**ILLUSTRATION** - A young man was about to enter the foreign missionary work. A gentleman said to the young man's father, "It's hard to give up the boy." "Yes," replied the father, "but it's just what we've been expecting." "How so?" inquired the friend. "When he was a little baby," answered the father, "his mother and I went to a missionary meeting. An appeal, most earnest and touching, was made for men to become missionaries. We ourselves could not go. When we returned home the baby lay asleep in his crib. We went to the crib. His mother stood on one side, I on the other. We together laid our hands on his forehead, and prayed that it might be God's will for him to become a foreign missionary. We never spoke to him of what we did. But all through these twenty-five years we have believed that our prayer about him would be answered, and answered it now is. Yes, it is hard to give up the boy, but it's what we've been expecting."

Exodus 13:3 Moses said to the people, "**Remember** this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery;

for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten.

- **Remember** - Ex 12:42 20:8 23:15 De 5:15 15:15 16:3,12 24:18,22 1Ch 16:12 Ps 105:5 Lu 22:19 1Co 11:24
- **out from Egypt** - Ex 13:14 20:2 De 5:6 6:12 8:14 13:5,10 Jos 24:17
- **by a powerful hand** - Ex 6:1 De 4:34 11:2,3 Ne 9:10 Eph 1:19
- **out from this place** - Ex 12:8,15 Mt 10:12 1Co 5:8
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Below is the original version of the New Living Translation (a [paraphrase](#)) which you might take a moment to read to help understand the message of Exodus 13:3-10. As you read this [paraphrase](#) (one which is generally a relatively accurate rendering of the original Hebrew or Greek) notice the **time phrases in bold** and ask yourself **"What is a happening or what is to happen during that time?"** Two other word you will want to carefully observe is **"celebrate"** and related word [festival](#) which occurs 8 times in 8 verses in this paraphrase. Note that the English word [celebrate](#) means to [commemorate](#) with festivities. The word [commemorate](#) in turn means to serve as a memorial or a reminder. [Festival](#) is an occasion for feasting or celebration, especially a day or time of religious significance that recurs at regular intervals. And finally take note of one other word that is repeated - remember (remind, reminder). Are you beginning to see the main thrust of this section Exodus 13:3-10?

- 3 So Moses said to the people, "This is **a day** to remember forever--**the day** you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. For the LORD has brought you out by his mighty power. (Remember, you are not to use any yeast.)
- 4 **This day** in **early spring** will be the anniversary of your exodus.
- 5 You must celebrate **this day** when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. This is the land he swore to give your ancestors--a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 6 For **seven days** you will eat only bread without yeast. Then on the **seventh day**, you will celebrate a great feast to the LORD.
- 7 Eat only bread without yeast during those **seven days**. In fact, there must be no yeast in your homes or anywhere within the borders of your land during this time.
- 8 "During these **festival days each year**, you must explain to your children why you are celebrating. Say to them, 'This is a celebration of what the LORD did for us when we left Egypt.'
- 9 This **annual festival** will be a visible reminder to you, like a mark branded on your hands or your forehead. Let it remind you always to keep the Lord's instructions in your minds and on your lips. After all, it was the LORD who rescued you from Egypt with great power.
- 10 "So celebrate this festival at the appointed time **each year**."

## IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

**J Ligon Duncan** on Ex 13:3-10 - God is calling us to remember His redemption through the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.

**Matthew Henry** - The remembrance of their coming out of Egypt must also be perpetuated. Remember it by a good token, as the most remarkable day of your lives, the birthday of your nation, or the day of its coming of age, to be no longer under the rod.

**George Bush** on **remember this day** - The reason of this was not merely the favor shown to them in such a signal deliverance, but the display it involved of the divine interposition, and obviously the more of God and of his power there is in any deliverance, the more memorable it is.

**Moses said to the people, "Remember this day** - Moses begins with a command for Israel to *continually* make a conscious effort to **remember this day**, the day (and night) of the Passover, the day of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. I say *'continually'* because the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates the Hebrew word for **remember** ([zakar](#)) with the Greek verb [mnemoneuo](#) which is an [imperative or command](#) in the [present tense](#), which calls for continual remembrance. Furthermore, the Greek verb is in the second person plural, so this command is directed not just to an individual but to all individuals in the nation of Israel. Finally, the Greek verb is in the [active voice](#) which calls for one's obedience to this command to be the continual conscious choice of their will ([volitional](#) choice). The point is that remembering does not just "happen" but it takes mental effort. I like to memorize Scripture and find that if I do not regularly review my memory verses, those verses become fainter and fainter over time so that occasionally I cannot even recall the chapter and verse designation, much less the substance of the passage. You may have a perfect memory but most of us do not and most of Israel did not as tragically will be seen in their subsequent history as a nation. So God is giving Israel some memory joggers in Exodus 13:3-10.

What is **this day**? Moses tells us it is the very **day** they departed Egypt, the very day Jehovah redeemed them from bondages and



set them free.

How does this Old Testament truth apply to New Testament believers today? The application should be crystal clear -- we need to continually remember that miraculous, glorious day when we were reckoned as righteous the moment we received by faith through grace the redemption payment of the blood of the Lamb forever setting us free from slavery to sin and Satan.

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Ro 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

John 8:31-36 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 'The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 'So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Hebrews 2:14 -15 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

**Remember** (record, mention) (02142)([zakar](#)) means to recall, call to mind or to be brought to remembrance. The first use of **zakar** is wonderful for it says "God **remembered** Noah" remembering His covenant (Ge 6:18). **Bush** writes that **zakar** "has the import not merely of mental recollection, but of actual celebration, or of some kind of public proceeding which should serve as a perpetuating memorial of a particular event." **Zakar** is used in the famous command "**Remember** the sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Ex 20:8)

**In which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery** - While the people of Israel were always to **remember** that "the Lord brought [them] out of it", they were NOT to remember Egypt positively (the idolatry, the worldliness, etc of Egypt) but they were to remember that Egypt meant bondage and oppression! They were not to look back longingly, but to move out in freedom gratefully and obediently on a journey to lay hold of the promises of Jehovah, specifically the Promised Land of milk and honey.

**Walter Kaiser** says **house of slavery** "is literally *"from a house of slaveries"* (also Ex 20:2; Dt 5:6; 6:12). Bush reminds us (Exodus, 1:155) of Egypt being called *"the iron-smelting furnace"* in Dt 4:20 ("But the LORD has taken you and brought you **out of the iron furnace**, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today); 1 Ki 8:51 ("from Egypt, from the midst of the **iron furnace**"); and Jer 11:4 ("I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from **the iron furnace**,"). (EBC-Ex)

**House of slavery** - 11x in 11v always referring to Israel in Egyptian bondage - Exod. 13:3; Exod. 13:14; Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 8:14; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:10; Jdg. 6:8; Mic. 6:4

By way of application to our Christian life, this reminds us of Paul's words

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind** and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Duncan on house of slavery** - The house of slavery is perhaps a graphic recollection of the practice of the Egyptians. They would have a large house within a walled-slaved city where all the slaves would be kept. And it became a metaphor to the Israelites of the whole land of Egypt. It was their experience of bondage and oppression. They are brought out of the house of slavery.

**For** - Term of explanation. Moses explains how they were extracted from bondage, **the house of slavery**.

**By a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place**- This phrase is repeated four times in Exodus 13! In this passage and Ex 13:9, Ex 13:14 and Ex 13:16. **THIS TRUTH IS WORTH REPEATING BELOVED!!!** God wants it to be clearly understood that it was not through some clever stratagem, it was not through Moses' brilliance or eloquence (!!!), it was not through Moses' courage (He did grow in courage over the course of the 9 plagues!), it was not because of the people's goodness or because they were so lovable – it was by Yahweh's powerful hand that they came out of Egypt. Beloved, every believer should have T-shirt with the message emblazoned on the front and back "I Have Delivered by a Powerful Hand!" I would predict you might be able to engage in some evangelistic discussions if you wore that in the shopping mall, etc!

**George Bush** - however hard or strong the impious king made his heart, God made his hand still stronger. This is one of those nice shades of meaning which cannot well be conveyed in a translation. (Exodus)

A key phrase in this section is **brought out** found in Ex 13:3, Ex 13:9, Ex 13:14, Ex 13:16.

**THOUGHT** - By way of application, believers today are given a freedom (**from the house of slavery**) won at the cost of Christ's blood (1Pe 1:18,19). It is appropriate that, since He gave Himself for us, (1Pe 2:24,25) we should give ourselves to Him (Titus 2:14). When we remember what God has done for us (2 Ti 2:8, 2Pe 3:2, Rev 2:5, Rev 3:3), we are motivated to ask what we can do for God. It is important never to invert this order. We are not to foolishly pridefully try to please God in order to obligate Him to us. Instead we are to humbly acknowledge that we are already obligated to Him for our salvation! Good works (Ep 2:10 "God's" works through us) can express love for the Holy One of Israel, our Redeemer Who has saved us, but can never serve as a bribe to win His unmerited favor (called grace). Thank Him for so great a salvation.

Romans 6:17-18<sup>+</sup> But thanks be to God that though **you were slaves of sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and **having been freed from sin**, you became slaves of righteousness.

**And nothing leavened shall be eaten** - The point is that God is giving Israel a concrete way of remembering and expressing what He has done by depriving themselves of the leavened bread. They would be forced to remember the bread of haste that they had to make in the wake of God's deliverance in the Exodus.

**Exodus 13:4 "On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth."**

NAU Exodus 13:4 "On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth."

BGT Exodus 13:4 ν γ ρ τ σ μερον με ς κπορε εσθε ν μην τ ν ν ων

NET Exodus 13:4 On this day, in the month of Abib, you are going out.

LXE Exodus 13:4 For on this day ye go forth in the month of new corn.

NLT Exodus 13:4 On this day in early spring, in the month of Abib, you have been set free.

KJV Exodus 13:4 This day came ye out in the month Abib.

ESV Exodus 13:4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out.

NIV Exodus 13:4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving.

ASV Exodus 13:4 This day ye go forth in the month Abib.

CSB Exodus 13:4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving.

NKJ Exodus 13:4 "On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.

- **Abib** - Ex 23:15 34:18 De 16:1-3
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOING FORTH ON FIRST MONTH ABIB

**On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth** - NLT paraphrases it "On this day in early spring, in the month of Abib, you have been set free." In essence Moses says on the 14th of Abib or Nisan (the Chaldean name), our March-April, you are to celebrate your deliverance and freedom. There was a very specific day and month when this feast was to be celebrated. **Bush** calls Abib "the month of green corn."

**Abib** (024)(**abib**) means "young ear of grain," ripe, but soft. Thus, it became a designation of a specific time of the year, the time of the first harvest. Others say it means barley especially when it is just ripe and still soft and allows the grains to be eaten rubbed or roasted. In Lev 2:14 it was used as an offering to the LORD. Abib is the month of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and first-fruits which are still observed yearly to remind the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt.

**Abib** - 9x in 6v - Abib(6), ear(1), fresh heads(1), fresh heads of grain(1). Ex 9:31; Ex 13:4; Ex 23:15;



Ex 34:18; Lev. 2:14; Dt. 16:1

Deuteronomy 16:1 "Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

**Exodus 13:5 "It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month.**

- **brings you to the land** - Ex 3:8 34:11 Ge 15:18-21 De 7:1 12:29 19:1 26:1 Jos 24:11
- **He swore to your fathers** - Ex 6:8 33:1 Ge 17:7,8 Ge 22:16-18 Ge 26:3 Ge 50:24 Nu 14:16,30 32:11
- **land flowing with milk and honey** - Ex 3:17
- **you shall observe this rite in this month** - Ex 12:25,26
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## KEEP THE PASSOVER IN THE PROMISED LAND

**It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite** Now the land of Canaan had never heard of having a feast of "unleavened bread," so Moses makes it clear in verse 5 that when they get into that land they need to observe it. **You** is plural (as is **you** in Ex 13:4) so he is speaking of not just this individual but the entire nation.

Jehovah had heard Israel's cry in the furnace of affliction in Egypt and so in some of the opening words from Jehovah in the Burning Bush to Moses Yahweh declared ""So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite" (Ex 3:8+)

**George Bush** has an interesting note - Provision is here made for the permanent remembrance of the great event of the nation's exodus from Egypt. The present injunction prescribes the observance of the rite after their settlement in the land of promise, and we learn that they kept only one passover during their forty years sojourn in the wilderness. It was omitted probably because circumcision was omitted during that time, which was an indispensable prerequisite to the passover. (Exodus)

**Which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey**- Swore to your fathers refers to the Abrahamic Covenant passed to Isaac then to Israel (read Ge 17:7,8 = to Abraham, Ge 26:3 = to Isaac). The danger for Israel was that when they got into a land like that is that you forget about who gave you all of the blessings. This festival would point right back to God

**THOUGHT** - Milk and honey make one forget how they got here, by God's strong hand and they are not their own but are redeemed and are as a nation Yahweh's firstborn (Ex 4:22, Jer 31:9). Dear believer, O how we need to continually be on guard (as enabled by God's Spirit) lest our heart devotion for Jehovah slowly dissipates (like a battery slowly leaks its power) and is replaced by the enchanting taste of "milk and honey" (whatever that is in each or our lives - money, power, prestige, etc)! **Thomas Watson** said - Pride, idleness, and lust—are three worms which often breed in prosperity....**Prosperity** often deafens the ear against God.... **Prosperity** has its honey—and also its sting!... Many have been sunk to hell, with golden weights! The world's golden sands are quicksands... If we have less **prosperity**—we have less snare. As we lack the rich provisions of the world—so we lack their temptations.

**TECHNICAL NOTE ON SWORE** - Often the verb "swear" (šāba', Niphal) means "promise." See Gen. 22:16–17; 26:3; 50:24; Exod. 33:1; Num. 11:12; 32:11; Deut. 1:8; 6:10, 18; etc.

**That you shall observe this rite in this month** - **Observe** is used in the sense of worship. God wanted Israel to think about His redemptive program which was focused on that shed blood and let that stimulate worship of Yahweh and a life lived in concordance with true worship.

**Walter Kaiser** has an fascinating note on the Hebrew word for **observe** or **ceremony** in NIV (Hebrew = [abad](#); Lxx = [latreia](#) = religious service based in worship) - Although הַעֲבֹדָה (hā'abōdāh) is rendered "**ceremony**" here (**ED**: IN THE NIV - Ex 13:5NIV) and also in Ex 12:25–26, it was "**slavery**" and "**work**" in Ex 2:23 and Ex 5:9; but it is a "**work** [or service of the Lord]" in Ex 35:24; 36:5; 39:42. Thus Israel was saved from "**slavery**" into "**service**" for God as remembered by a "**ceremony**"! A veritable theology in a

single word!

**Exodus 13:6 "For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD**

- Ex 12:15-20 34:18 Lev 23:8
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD**- So remember the rite with memory per se but also with celebration. Recall that the feast of unleavened bread is integrally linked to the day of Passover, so much so that Dr Luke records "Now the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, which is called the **Passover**, was approaching." (Lk 22:1+)

**Thompson** - To enjoy the full blessings of God, sin must be removed.

**Exodus 13:7 "Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders.**

- Ex 12:19 Mt 16:6
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **STRICT PROHIBITION AGAINST LEAVEN!**

**Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders** - Notice this ordinance is so strict that not only was leaven not to be eaten, it was not even to be seen!

**THOUGHT** - In our visual society rife (and rotting morally) with sexual images, how relevant is this prohibition to all the firstborn of the Church of Jesus Christ (Heb 12:23<sup>+</sup>)? That's a rhetorical question of course! This passage is very convicting!

**Exodus 13:8 "You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'**

- Ex 13:14 Ex 12:26,27 De 4:9,10 Ps 44:1 78:3-8 Isa 38:19 Eph 6:4
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **PERSONALIZATION AND PASSING ON**

**You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt**- Specifically the father was to tell of the lamb that was offered and his blood was shed that enabled God to save him. Notice the phrase **what the LORD did for ME** clearly personalizes this blood bought redemption for the father (cf Ex 13:16 where he says "the LORD brought **US** out of Egypt."), the implication being that this man was in the original group of Hebrews who experienced the exodus from Egypt. His personal experience was to be passed on to the next generation. Of course the message would still apply to his son, who would be one of the first generation to enter into the promised land for the father would die in the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

We see this same important principle of passing the truth about God's marvelous works down to the next generation in Psalm 78:5-8

For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, 6 That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, 7 That they should put their confidence in God

And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments, 8 And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

**George Bush** comments on the important truth presented in this passage...

No one can fail to infer from this the great importance of acquainting children at an early age with the leading stories of sacred writ, and familiarising their minds with the moral lessons which they are designed to teach. It is a debt which we owe to the honor of God and to the benefit of their souls, to tell them of the great things which God has in former ages or in our own age, done for his church, or is still doing. Nor should parents consider themselves released from this duty because their children can read these narratives for themselves, or hear them recited and explained by Sunday School teachers. They are things to be talked about in the family circle, which is the grand nursery of God's appointment for the training of the infant mind, and where the tender heart of childhood is most easily to be reached. (Exodus)

**NET Note** - A very important part of the teaching here is the manner in which the memory of the deliverance will be retained in Israel—they were to teach their children the reasons for the feast, as a binding law forever. This will remind the nation of its duties to Yahweh in gratitude for the great deliverance.

**Exodus 13:9** "And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.

- **a sign to you on your hand** - Ex 13:16 12:14 Nu 15:39 De 6:6,8 11:18,19 Pr 1:9 3:21 6:20-23 Pr 7:23 Song 8:6 Isa 49:16 Jer 22:24 Mt 23:5
- **may be in your mouth** - De 30:14 Jos 1:8 Isa 59:21 Ro 10:8
- **powerful hand** - Ex 13:3 Ex 6:1-30 Jos 1:9 Ne 1:10 Ps 89:13 Isa 27:1 Isa 40:10 Isa 51:9 Joel 2:11 Rev 18:8
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Phylactery on Forehead

## SIGNS AND REMINDERS OF GOD'S REDEMPTION

**And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand And as a reminder on your forehead-** Literally "between your eyes." NIV = "This observance will be for you like a **sign** on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips." NLT = "This annual festival will be a visible sign to you, like a mark branded on your hand or your forehead." So both of these renderings suggest keeping of the Passover/Unleavened Bread feast was LIKE a sign but was not a LITERAL sign, which is what the Jews made it become. And so we read of the [Tefillin](#) or [Phylactery](#) which are bound around the arm or the forehead. The phrase **and as a reminder on your forehead** is more literally "and for a memorial between thine eyes." (YLT).

We see a similar thought in Joshua 4:6 where the memorial stones (context = Josh 4:7-10) were to be signs = "Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?'"

**Sign** (0226) ('[oth](#)) means a sign in the sense of a memorial (cf , Nu 17:3, Aaron's rod = Nu 17:25). Signs on hands (Ex 13:9, Ex 13:16; Dt 6:8, Dt 11:18) All uses of 'oth in Exodus - Ex 3:12; Ex 4:8; Ex 4:9; Ex 4:17; Ex 4:28; Ex 4:30; Ex 7:3; Ex 8:23; Ex 10:1; Ex 10:2; Ex 12:13; Ex 13:9; Ex 13:16; Ex 31:13; Ex 31:17

**Treasury of Scripture Knowledge** on **a sign to you on your hand** - This expression, says Michaelis, alludes to the custom of the Orientals, of burning in their right hand all kinds of marks with the ashes of henna, which gives an indelible colour; and this is done even to this day. They were likewise accustomed to write all kinds of sayings, and frequently superstitious words, on slips or pieces of linen, which they wore as ornaments on their foreheads.

In favor of this passage not being taken to literally strap a reminder on his forehead we read a similar instruction in Pr 3:3 "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart." While one might devise a necklace with a case to contain Scriptures, far better is to write them on one's heart, which in my opinion speaks of memorizing the Word! Are you writing God's Word on your heart? Nothing will be more beneficial in your life than undertaking this too often neglected spiritual discipline (see [Memorizing His Word](#), [Memory Verses by Topic](#)) We see a similar picture in Pr 6:20-23 again placing emphasis on one's HEART, the **internal life** which takes precedence over the **external life** and indeed it energizes and empowers (as enabled by the Spirit) one's **external life**! God is always far more interested in our hearts than what we wear on our forehead or forearm! (cf Pr 4:23+).

My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; 21 Bind them continually **on your heart**; Tie them around your neck. (ED: WE DO NOT SEE ANY JEWS DOING THIS LITERALLY -- AS FAR AS I AM AWARE). 22 When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. 23For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life

**MacArthur** - The imagery of the proverbial mode of speech signified that their conduct was to be that of someone who could verbally recall what God's law demanded of them. Yahweh who had rescued them had also provided the standards of life for them! (ED: **THOUGHT** - IS THIS PRINCIPLE NOT TRUE TODAY FOR SINNERS DELIVERED BY JESUS' PAYMENT OF THE RANSOM PRICE OF HIS BLOOD FOR WE ARE NOT ONLY DELIVERED BUT HAVE BEEN GIVEN EVERYTHING NECESSARY FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS! See 2 Pe 1:3-4<sup>+</sup>). (MSB)

**Ryrie** - On the basis of this verse, coupled with Dt 6:8 and Deut 11:18, some Jews still wear phylacteries (little leather pouches containing short sections of the law, bound on the forehead and on the left arm above the elbow). For a detailed description of this practice and its abuse, see Mt. 23:5 = "they broaden their phylacteries" Phylacteries were square leather boxes containing four strips of parchment on which were written Dt 11:13-21 and Dt 6:4-9, and Ex. 13:11-16, Ex 13:1-10. During prayer one was worn on the forehead between the eyebrows and another on the left arm close to the elbow. They were held in place by leather bands, which the Pharisees made **broad to attract more attention** to themselves. The custom was based on Ex. 13:9, 16; Dt 6:8; 11:18, though phylacteries had only begun to be used by the ultrapious in Christ's day. Christ criticizes not the custom itself but the **wrong spirit that corrupted it.**)

**NET** has an interesting note - This passage has, of course, been taken literally by many devout Jews, and portions of the text have been encased in phylacteries and bound on the arm and forehead. B. Jacob (Exodus, 368), weighing the pros and cons of the literal or the figurative meaning, says that those who took it literally should not be looked down on for their symbolic work. In many cases, he continues, it is the spirit that kills and the letter makes alive—because people who argue against a literal usage do so to excuse lack of action. This is a rather interesting twist in the discussion. The point of the teaching was obviously meant to keep the Law of Yahweh in the minds of the people, to remind them of their duties. The purpose of using this ceremony as a sign and a memorial is that the Law might be in their mouth.

**George Bush** - The Jewish commentators are generally of opinion that the words of the precept concerning the sanctification of the first-born were to be written on shreds of linen or parchment, and worn on their wrists and foreheads. These were the 'Phylacteries,' or scrolls of parchment, with portions of the law written upon them, of which our Savior speaks, Mat. 23:5, as distinguishing, when made uncommonly broad, the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. It is not improbable, however, that the precept here is only figurative, implying that the remembrance of God's goodness should be continually cherished, that it should no more be lost sight of than is an object appended to the hand or hanging between the eyes. Thus Prov. 3:3, 'Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart;' i. e. have them in perpetual remembrance.

**That the law of the LORD may be in your mouth-** The point is these ordinances should be so familiar to them that they frequently speak of these things not only to instruct others but to affect their own heart. One is reminded of Moses later charge to Joshua

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8<sup>+</sup>)

This statement would support the thought that the signs on hand and forehead might be metaphors (forehead - thinking about it) and hand (doing it). The best place to store the Law of the LORD is not in a box but in one's heart! (Ps 119:11), for then one could practice the words of Jesus that out of the mouth comes that which fills the heart (Mt 12:34<sup>+</sup>).

**NET** has a good note - **Mouth** is a [metonymy](#) of cause; the point is that they should be ever talking about the Law as their guide as they go about their duties (see Deut 6:7; Dt 11:19; Josh 1:8).

**For** - This is a term of explanation. What is it explaining? It explains why a **sign** is important, because ultimately it points to the power of Yahweh to deliver.

**NET** - This causal clause gives the reason for what has just been instructed. Because Yahweh delivered them from bondage, he has the strongest claims on their life.

**With a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt-** This is exactly what Jehovah had predicted (see passages below) - it would take His strong hand! Pharaoh's heart was hardened but Jehovah's hand was more **powerful** (Heb = [chazaq](#)) than Pharaoh's resistance and ultimately broke his heart with the loss of his firstborn son.

Ex 3:19+ But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except **under compulsion**. ([chazaq](#) yad = literally a strong hand)

Ex 6:1+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for **under compulsion** ([chazaq](#) yad = literally a strong hand) he shall let them go, and **under compulsion** (strong hand) he shall drive them out of his land."

#### Related Resource:

- [Study of the Hand of the LORD](#)

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#### Question: "[What are phylacteries?](#)"

**Answer:** Phylacteries, sometimes called tefillin, are small, square leather boxes containing portions of Scripture worn by Conservative and Orthodox Jews during prayer services. Phylacteries are worn in pairs—one phylactery is strapped on the left arm, and one is strapped to the forehead of Jewish men during weekday morning prayers. The word phylactery comes from a Greek word meaning "safeguard, protection, or amulet."

The **phylactery** strapped to the arm is called the [shel yad](#) and has only one compartment; the one on the forehead, containing four compartments, is called the [shel rosh](#). The letter shin (ש) is printed on either side of the head phylactery. Various rules govern the length and width of the connecting straps, the tying of the knots to secure the phylacteries, and the color of the boxes (black). Inside each phylactery are four passages from the Old Testament: Ex 13:1–10, 11–16; Dt 6:4–9; Dt 11:13–21. The verses must be written in black ink on parchment specially prepared for this purpose, using the skin of a clean animal. Other rules specify the type of writing instrument to be used, the number of printed lines devoted to each verse, the arrangement of the pieces of parchment within each compartment, etc.

The wearing of **phylacteries** is based on some commands in Deuteronomy. Israel was told to love God and keep His commandments. In fact, they were to "tie [the commandments] as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads" (Deuteronomy 6:8). Later, God tells them, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads" (Deuteronomy 11:18). We take the wording of these commands to be figurative: whatever we do (with the hand) and whatever we think (with the head) is to be guided by the authority of God's Word. But, at some point—possibly as early as the fourth century BC—the Jewish rabbis began applying this verse literally, and the practice of tying phylacteries onto their arms and heads commenced.

**Phylacteries** are mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus, warning His disciples about the hypocrisy of the teachers and Pharisees, said, "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long" (Matthew 23:5). The religious leaders of Jesus' day had strayed from God's intention in the Law. Phylacteries were being made larger for the sole purpose of drawing attention to the wearer—the larger the phylactery, the more piety it supposedly showed. Ironically, the very command to honor the Word of God was being used to dishonor the Word.

Jesus taught that God is not as concerned with the external trappings of religion as He is with the true nature of the heart. He pointed out that it was possible to wear large phylacteries containing God's Word yet disobey God's Word at the same time. Likewise, in the church today, it's possible to wear a cross, pay a tithe, raise a hand, and quote a creed—all without truly acknowledging the Lord in our hearts. God knows the truth of our spiritual condition. "LORD Almighty, you . . . examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind" (Jeremiah 20:12). May we be able to say with the psalmist, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). (Source: [Gotquestions.org](#))

**Exodus 13:10 "Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year."**

- Ex 12:14,24 23:15 Lev 23:6 De 16:3,4
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### KEEP THE FEAST EVERY YEAR

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. Based on the precious and powerful truth just proclaimed in Ex 13:9b.

**You shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year** - **Year to year** = literally "from days to days" and is an

example of the frequent use of “days” for the concept “years”. The verb **shall keep** is the Hebrew verb [shamar](#) which means to keep, to watch, to preserve, to stay awake, to protect and in the Septuagint is [phulasso](#) which means to guard or protect like a sentinel watchfully guards his post. The point is that it will take some mental effort to remember to carry out the festival of Passover/Unleavened bread year after year.

**Exodus 13:11 "Now when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you,**

- **as He swore** - Ex 13:5
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE LAND GRANT BASED ON THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**

Exodus 13:11-16 gives an explanation of the command in Ex 13:2 that the firstborn (man and beast) was to be sanctified to Jehovah.

**Now when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you-** Not **IF** the LORD brings you in but **when**. It would come to pass! Jehovah would keep the promise made to Abrahamic, Isaac and Jacob. And here he says God also **swore to you**, to the Israelites who came out of Egypt. It would be Jehovah would **wouldbring** them to the land, a clear manifestation of God's grace, not Israel's goodness. The phrase **land of the Canaanite** stands for all groups often mentioned (see Ex 13:5). Notice also the emphasis on **the land** which would be God's gift to Israel.

**Herschel Hobbs** - Deliverance from slavery means being freed from something and also freedom for something. They were freed for a new relationship with God (Ex 19:3-6), a new way of living (Ex 20:1-2), a new opportunity to help other helpless people (Deut. 24:17-21), and a new land of promise. Christians have been freed from slavery to sin and death, but we have been freed for a new relationship with God, a new way of living, and new a home in heaven. This shows that freedom is not freedom from responsibility to live by God's standards and to minister in His name. Non-Christians often think that the moral demands and the social obligations of Christians mean a loss of freedom, but the opposite is true. Only as we are rightly related with God, do His will (ONLY POSSIBLE AS WE ARE DAILY ENERGIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!), and serve others in His name (AND FOR HIS GLORY) are we truly fulfilled and free to become the persons God created each of us to be. You would think that a prisoner set free would never return to his prison. From time to time the Israelites told Moses that they wanted to go back to Egypt. Some convicts have been in prison so long that they miss the only life they know; therefore, they find some way to return to prison. Some professing Christians return to their former slavery. All of us struggle with temptations toward the lure of sin. Sometimes we stumble, but we do not return to the kind of hopeless bondage that once enslaved us. We need to remember the slavery from which we have been set free and not return to it (Rom. 6:17-22).

**Exodus 13:12 you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD.**

NET Exodus 13:12 then you must give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. Every firstling of a beast that you have— the males will be the LORD's.

LXE Exodus 13:12 that thou shalt set apart every offspring opening the womb, the males to the Lord, every one that opens the womb out of the herds or among thy cattle, as many as thou shalt have: thou shalt sanctify the males to the Lord.

NLT Exodus 13:12 you must present all firstborn sons and firstborn male animals to the LORD, for they belong to him.

KJV Exodus 13:12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S.

ESV Exodus 13:12 you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD's.

NIV Exodus 13:12 you are to give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of



your livestock belong to the LORD.

ASV Exodus 13:12 that thou shalt set apart unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every firstling which thou hast that cometh of a beast; the males shall be Jehovah's.

CSB Exodus 13:12 you are to present to the LORD every firstborn male of the womb. All firstborn offspring of the livestock you own that are males will be the LORD's.

NKJ Exodus 13:12 "that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD'S.

NRS Exodus 13:12 you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your livestock that are males shall be the LORD's.

YLT Exodus 13:12 that thou hast caused every one opening a womb to pass over to Jehovah, and every firstling -- the increase of beasts which thou hast: the males are Jehovah's.

NAB Exodus 13:12 you shall dedicate to the LORD every son that opens the womb; and all the male firstlings of your animals shall belong to the LORD.

NJB Exodus 13:12 to Yahweh you must make over whatever first issues from the womb, and every first-born cast by animals belonging to you: these males belong to Yahweh.

GWN Exodus 13:12 sacrifice every firstborn male offspring to the LORD. The firstborn male offspring of each of your animals belongs to the LORD.

BHT Exodus 13:12 wūha`ábarTā kol-Pe|ter-re<sup>o</sup>Hem lyhwh(la|`dōnāy) wūkol-Pe<sup>o</sup>ter še<sup>o</sup>ger Būhēmā `ásher yihyè lūkā hazzūkārīm lyhwh(la`dōnāy)

BBE Exodus 13:12 You are to put on one side for the Lord every mother's first male child, the first-fruit of her body, and the first young one of every beast; every male is holy to the Lord.

NAS Exodus 13:12 that you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD.

- **you shall** - Ex 13:2 Ex 22:29 Ex 34:19 Lev 27:26 Nu 8:17 18:15 De 15:19 Eze 44:30
- **first offspring** - Ex 34:19 Nu 3:12 18:15
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FIRSTBORN DEVOTED TO YAHWEH

**You shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb and the first offspring of every beast that you own. Shall devote** (ESV and KJV = set apart, NIV = give over) literally reads "'you will **cause to pass over** (וְהָעֲבָרְתָּ, véha'avarta) to Yahweh." This is clearly a play on words, because this same verb ([abar](#)) translated "**devote**" here is used in Ex 12:12 ("I will go through") and Ex 12:23 ("the LORD will pass through") to describe the LORD passing over or through the land of Egypt, to smite the firstborn.

As **Currid** puts it "here we have a verbal word-play: as Yahweh **passed over** the Hebrews during the tenth plague, the Hebrews are now to **pass over** their first-born to Him. The verb **'to pass over'** is also a commentary on pagan child sacrifice. Pagans of the ancient Near East would take a child and pass him over/through the fire as a form of devotion and sacrifice (Dt. 18:10 = "makes his son or his daughter **pass through** the fire"; 2 Ki 16:3 = "made his son **pass through** the fire"). Yahweh does not require such barbarism. He wants the first-born set apart and devoted to His service. Thus the Israelites are **not** to **pass over** their first-born in the fire, but **pass them over** to the Lord."

**Walter C. Kaiser** adds "As Israel 'passed over' ([abar](#)) the Red Sea and the destroyer 'passed over' their firstborn, so now they were 'to cause to pass over' or 'give over' ([abar](#)) to the LORD all their firstborn."

This passage clearly parallels Ex 13:2 for in both passages Jehovah claims the firstborn as belonging to Him. As the NET explains "The remarkable thing about this is that Yahweh did not keep the firstborn that was dedicated to him, but allowed the child to be redeemed by his father (**ED: FOR A PRICE** - SEE Nu 18:15, 16). It was an acknowledgment that the life of the child belonged to God as the one redeemed from death, and that the child represented the family. Thus, the observance referred to the dedication of all the redeemed to God." The word offspring is more literally "every opener of a womb." (see word study below).

**Offspring** ([06363](#))(**peter**) means that which separates or first opens. **Peter** is derived from **pātar** meaning to free, to release. The semantic relationship is transparent, as it is the firstborn who opens or frees the womb.

Peter, which simply means "something which opens," is coupled with the noun **rechem**, "womb," in more than half of its occurrences, giving the understanding of "firstborn. Peter is used exclusively in ritual contexts. The bulk of the occurrences are found in regard to the institution of the Passover. Here the noun is used as a generic for human and domestic livestock firstborn" (Gilbrant)

**Peter** - 10x in 8v - first issue(2), first offspring(8). Ex 13:2; Ex 13:12; Ex 13:13; Ex 13:15; Ex 34:19; Ex 34:20; Nu 3:12; Nu 18:15

**The males belong to the LORD** - He says **that you own**, but the truth is they **belong to the LORD**. Presumably the males beasts were sacrificed, unless they were an unclean animal like a donkey, which was either to be killed (indicating it no longer belonged to the person who brought it) or redeemed by the payment of the price of the blood of a lamb.

Can you see how all of these laws served an overarching purpose -- to remind the Israelites that Jehovah had redeemed them from slavery by accepting as the "ransom price" the blood of a one year old lamb, which protected their firstborn from death. So now every time an Israelite would bring (devote, sanctify) a firstborn child or beast to God, he would be reminded of the deliverance of Israel in Egypt.

**Thompson** - Now this firstborn data is critical to Israel because it will be addressed at least five more times in the O.T. Law: Ex. 22:29-30; Ex. 34:19-20; Lev. 27:26-27; Num. 18:14-18; Deut. 15:19-23. Each reference is important and gives its own slant to things. So this is the first of six addresses on this subject. According to verse 12, the firstborn of every human was to be given to the Lord and the firstborn male of the animals were to be given to the Lord. Now the words "devote to the LORD" mean to bring to the tabernacle and give it over to the LORD. God did not want to keep the children and separate them from their families; but He did demand that they be brought to the tabernacle and dedicated to Him and an animal sacrifice was to be made, which was a sacrifice of the firstborn male animal. This is a very important point to realize; when a firstborn animal was given to God, it was sacrificed and it did die. So in all reality the redemptive price was paid by the firstborn sacrifice. The idea of a substitutionary sacrifice as being the only means of having a relationship with the Holy God is seen right here.

**NET Note** - It was once assumed by some scholars that child sacrifice lay behind this text in the earlier days (ED: THIS GENRE OF LUDICROUS LOGIC IS WHY IT ALWAYS BEST TO FIRST DO YOUR OWN INDUCTIVE STUDY BEFORE CHECKING THE COMMENTARY. YOU WILL OFTEN BE AMAZED AT HOW MUCH LIGHT THE SCRIPTURE SHEDS ON THE COMMENTARY!), but that the priests and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law forbade child sacrifice, and always used child sacrifice as the sample of what not to do in conformity with the pagans (e.g., Deut 12:31). Besides, how absurd would it be for Yahweh to redeem the firstborn from death and then ask Israel to kill them.

**Exodus 13:13 "But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.**

**Currid** - 'Redeem every first-born donkey with a lamb; but if you do not redeem [it], then you shall break its neck. Redeem every first-born male among your sons.'

**NET** Exodus 13:13 Every firstling of a donkey you must redeem with a lamb, and if you do not redeem it, then you must break its neck. Every firstborn of your sons you must redeem.

- **donkey** - Ex 34:20 Nu 18:15-17
- **lamb** - Ex 12:3,21
- **you shall break** - Nu 3:46-51 Nu 18:15,16 Rev 14:4
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FIRSTBORN OF ANIMALS MEN TO BE REDEEMED**

**But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck** - Note that firstborn females were exempted. The text probably makes mention of a **donkey** because they were the main means of transport for the Hebrews, and because of their value God mercifully allowed them to be redeemed **with a lamb**. What's going on with the poor donkey? This was alluded to above. When the firstborn of a beast was given to (devoted, sanctified) the LORD, it was sacrificed. The problem with the firstborn of a donkey is that this animal was considered unclean and could not be used as a sacrifice. However since donkeys were valuable animals used for many chores, the law allowed one to redeem his donkey with a lamb (again we see in essence the blood of a lamb paying the price to set the donkey free, all of these blood

sacrifices of course -- and this one clearly a substitutionary sacrifice -- pointed to God's future Lamb for only His blood offered as a substitute could effect redemption of men from slavery to Sin and Satan.) If the donkey was not redeemed it had to be killed.

**Currid** adds that "Since man is depriving God of his due, then man is denied use of the animal (DONKEY). Breaking the donkey's **neck** instead of killing it with a knife or by some other means is probably in order to divorce it from any sacrificial act or intent."

**And every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem** - "Redeem every first-born male among your sons." You shall redeem means they were to buy them back at a price, which we later see was fixed at five shekels per male (see Nu 18:16, cf Nu 3:46-47). Can you see the dual effect of this law? While the firstborn of Israelites in deliverance from Egypt was redeemed with the blood of a lamb, the firstborn thereafter were to be redeemed and this would serve as a reminder pointing back to Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt but also a "shadow" pointing forward to Yahweh's future deliverance by the blood of the Lamb, God's only begotten Son!

**THOUGHT** - They needed this reminder. But look in the mirror dear believer, for the person you see also needs reminders. WE ALL TEND TO FORGET THE GREAT ACTS OF GOD IN OUR LIFE! Indeed, this is part of the power of celebrating the Lord's Supper, for it serves as a reminder of the blood of the ultimate Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+). The next time you celebrate communion, think about your mercy filled deliverance out of this fallen, passing (1 Jn 2:17) world ("Egypt") which you have experienced by exertion the strong arm of Jehovah (actually **two strong arms**, each nailed to an old rugged cross!) And then strive (by the power of the Spirit) to live the succeeding days without the corrupting effects of the leaven of sin in your life (motivated by love for the Lamb and the great deliverance God wrought for you on Calvary)!

**Hobbs** adds that "These rites were meant to be more than symbols, more than memorials. They were to be vivid visual aids by which the older generation could instruct the younger in the ways of God. Man's memory is all too short, at best. Man needs reminders, especially in following faithfully a God unseen. Therefore the monuments left along God's mighty road of deliverance were to be teaching instruments perpetuating the life of God in the continuing life of Israel for all time to come. In this sense these rites were to be flames of remembrance, keeping God alive in the hearts of his people."

Paul makes the statement "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? (WHY?) For (term of explanation) **you have been bought with a price**: (AKA "REDEEMED") therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20+, Titus 2:14+ = His own possession, 1 Peter 2:9+ = A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,). And now we as **firstborn** (all believers are in a sense "firstborn" - see Heb 12:23) and should daily present our bodies (heart, soul, mind, strength - Mk 12:30) our bodies as living and holy sacrifices, acceptable (pleasing) to God (AND DON'T CRAWL OFF THE ALTAR DURING THE DAY!) (Ro 12:1+)

**Redeem** (06299) see note below on [padah](#). This same verb is used again in a description of Israel's deliverance from Egypt in Dt 7:8 "because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and **redeemed** ([padah](#); Lxx = [lutroo](#)) you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." And again in Deut 13:5 Moses has a similar description = "the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and **redeemed** ([padah](#); Lxx = [lutroo](#)) you from the house of slavery."

**Thompson** - God makes provision concerning donkeys. Every firstborn donkey is to be redeemed by a lamb. If you do not redeem the donkey the neck is to be broken. No firstborn animal could be kept for personal use. It either needed to be redeemed or it needed to die. Why? Because all of this pointed to Jesus Christ, who would have to die in order to redeem Israel and us. Now donkeys were considered to be unclean animals (Lev. 11:2-4), but they could be redeemed by a Lamb (ED: AND AS BEST I CAN DISCERN FROM THE SCRIPTURES THERE IS NO PROHIBITION FROM USING THEM FOR WORK, AND YET THEY LIKE THE REDEEMED SONS STILL BELONGED TO THE LORD.).

**Bush** has an interesting note - The redemption of a child took place when it was a month old. If it died sooner, the parents were not obliged to redeem it. It died as it were to God, to whom it previously belonged. (Exodus, 1861)

**Joseph Parker** - Every firstling of a donkey thou shalt redeem with a lamb. -- Little things are made important in the Scriptures. This is an apparently out-of-the-way incident. Out of the way! What way? Out of our way, possibly; but what is our way? a little path leading nowhere: a road we have made with which to please ourselves to go up and down upon, and suppose to be the universe.

**Exodus 13:14** "And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.'

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**Currid** - 'And it will come to pass in days to come, when your son asks you, saying, "What is this?" that you shall say to him, "With a strong hand Yahweh brought us out from Egypt, from the house of slaves."' '

- **son** - Ex 12:26 De 6:20-24 Jos 4:6,21-24 Ps 145:4
- **in time to come** -Ex 12:26 Ge 30:33 De 6:20 Jos 4:6 22:24
- **With a powerful hand** - Ex 13:3
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **THE EXODUS IS DIDACTIC! WHAT IS THIS? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

**Didactic** means designed or intended to teach, to convey instruction, especially (in the context of Scripture) to teach moral lessons that produce moral behavior, not motivated by legalism but motivated by a love for God and what He has done for each of us whom He has rescued from certain eternal disaster!

Parallel passage (relates to Passover feast) - "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' (Ex 12:26+)

Notice that the instruction of children is part of the law of the LORD! It is not optional, but is necessary to perpetuate the truth of Israel's powerful Deliverer.

**And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?'**- Time to come is literally "tomorrow." The question is **What is this?** What does this mean? "Why do we do this? Why did you have to break the neck of the donkey? Or why did a lamb have to shed its blood for the life of the donkey?"

**THOUGHT** - Do we as parents conduct ourselves daily in such a way (led by, filled with the Spirit) that our words and actions prompt our children to ask "Why do you speak that way?" Or "Why do you do this or that?" If we live with an attitude of worship to Jehovah, not a religious ritual), it will be obvious to those nearest us and it will have an impact on their thinking and thus their acting. The highest calling of Christian parents is to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4<sup>+</sup>).

**Then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery - Powerful hand** is literally "strength of hand" and of course is anthropomorphic for the power of God. In short, this deliverance was 100% God's work and God's power, for as slaves they had no power against the most powerful nation in the world! (The same applies to every person born "dead" in Adam - Ro 5:12<sup>+</sup> - which is ALL of us! We are ALL powerless against sin and Satan! We need a Powerful Hand!) The laws of the firstborn (and unleavened bread) are not to burden us, but to invigorate an attitude of worship and reverence for Jehovah. And especially an attitude of gratitude for His provision of so great a salvation, to the Jews a deliverance from bondage to Pharaoh, but to believers today a deliverance from bondage to sin and Satan and eternal death by His **powerful hand**. So fittingly the answer to the son's question begins with exaltation of the greatness of Jehovah and His mighty deliverance of their ancestors out of bondage in Egypt.

**Hobbs** writes "Page H. Kelley wrote, "Passover was the ancient Hebrews' Easter and the Fourth of July all wrapped up into one." Their deliverance from slavery in Egypt foreshadowed the deliverance from sin and death made possible through Jesus Christ."

This life/death picture shows that God is serious about the Hebrews remembering His great deliverance out of Egypt, out of slavery simply, but profoundly (and mysteriously and supernaturally) by the blood of a lamb.

**THOUGHT** - Ultimately, these OT laws regarding firstborn and feast of unleavened bread were but a faint shadow (Col 2:16, 17<sup>+</sup>) pointing a divine index finger (so to speak) of the **powerful hand of Jehovah** to the Cross of Christ, the Lamb of God, Whose "blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me!"

### **Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing**

My great Redeemer's praise,  
The glories of my God and king,  
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,  
Assist me to proclaim,  
To spread through all the earth abroad,  
The honors of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease—  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

**He breaks the pow'r of canceled sin,  
He sets the pris'ner free;  
His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood availed for me.**

**Walter Kaiser** says **house of slavery** "is literally *"from a house of slaveries"* (also Ex 20:2; Dt 5:6; 6:12). Bush reminds us (Exodus, 1:155) of Egypt being called *"the iron-smelting furnace"* in Dt 4:20 ("But the LORD has taken you and brought you **out of the iron furnace**, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today); 1 Ki 8:51 ("from Egypt, from the midst of **the iron furnace**"); and Jer 11:4 ("I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from **the iron furnace**,"). (EBC-Ex)

**House of slavery** - 11x in 11v always referring to Israel in Egyptian bondage - Exod. 13:3; Exod. 13:14; Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 8:14; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:10; Jdg. 6:8; Mic. 6:4

**NET** - The expression is "with strength of hand," making "hand" the genitive of specification. In translation "strength" becomes the modifier, because "hand" specifies where the strength was. But of course the whole expression is anthropomorphic for the power of God.

**Bush** applies this truth - This feature of the Mosaic economy was calculated to have a powerful practical effect upon the eldest sons of every family (ED: FIRSTBORN MALES WHO HAD BEEN DEDICATED AS INFANTS!); for when they were taught that they themselves had been redeemed by their parents according to the divine appointment, they could scarcely fail to perceive that peculiar obligations rested upon them to walk worthy of that hallowed preeminence with which they were invested in God's estimation. But if this was the impression produced by this statute on the minds of Jewish children, how should Christians be affected with the consideration, that they have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, like the first-born of Israel, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot? (Amen? Amen!)

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**Andrew Murray's** discussion "[Sanctify the First-Born](#)" - Exodus 13:1, 13-15

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**F B Meyer - Exodus 13:14 By strength of hand the Lord brought us out.**

Four times over in this chapter Moses lays stress on the strong hand with which God redeemed his people from the bondage of Egypt; and we are reminded of "the exceeding greatness of His power, which is to us-ward who believe" (Ephesians 1:12-20).

**God's strong hand reaches down to where we are.** — It would have been useless if Israel had been bidden to help itself up to a certain point, whilst God would do the rest. The people were so broken that they could only lie at the bottom of the pit, and moan. God's hand reached down to touch and grasp them at their lowest. So God's help is not conditional on our doing something, whilst He will do the rest. When we are without strength, when we have expended our all in vain, when heart and flesh fail then God comes where we are, and becomes the strength of our heart and our portion for ever.

**God's strong hand is mightier than our mightiest adversaries.** — Pharaoh was strong, and held the people as a child may hold a moth in its clenched fist. But a man's hand is stronger than a child's, and God's than Pharaoh's. So Satan may have held you in bondage; but do not fear him any more, look away to the strength of God's hand. What can it not do for you?

**We must appropriate and reckon on God's strong hand.** — It is there towards them who believe, as a locomotive may be next a line of carriages; yet there must be a coupling-iron connecting them. So you must trust God's strength, and avail yourself of it, and yield to it. Remember that his arm is not shortened, nor his hand paralyzed, except our unbelief and sin intercept and hinder the mighty working of his Power.

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## Where History Comes Alive

When your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" . . . you shall say, "It is the Passover." —Exodus 12:26-27

Today's Scripture: Exodus 13:14-16

The movie *Night at the Museum* portrays the humorous experiences of a security guard at a natural history museum. The excitement begins for him when the displays come to life at night.

Inspired by this movie, directors of a real museum created a similar experience. The staff portrayed historic figures such as knights in armor, Victorian ladies, and Egyptian royalty. When children arrived at the museum, they were told that the people in the exhibits had come alive and needed to be led back to their proper place. As the children responded, history came alive for them.

Children need not be bored by history. This is especially true of Bible stories. Take Moses, for example. He escaped death as a child, was educated as a prince, worked miracles, and received the Ten Commandments on tablets. What exciting story elements that teach children about God!

Biblical stories have been shared with children for generations—all the way back to the times of Exodus (ch.12–13) and Deuteronomy (ch.6). Moses described times when children were retold vital stories from Jewish history.

Why not set a time to read Bible stories to the children in your life? Then watch their excitement as biblical history comes alive!  
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The stories in the Word of God  
Are there for us to see  
How God has worked in people's lives  
Throughout all history.  
—Sper

The Bible's treasures are found by those who dig for them.

**Exodus 13:15 'It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring of every womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.'**

**Currid** - 'And it came to pass when Pharaoh was stubborn about sending us out that Yahweh killed all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of man to the first-born of animals. Therefore, I sacrifice to Yahweh every first-born of the womb, the males, but every first-born of my sons I will redeem.'

- **the LORD killed every firstborn** - Ex 12:29
- **therefore I** - Ex 13:12
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE ANSWER TO THE SON'S QUESTION CONTINUES

Keep the context in mind - the father is still answering his son's question in Ex 13:14.

**It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring of every womb** - Notice the text says the LORD killed every firstborn, but in Ps 78:49 we read "He sent upon them His burning anger, fury and indignation and trouble, a **band of destroying angels** ("messengers who bring disaster" NET)." The angels were not evil but they did bring judgment. **Criswell** writes (on Ps 78:49) this "denotes good angels that execute the judgments of God (cf. Ge 19:1-6; 2 Sa 24:15-17; 2 Ki 19:35)."

Regarding **every firstborn of my sons I redeem** - One would "redeem" his firstborn son by paying a certain amount of money to the priests.

**Rayburn** explains "Part of this symbolism is, of course, the recollection of the history of the Passover and part of it is the idea that the people, generation by generation – represented as they would be by the **firstborn** – belong to the Lord. He has a claim on them because he has purchased them, redeemed them. As Paul will later put the logic: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20<sup>+</sup>)

NLT Exodus 13:15 Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and animals. That is why I now sacrifice all the firstborn males to the LORD-- **except that the firstborn sons are always bought back**



**Matthew Henry** - It is the church of the **firstborn** that is sanctified to God, Heb. 12:23. Christ is the **firstborn** among many brethren (Ro 8:29), and, by virtue of their union with Him, all that are born again, and born from above, are accounted as **firstborn**.

**J Vernon McGee** - This observance was to remind the Israelites that God delivered them out of the land of Egypt. The firstborn of their sons had to be redeemed by silver. We are told in 1 Peter 1:18–19<sup>+</sup> that, “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

**Spurgeon** - The term “firstborn” often meant, in Scripture, the most excellent, the chief. Jesus Christ, because of the excellence of His character, is said to be “**the firstborn among many brothers**” (Ro 8:29-note), “**the firstborn over all creation**” (Col 1:15-note), and “**the firstborn from the dead, so that in He Himself may become first in everything**” (Col 1:18-note). So, although believers are, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others, yet after Christ has renewed them, they become the excellent of the earth in whom should be all our delight. But the term “**firstborn**” has a second meaning in Scripture. The firstborn, under the old Mosaic economy, were chosen by God for Himself. When He smote the **firstborn** of Egypt, He set apart for Himself all the **firstborn** of Israel. He might have selected the youngest of the family, or the second, if He had chosen to do so, for God does as He wills, and “he will not answer all a person’s words” (Job 33:13).

In another note **Spurgeon** writes - In the dark and dreadful night, the destroying angel is let loose, with noiseless wings, and with a sharp sword that never misses its mark. He is speeding from house to house throughout all the land of Egypt, and from the firstborn of Pharaoh upon the throne to the firstborn of the slave woman behind the mill, they fall dead, and Egypt’s wail goes up to heaven in an exceedingly bitter and piercing cry. But throughout the houses of the Israelites a different scene is being witnessed. The doors are shut; a roasted lamb lies upon the table, and men and women stand around it, girt as for a journey, and with their staffs in their hands, and they eat in haste. There is a firstborn child in his mother’s arms, or a firstborn male who is grown up, yet they show no sign of trepidation, though it is well known that, on that night, the firstborn are to die. Why are they so calm? Had you been present, an hour or two ago, you would have seen that the father, when he slew the lamb, drained the warm life blood into a bowl, and, as his children gathered about him, he said to them, “Come, follow me.” And taking with him a bunch of hyssop, he went to the outside of his door, and smote the lintel until it was crimsoned with the blood of the lamb, and then he sprinkled the posts on either side so that the blood was all about the door. “And now,” said he, “my children, we are safe. When God sees the blood, He will pass over us, and our firstborn will not be slain. The blood will make them secure.” **In like manner, we who are the FIRSTBORN of God are saved by the blood of Jesus.**

**Brian Bell** on **first-born** - In ancient days the kings kept a register of their faithful citizens (like king Ahasuerus having the Book of Records, read to him, & ran across the faithful citizen Mordecai) Firstborn – all rights of inheritance go to the 1st born, to us who are co-heirs w/Christ. Bishop Westcott says, we are a society of eldest sons of God. [there are no 2nd, 3rd, 4th sons & daughters in the church] ([Sermon](#))

**Firstborn** (01060) (**bekor**) means an offspring who came first in the order of birth (animals Ge 4:4) or persons (Ge 25:13). Swanson adds that **bekor** means “firstborn, usually, the first male offspring, the oldest son, with the associative meaning of prominence in the clan and privileges pertaining to clan and inheritance (Ge 43:33; Ne 10:37).” The firstborn of clean animals were sacrificed to the Lord (Dt. 12:6, 17), but the firstborn males of unclean animals could be redeemed (Nu 18:15) **Currid** - Yahweh calls Israel his ‘first-born son’. He uses the language of a family relationship. The status of the first-born in antiquity was one of great privilege. In the laws of Israel, the first-born had the right of headship of the family after the father died, and the right of receiving a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:17). It was a position of prominence and pre-eminence.

The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **bekor** with Greek word **prototokos** (from **protos** = first, foremost, in place order or time; rank dignity + **titko** = beget, to bear, bring forth) can mean **first-born chronologically** speaking of Jesus in (Lk 2:7+), but refers primarily to position, rank, priority of position and emphasizes preeminence.

Thus in Colossians 1:15<sup>+</sup> Paul writes that Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation.” In this passage the emphasis is on the priority of Jesus’ **rank** as over and above creation. In both Greek and Jewish culture, the **first-born** was the son who had the right of inheritance. He was **not** necessarily the first one born chronologically.

**Prototokos** is used 8 times in the NT and four refer to Jesus’ preeminence --

- Colossians 1:18 ([note](#)), He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the **firstborn** from the dead (HIS RESURRECTION), so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
- Romans 8:29 ([note](#)), For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the **firstborn** among many brethren (His position in relationship to

His Church);

- Hebrews 1:6 ([note](#)), And when He again brings the **firstborn** into the world (HIS SECOND COMING), He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."
- Rev 1:5 ([note](#)) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the **firstborn** of the dead (HIS RESURRECTION), and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

In both Greek and Jewish culture, the **first-born** was the son who had the right of inheritance. He was **not** necessarily the first one born chronologically. Although Esau was born first chronologically, it was Jacob who declared the "**first-born**" in regard to the blessing from Isaac (Jacob speaking to Esau said "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his **birthright** (Septuagint translates Hebrew with Greek word **prototokos**) to Jacob." [Gen 25:33]).

The nation of **Israel** was figuratively called God's **first-born** in Ex 4:22+ and Jer 31:9+ (Ephraim [ISRAEL] is My firstborn). Though Israel clearly was not the first people born, they held first place or the place of pre-eminence in God's sight among all the nations (cf Deut 7:7).

Solomon was the preeminent son of David, although he was not the actual first born ("Sons were born to David at Hebron: his **first-born** [Septuagint translates with Greek **prototokos**] was Amnon" 2Sa 3:2)

In Ps 89:27, God says of the Messiah that He "shall make him My **first-born**" then defines what He means—"the highest of the kings of the earth."

In Revelation 1:5 ([note](#)), Jesus is called **the first-born of the dead** even though He was not the first person to be resurrected chronologically. Of all ever raised, He is the preeminent One.

Hebrews 12:23+ - "The general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven" will have all Christians of all times as its members. It will have its first full **assembly** in the future age with the OT **spirits of righteous men made perfect** are together with NT saints forever. And thus this reference is to the whole communion of saints (all Christians of all times) who have come, not merely into the presence of the church, but into its membership by faith in Christ. The writing of their names in heaven recalls Jesus' words to his disciples, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Lk 10:20+).

They will all share with Jesus the title of **firstborn** (Col 1:18) because they are "heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17-[note](#)).

**Bruckner** has an interesting note - Later, in the book of Numbers, the tribe of the Levites was dedicated to the Lord in place of redeeming the firstborn with a lamb. Their animals became substitutes for sacrificing all the firstborn animals (Num. 3:11–13, 40–51).

**Was stubborn** ([07185](#))(**qashah**) means to be hard, to be hardened, to be stiff-necked. **Coppes** writes that "The root qāshî apparently arose from an agricultural milieu. It emphasizes, first, the subjective effect exerted by an overly heavy yoke, which is hard to bear, and secondarily, the rebellious resistance of oxen to the yoke." (TWOT) **Qashah** thus refers to something difficult, heart, cruels, severe - severe labor (Ge 35:16, 17); cruel wrath (Ge 49:7), hardened spirit (Dt 2:30); neck (not to be) stiff (Dt 10:16); severe hand (1 Sa 5:7); harsh words (2 Sa 19:43); heavy yoke (1 Ki 12:4, 2 Chr 10:4); stiffened (hardened) neck (2 Ki 17:14, 2 Chr 30:8, 36:13, Jer 7:26, 17:23, 19:15); hardened heart (Ps 95:8; Pr 28:14, cf hardened neck - Pr 29:1); hard-pressed (Isa 8:21). This passage gives a good picture of the meaning of qashah speaking of Israel which often stiffened their neck to Yahweh or His prophets - "'Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but **stiffened** their neck; they did more evil than their fathers." (Jer 7:26). So a stiffened neck (or hardened heart) does not listen but does evil! Woe! God keep all of us from falling into the deadly trap of a stiff neck or hard heart to Your loving truth, grace, and mercy in Jesus' Name. Amen

**Qashah** - 28x in 28v - became stubborn\*(2), cruel(1), defied\*(1), hard(1), hard thing(1), hard-pressed(1), harden(2), hardened(1), hardens(2), harsher(1), made our hard(2), seem hard(1), severe(2), stiffen(2), stiffened(6), stubborn(1), suffered severe(1). Gen. 35:16; Gen. 35:17; Gen. 49:7; Exod. 7:3; Exod. 13:15; Deut. 1:17; Deut. 2:30; Deut. 10:16; Deut. 15:18; 1 Sam. 5:7; 2 Sam. 19:43; 1 Ki. 12:4; 2 Ki. 2:10; 2 Ki. 17:14; 2 Chr. 10:4; 2 Chr. 30:8; 2 Chr. 36:13; Neh. 9:16; Neh. 9:17; Neh. 9:29; Job 9:4; Ps. 95:8; Prov. 28:14; Prov. 29:1; Isa. 8:21; Jer. 7:26; Jer. 17:23; Jer. 19:15

**But every firstborn of my sons I redeem** - Although **firstborn sons** were to be offered to Jehovah, He did not want them to actually be sacrificed and thus gave provision to redeem.

**Redeem** (06299)(**padah**) means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to effect the freedom or release of a person who is in bondage or ownership by another and it often implies a delivering or rescue from distress. **Padah** describes the transfer of ownership from one to another upon payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. **Padah** is used to depict God's act of redeeming; He **redeemed** His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and the slavery they were under in Egypt (Dt. 7:8; Mic. 6:4). **Padah** is often translated in the Septuagint with the verb **lutroo** (cf related word **lutron** both from **luo** = loosen that which is bound, especially freeing those in prison). The noun **lutron** is the actual ransom price paid for freeing captives from their bonds and setting at liberty. **Lutroo** describes releasing of someone held captive (e.g., prisoner or slave) on receipt of the ransom payment. **Padah** in Exodus - Exod. 13:13; Exod. 13:15; Exod. 21:8; Exod. 34:20;

**Padah** is used to refer to the Exodus in the following...

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (see also Dt. 9:26; Dt 24:18) "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers (THE UNCONDITIONAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT), the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and **redeemed** (**padah**; Lxx - **lutroo**) you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Micah 6:4+ "Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And **ransomed** (**padah**; Lxx - **lutroo**) you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

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**Herschel Hobbs** - The New Testament words for redeem refer to liberation, but at a price— the blood of Christ (Mark 10:45; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Those who have been redeemed are given many opportunities to testify of what the Lord has done for them. As the Israelites had opportunities, so do we. "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (Ps. 107:2) applies even more to us than to the Israelites, for we have been redeemed from slavery to sin and death. And the testimony of redemption is not just for our children, it is for all the earth.

Bill Howard is in my Sunday School class. He began to drink at an early age and was an alcoholic by the time he joined the navy at age 17. He continued to drink until he hit bottom in December 1959. He went to church on the first Sunday of 1960, heard the gospel, and was saved. He has not taken a drink since then. He is dedicated to telling others what the Lord has done in his life and what the Lord can do in the lives of others.

To sum up the New Testament connections with the Old Testament deliverance from Egyptian bondage, we have noted the following:

1. People are sinners who are enslaved in sin, unable to set themselves free.
2. God in Christ, our Passover Lamb, provided a way of deliverance from the slavery of sin.
3. When we respond in faith to Christ, He sets us free from sin's penalty, begins setting us free from sin's power, and promises to set us free from sin's presence.
4. Being set free from sin and death calls for us to live a new way of life, to minister in Christ's name to others, to teach our children, and to bear witness to others.

In Search the Scriptures for this lesson, we have seen these four comparisons. As God gave Israel a new beginning with the Passover, so He offers us new life in Christ. As God spared the Israelites from death by the blood of the lamb, so God saves us from sin and death by the blood of the Lamb of God. As the Israelites were to offer their firstborn males to God, so are we to give ourselves to Him. As they were to testify of God's delivering them from slavery in Egypt, so are we to testify of Christ's delivering us from sin and death.

Look at your own life in light of these truths. How do you measure up?

- Do you believe that sin brings slavery to sin and death and that only Christ can set a person free from that slavery? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior and experienced the liberation from your sins He gives? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you allowing Him to empower your life to overcome temptations to compromise with old besetting sins? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you teaching your children about the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you telling others what the Lord has done for you and can do for them? \_\_\_\_\_
- Whom have you told recently? \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer of Commitment: "Lord, I praise You for freeing me from sin's slavery and ask You to help me live for You and tell others what You have done for me." (Free At Last)

**Exodus 13:16 "So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."**

- **a sign on your hand** - Ex 13:9 12:13
- **phylacteries on your forehead** - De 6:7-9 Dt 11:18 Mt 23:5
- **for with** - Ex 13:9,14 De 26:8
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SIGNS ON HAND AND HEAD POINT TO POWERFUL HAND OF YAHWEH**

Keep the context in mind - the father is still answering his son's question in Ex 13:14.

**So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt** - **Phylacteries on your forehead** is literally "frontlets between your eyes." (or "bands about the forehead"). See [notes](#) on Ex 13:9. Yes, Yahweh "brought them out," but He also "bought them out," paying the "ransom price" in the blood of a lamb (cf 1 Peter 1:18-19+).

**THOUGHT** - In my opinion, the literal rendering "between your eyes" would support a figuratively interpretation, so that the idea would be these laws in Exodus 13 are to be seen with spiritual eyes, not "religious eyes," the former seeing the true meaning of these laws as energizing relationship (with Yahweh), the latter seeing the laws as a ritual to be practiced religiously. The first practice brings true life. The latter is dead religion. Paul wrote that God "made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter (LAW) kills, but the Spirit gives life." (2 Cor 3:6+, cf Jn 6:63, cf read Jesus' words on the oppressive burden of rituals like phylacteries - Mt 23:4-5) One is reminded of Paul's prayer "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." (Eph 1:18+). An enlightened heart is always God's greatest purpose for His laws, ordinances, precepts, etc, because He knows that our heart is what will direct (energized by the Spirit) our feet to walk in a manner worthy of His Name.

In support of the figurative interpretation, the Septuagint rendering of "*frontlets between your eyes*" uses the adjective **asaleutos** which means unmovable (of the ship wrecked with prow stuck fast and immovable - Acts 27:41+) and unshakeable, enduring, firm, unchangeable as in Heb 12:28 referring to the kingdom we inherit in Christ. Hence, the picture in Ex 13:16 is of these laws/ordinances being fixed, immovable, enduring before one's (spiritual) eyes, not a small box fixed to one's forehead!

**Hobbs** agrees - The words **a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead** are similar to Deuteronomy 6:8 and Dt 11:18. Some Jews take these statements literally and wear on their arms and on their heads small leather boxes containing Scripture verses. More likely these words were to be taken figuratively. In other words, *frontlets between thine eyes* indicates that what they looked at, how they saw and interpreted their world, was to be through this lens. What God had done for them and commanded them to do was to color their whole worldview. A **sign on your hand** indicates that what they reached out to do was to be in conscious recollection of what God had done for them and commanded them to do. That is, these truths were to become an integral part of their lives. They were to be within (ED: THAT IS IN THEIR HEART, THEIR "CONTROL CENTER"), and (ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT) were to be expressed in outward godly living and faithful testimony.

**Phylacteries** (frontlets)([02903](#))(**toptaphoth**) is used only in Ex 13:16, Dt 6:8 and Dt 11:18. The **toptaphoth** was a band, a sign or a mark that was placed on the forehead, "between the eyes" and was to serve as a reminder in Ex 13:16 and the dedication of the firstborn. In Dt. 6:8 and Dt 11:18 the phylacteries were to serve as reminders of the Lord's commandments. The instruction was to bind the phylactery between one's eyes and bind the Lord's command to one's hand as a symbol of the Law's involvement in every part of life of a Hebrew, including his actions (binding on hands), and his thoughts (binding on head). This symbol was to be a perpetual reminder but was taken literally by the Jews who began to wear real leather boxes on their arms and foreheads that contained portions of the Law. Jesus condemned those who made their phylacteries larger than usual in an attempt to appear more pious to others (Mt. 23:5). The wearing of phylacteries has continued as a practice among orthodox Jews to this day (especially with the [Shema](#) of Deut. 6:4).

**TWOT** adds this note - A common means of identifying slaves in the ancient near east was to mark their hands and/or their foreheads. Perhaps these "frontlets" were marking Israelites as the Lord's servants who

were to be identified by allowing the Law to permeate their thoughts and actions. The literal "marking" (whatever the form) had its primary sense in the figurative equation with God's commandments as the "frontlets"—the statutes of the feast of unleavened bread (Exodus 13:1-10), the regulations of the firstborn (Exodus 13:11-16), and the overall stipulations of the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 6:8; Deut. 11:18). These "frontlets" were to be "memorials" on the forehead (cf. the substitution of zikkārôn for ʾôṭāpôt in Exodus 13:9), reminding the Israelite to think upon the commandments of the Lord and to keep them. Later Jewry took these "frontlets" in a literal ostentatious way and were rebuked by Jesus (Matthew 23:5). They tied little boxes on their foreheads and wrists and placed scripture verses in them as a reminder. One of these phylacteries was found in the caves of Qumran. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Kaiser on phylacteries** - Rawlinson (1:300) believes that Moses borrowed and reinterpreted the Egyptian practice of wearing as amulets "forms of words written on folds of papyrus tightly rolled up and sewn in linen." (EBC)

**NET Note on phylacteries on your forehead** - The Gemara interprets it as a band that goes from ear to ear. In the Targum to 2 Sam 1:10 it is an armlet worn by Saul

**Thompson** - So the firstborn was to be a sign of the delivering power of God. A sign points to something. Now when we turn to the N.T., it is clear that Jesus Christ is frequently referred to as being the firstborn:

1. Jesus was the **firstborn** of Mary—Mt. 1:25; Lk. 2:7;
2. Jesus was the **firstborn** from the dead—Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5
3. Jesus is the **firstborn** among many brethren—Ro 8:29
4. Jesus is the **firstborn** of all creation—Col. 1:15
5. Jesus is the **firstborn** from the dead - Col 1:18
6. Jesus is the **firstborn** Who is returning - Heb 1:6
7. All in Jesus are now also **firstborn** - Hebrews 12:23

**NET Note** - The pattern of the passage now emerges more clearly; it concerns **the grateful debt of the redeemed**. In the first part eating the unleavened bread recalls the night of deliverance in Egypt, and it calls for purity. In the second part the **dedication of the firstborn** was an acknowledgment of the deliverance of the firstborn from bondage. They were to remember the deliverance and choose purity; they were to remember the deliverance and choose dedication. The NT will also say, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, therefore, glorify God" ( 1 Cor 6:20). Here too the truths of God's great redemption must be learned well and retained well from generation to generation.

**Currid's application** - It should be observed that the act of redeeming the first-born in Israel was a mere shadow of the work of Christ. The result of the tenth plague was a deliverance of Israel that was physical, earthly and temporal. The redemptive work of Christ in his death is much greater: it is also eternal and spiritual. Thus, the Old Testament act of redemption reaches its apex and its fulfilment in the work of the great Redeemer in the New Testament.

**Exodus 13:17** Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, "The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."

- **The people might change their minds**- Ex 14:11,12 Nu 14:1-4 De 20:8 Jud 7:3 1Ki 8:47 Lu 14:27-32 Ac 15:38
- **return to Egypt**- Ex 16:2,3 De 17:16 Ne 9:17 Ac 7:39
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE KING'S HIGHWAY ([Via Maris](#)) - See [Purple Line](#)

## ISRAEL'S TRAVEL ITINERARY BEGINS

This next major section goes from Ex 13:17-15:21 and takes Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea and into the wilderness. This section has three short parts: the leading to the sea (17–18), the bones of Joseph (19), and the leading by the cloud and pillar (20–22).

[He leadeth me: O blessed thought!](#)

---Joseph H. Gilmore

He leadeth me, O blessed thought  
O words with heavenly comfort fraught  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom  
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom  
By waters still, over troubled sea  
Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me

He leadeth me, He leadeth me  
By His own hand He leadeth me  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me

Lord, I would place thine hand in mine  
Nor ever murmur nor repine  
Content, whatever lot I see  
Since 'tis thine hand that leadeth me

He leadeth me, He leadeth me  
By His own hand He leadeth me  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me

And when my task on earth is done  
When by thy grace the victory's won  
Even death's cold wave I will not flee  
Since God through Jordan leadeth me

He leadeth me, He leadeth me  
By His own hand He leadeth me  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me

His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me

For by His hand He leadeth me

**Warren Wiersbe** introduces this section with these wise words - History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid." President Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke those words in his first inaugural address, January 20, 1953. As the man who helped lead the Allies to victory in World War II, General Eisenhower knew a great deal about the high cost of victory as well as the heavy burden of freedom that always follows. British novelist Charles Kingsley rightly said, "There are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; and the true, where a man is free to do what he ought." Throughout their history, the nation of Israel struggled with both of these freedoms, just as God's people struggle with them today. It's a mark of maturity when we learn that freedom is a tool to build with, not a toy to play with, and that freedom involves accepting responsibility. Israel's exodus experience taught them that their future success lay in fulfilling three important responsibilities: following the Lord (Ex 13:17–22), trusting the Lord (Ex 14:1–31), and praising the Lord (Ex 15:12–21). (Be Delivered)

**Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near** - Travelers going east out of Egypt had two options "the way of the sea" or "the way of Shur." On the Way of the Sea [Via Maris](#)) route Israel could have walked to Gaza in only about ten days. From Succoth the fastest and shortest route to take to the Promised Land would be a northeast route of about 150 miles. But the **easiest** is not always the **best**! And so we see how God leads them in Ex 13:21 "going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way." What was this cloud? I personally think it was the [Shekinah glory cloud](#).

**Matthew Henry** - Their spirits were broken with slavery; it was not easy for them to turn their hands of a sudden from the trowel to the sword.

**Guzik** - It would have been easy for the Israelites to think that the [Via Maris](#) was the way to go; it had good, easy roads, the



shortest distance, it was a trade route so food and water could be bought. But the dangers of the way were too great, though they could not see them. God anticipated dangers they could not see.. In the same way, God will never allow us to face more than we are able to bear; He knows what we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13+). "He carefully chose their way out of Egypt; not the nearer, but the safer. He tempts not above what we are able: but so orders the matter, that evils are not ready for us until we for them." (Trapp)i. "The nation delivered and consecrated is seen at once as under the direct government and guidance of God." (Morgan)

**NET** on the verb **lead** - The verb נָחַח (nakhah, "to lead") is a fairly common word in the Bible for God's leading of his people (as in Ps 23:3 for leading in the paths of righteousness). This passage illustrates what others affirm, that God leads his people in a way that is for their own good. There were shorter routes to take, but the people were not ready for them.

**NET** on **Philistines** - The term **Philistines** has been viewed by modern scholarship as an anachronism, since the Philistines were not believed to have settled in the region until the reign of Rameses III (in which case the term would not fit either the early or the late view of the exodus). But the OT clearly refers to Philistines in the days of the patriarchs. The people there in the earlier period may have been Semites, judging from their names, or they may have been migrants from Crete in the early time. The Philistines after the exodus were of Greek origin. The danger of warfare at this time was clearly with Canaanitish tribes.

There is another reason Moses was not to lead them directly to Canaan - it was to fulfill **asign**. Jehovah had promised Moses a sign after he brought the Israelites out of Egypt...

And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the **sign** to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain (Ex 3:1+ = "mountain of God")." (Ex 3:12+)

**for** - Term of explanation. This one is obvious.

**God said, "The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt** - Moses gave them direction but as he received it from the Lord. This is the first mention of **God** since Exodus 10:25+ (LORD our God). The Egyptians had fortresses on the [Via Maris](#) (see map above) and would have engaged Israel in battle had they gone "the easy way." The Hebrew is translated [naham](#) here in the Septuagint with the verb [apostrepho](#) which means to turn away from something, in this case from their journey to the promised land. **NET** adds on **naham** "This nontheological usage gives a good illustration of the basic meaning of having a change of mind or having regrets."

**THOUGHT** - Is there not a lesson for all of us? What appears to be the "easy way" at first glance and using human logic is not always the best way. It is not always the way the LORD would lead us. The upshot is that when we are preparing for some "journey" that is different from our routine (e.g., we feel God is calling us to go to the missionary field, etc), we need to plead for His lead and then heed His lead! It is that simple! But it not the route our flesh wants us to go, for it says "Go the easy route. You don't need God's guidance on this one. It's so straightforward, surely this is the way God would lead you, so go ahead and go!"

Jeremiah 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

**Matthew Henry** - He may devise his way, and design it; but, after all, it is God that directs his steps, Prov. 16:9. **Man proposes, but God disposes, and in his disposal we must acquiesce, and set ourselves to follow providence.**

Israel would face warfare but not until the Amalekites in Exodus 17.

**Bruckner** on **change their minds** - This would in fact be a temptation, as quick physical liberation does not necessarily result in the liberation of one's self-perception (Ex 14:10–14). (Ibid)

**Kaiser** - There were three possible routes of escape: (1) a northeast route going to Qantara through the land of the Philistines to Gaza and Canaan; (2) a middle route heading across the Negeb to Beersheba, which incorrectly assumes Mount Sinai is Gebel Halal near Kadesh-Barnea; and (3) a southeast route leading from the wilderness east of modern Ismailia to the southern extremities of the Sinai Peninsula. (EBC)

**John Currid** observes that the "direct route would have been the [Via Maris](#) (the Way of the Sea) that extends from the Nile river across the northern Sinai into the coastal plain of Palestine. This was an extensively travelled road in ancient times, and was probably the most commonly used route from Egypt to Asia. An attempted escape through northern Sinai would have placed the Hebrews in harm's way because the primary roads in that region were guarded by a series of Egyptian forts. God was well aware of the character of the Israelites, that they would flee at the first sign of danger and war. They would simply prefer to return to Egypt and its oppression rather than face the hazards of battle (consider Num. 14:1–4 where God's assessment is shown to be correct).

**Matthew Henry** - If we think he leads not his people the nearest way, yet we may be sure he leads them the best way, and so it will appear when we come to our journey's end. **Judge nothing before the time...** 1 Corinthians 10:13<sup>±</sup> = "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." God knows our frame, and considers our weakness and faintheartedness, and by less trials will prepare us for greater. God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle brings up her young ones (Dt. 32:11), teaching them by degrees to fly.

**NET Note** - This short section (Ex 13:17–22) marks the beginning of the journey of the Israelites toward the sea and Sinai. The emphasis here is on the leading of Yahweh—but this leading is manifested in a unique, supernatural way—unlikely to be repeated with these phenomena. Although a primary application of such a passage would be difficult, the general principle is clear: God, by his clear revelation, leads his people to the fulfillment of the promise. This section has three short parts: the leading to the sea (17–18), the bones of Joseph (19), and the leading by the cloud and pillar (20–22).

**Change their minds** (05162)(**naham/nacham**) can mean to be sorry (to repent), to console oneself, to change one's mind, reconsider, i.e., change one's opinion concerning truth (1Sa 15:29; Ps 110:4); to change one's mind (Nu 23:19). **Gilbrant** - In many locations, the KJV translates *nācham* as "repent," and in the majority of those instances, God is the One Who "repents." The Bible teaches that God is not a man that He has need to repent (1 Sa 15:29); that is, He never sins and therefore never needs to "turn away from" evil deeds, thoughts, etc. Nevertheless, from man's limited perspective, God seems to change his mind concerning certain acts. Many translators use the word "relent" instead to reflect the idea of God's compassion. For example, Ex 32:14 states, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." To understand how such a statement is possible, the Bible teaches that God's judgments are conditional. That is, "If that nation that I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned" (Jer. 18:8, NIV) See [Does God change His mind?](#)

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**Wiersbe** - Israel's exodus from Egypt wasn't the end of their experience with God; it was the new beginning. "It took one night to take Israel out of Egypt, but forty years to take Egypt out of Israel," said George Morrison. If Israel obeyed His will, God would bring them into the Promised Land and give them their inheritance. Forty years later, Moses would remind the new generation, "He [the Lord] brought you out of Egypt ... to bring you in, to give you [the] land as an inheritance" (Deut. 4:37–38, NKJV). The same thing can be said of the redemption we have in Christ: God brought us out of bondage that He might bring us into blessing. A.W. Tozer used to remind us that "we are saved to as well as saved from." The person who trusts Jesus Christ is born again into the family of God, but that's just the beginning of an exciting new adventure that should lead to growth and conquest. God liberates us and then leads us through the varied experiences of life, a day at a time, so that we might get to know Him better and claim by faith all that He wants us to have. At the same time, we come to know ourselves better; we discover our strengths and weaknesses, and we grow in understanding God's will and trusting His promises. (Ibid)

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**G Campbell Morgan** - God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.—Exodus 13:17.

A great principle of the Divine government emerges in these words, an understanding of which will explain many experiences through which His people are called to pass. These people were but now released from slavery, and were undisciplined and untrained. Before they could be ready to withstand the opposition of new enemies, they had much to learn, and many experiences through which to pass. The near way geographically to their destination lay through the land of the Philistines, but to pass that way would inevitably have involved them in conflict. For this they were not in any way pre-pared. To have been thus plunged into it, would necessarily have filled them with despair, producing a change of mind which would have sent them back to Egypt. Therefore God led them round about, by a longer way, having its own difficulties as the sequel will show, but delivering them from this first peril. How constantly God does this with His people! He leads us by ways which seem to us to be long and tedious, when there are ways apparently so \*much more direct to the goal where we know He wills we should be. Let us ever know that when He does so, He is avoiding for us perils of which we may not be conscious, but which are far graver than those through which we pass as we travel the pathway He marks out for us. The nearest way is not always the shortest. Our God never permits us, as long as we obey Him, to meet any danger unprepared. The length of the way, and the slowness of the method, are really making for quick and sure arrival. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible).

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#### **Handfuls of Purpose - James Smith LED BY THE LORD Exodus 13:16–22; 14**

The invisible God led the children of Israel as His own people by the visible, moving, guiding, cloudy pillar. So the Holy Ghost does as really lead us now through the pillar of the Word. As God made the pillar a sheltering cloud and a shining fire, so the Holy Spirit

makes the Word to every believer a place of refuge and a guiding lamp. Those led by the Lord—

**I. Have been Delivered by the Lord** “The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt” (Ex 13:16). Not rebels but sons are led by the Spirit. While under the dominion of sin we are in “the house of bondage.” We must be freed by His blood before we can become “a kingdom of priests unto God” (Rev. 1:5, 6). “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9).

**II. Should Unwaveringly Follow.** “God led them not through the land of the Philistines, although that was near, but through the way of the wilderness” (Ex 13:17, 18). It is comparatively easy for us to follow the Lord when we are led the near way, the way we expected to go, but faith is more severely tested when the way leads us round about, and that through a wilderness. When HE leads us let us be assured it is the right way. It may be through the wilderness of adverse circumstances, bodily affliction, or bereavement (Psa. 107:7).

**III. Shall Follow in an Orderly Manner.** The children of Israel went up by five in a rank out of Egypt” (v. 18, margin). They went out following the Lord as an orderly, armed host. Can there be anything else than harmonious regularity when the Lord leads, and when all are alike willing to follow Him. From whence cometh divisions (1 Cor. 1). Out of the depths of our proud, carnal, self-seeking minds. “I am of Paul, I of Apollos, Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor. 1:12, 13). Holy Spirit, lead Thou me on.

**IV. Will Walk in the Light.** “The Lord went before them to lead the way by a pillar of fire to give them light by night” (Ex 13:21). God in the pillar led them, sheltered them, satisfied them with bread, and in the wilderness darkness shone upon them. Jesus said, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). The light of God’s presence still shines out upon His people in the darkness of this wilderness world through the holy pillar of His Word. “Walk in His light.” “Follow on to know.”

**V. Will be Pursued by the Enemy.** “And Pharaoh pursued after the children of Israel” (Ex 14:8, 9). He said, “They are entangled in the land” (chap. 14:3). They are crazy, and don’t know where they are going. Such weak-minded people will be an easy prey. Yes, when we are led by the Lord we appear fools in the eyes of the worldly-wise. As soon as Christ was led by the Spirit He was tempted of the devil. If any man will live godly he must suffer persecution. It is only after we have escaped out of the kingdom of darkness that we are pursued by the devices and rulers of the darkness of this world. “Woe unto you when all speak well of you” (Luke 6:26).

**VI. Shall see the Salvation of the Lord.** “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Ex 14:13, 14). The victory is to be one of faith. This is the weapon of our warfare, fight the good fight of faith. “Your strength is to sit still” (Isa. 30:7). “Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand, and having done all, stand, stand therefore” (Eph. 6:11–14).

The great wrestling struggle of faith is that we should be able, in the face of all opposing forces, just to keep our standing in Christ Jesus, where we are complete. Stand still, trust on, and ye shall see the salvation of God. The Lord shall fight for you, He shall make a way through the deep, and thou shalt glorify Him.

**VII. Shall Sing the Song of Triumph** “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song” (Ex 15:1). A Red Sea often rolls between our sorrows and our songs. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa. 30:5). “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psa. 50:15). The song of praise will surely follow the restful trust of faith. Think of David’s words, “I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord” (Psa. 132:4, 5). Have we found out a place for the Lord in all the plans, purposes, and affairs of our lives? Make room for Him, and your songs of victory will never cease.

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## God’s Timing

For every matter there is a time and judgment. — Ecclesiastes 8:6

Today’s Scripture: Exodus 13:17-22

Pastor Audley Black’s church near the south coast of Jamaica has been in a building program since at least 2005. That was the first time I visited his church and saw that they were expanding. The last time I was there—in the spring of 2011—some of the walls were up. By that summer, they had started on the roof. When I suggested to Pastor Black that perhaps the church would be done by 2013 when I thought I might return, he said it was a possibility.

There was no hint of disappointment that this project could take 8 years or longer! No, Pastor Black and his people are excited about what God is doing, and they’re patient with His timing.

We are often not that patient. We want our church to grow quickly, our young people to mature right away, and our problems to be fixed today.

Maybe we need to be reminded that some things take time—God's time. For instance, when the Israelites first left Egypt, God sent them on the long route to the Promised Land (Ex. 13:17-18). During that time He prepared them, taught them, and challenged them.

In our microwave world, we want everything done instantaneously. But sometimes that's not God's plan. Let's seek God's help and learn to accept His timing. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He does not lead me year by year,  
Nor even day by day;  
But step by step my path unfolds;  
My Lord directs my way.  
—Ryberg

God's timetable may move slowly, but it does move surely.

**Exodus 13:18 Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt.**

**Currid** - So God led the people by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea, and by divisions the children of Israel went up from the land of Egypt.

- **led the** - Ex 14:2 Nu 33:6-8 De 32:10 Ps 107:7
- **went up in martial array-** Ex 12:51
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Red Sea

**Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea** (click here for the upper portion of the map enlarged and showing the [Gulf of Suez and Gulf of Aqabah](#)) - "around by the way of the desert to the Red Sea." Specifically God directed Israel to go in the opposite direction of where she was headed. God did not lead Israel ON the shortest or fastest route to the Promised Land, but it was His path for them. His path is always the best path!

**Wiersbe** - Nothing takes God by surprise, for in His providence He plans the best way for His people to take. We may not always understand the way He chooses, or even agree with it, but His way is always the right way. We may confidently say, "He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Ps. 23:3NKJV), and we should humbly pray, "Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me" (Ps 25:4–5NKJV)....If you permit the Lord to direct your steps (Pr 3:5–6), expect to be led occasionally on paths that may seem unnecessarily long and circuitous. Remind yourself that God knows what He's doing, He isn't in a hurry, and as long as you follow Him, you're safe and in the place of His blessing. He may close some doors and suddenly open others, and we must be alert (Acts 16:6–10; 2 Cor. 2:12–13).

Those whom God brings into a wilderness he will not leave nor lose there,  
but will take care to lead them through it.  
--- Matthew Henry

**Guzik** - The Red Sea first mentioned here is not the huge expanse of the Red Sea (some 100 miles wide), but the western "finger" of the Red Sea that extends up unto the border areas of Egypt—the modern day [Gulf of Suez](#).

**NET Note on Red Sea** - The translation of this name as "**Red Sea**" comes from the sea's Greek name in the LXX and elsewhere. The Red Sea on today's maps is farther south, below the Sinai Peninsula. But the title Red Sea in ancient times may very well have covered both the [Gulf of Suez and Gulf of Aqabah](#) (see Deut 1:1; 1 Kgs 9:26). The name "Sea of Reeds" in various English versions (usually in the form of a marginal note) and commentaries reflects the meaning of the Hebrew word יָם סוּף a word for reedy water plants (Ex2:3, 5; Isa 19:6; Jonah 2:6 [Eng. v. 5]) that may have a connection with an Egyptian word used for papyrus and other marsh plants. On this basis some have taken the term Yam Suph as perhaps referring to Lake Menzaleh or Lake Ballah, which have abundant reeds, north of the extension of the Red Sea on the western side of Sinai. Whatever exact body of water is meant, it was not merely a marshy swamp that the people waded through, but a body of water large enough to make passage impossible without divine intervention, and deep enough to drown the Egyptian army.

**Red Sea** - 26x in 26v in NAS - Exod. 10:19; Exod. 13:18; Exod. 15:4; Exod. 15:22; Exod. 23:31; Num. 14:25;

Num. 21:4; Num. 33:10; Num. 33:11; Deut. 1:40; Deut. 2:1; Deut. 11:4; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 4:23; Jos. 24:6; Jdg. 11:16; 1 Ki. 9:26; Neh. 9:9; Ps. 106:7; Ps. 106:9; Ps. 106:22; Ps. 136:13; Ps. 136:15; Jer. 49:21; Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29

**John MacArthur** on where they crossed the Red Sea - Four views have generally emerged: It was located

1. in the **northeastern region of the delta**—but this would have been in effect “the way of the sea” and would not have been 3 days’ journey from Marah (Ex 15:22, 23);
2. in the **northern end of the Gulf of Suez**—but this rules out entry into the wilderness of Shur (Ex 15:22);
3. in the **vicinity of Lake Timsah** or the southern extension of present day Lake Menzaleh—but probably more than 3 days from Marah;
4. in the **Bitter Lakes region**, satisfying, in terms of geography and time, all objections to the other options. (MSB)

**and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt** - It is interesting that many of the translations say that Israel went out of Egypt “equipped for battle. (Ex 13:18ESV); “armed for battle” (Ex 13:18NIV), “in battle formation” (Ex 13:18CSB); “prepared for battle.” (Ex 13:18 NET) And yet verse 18 says “**The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.**” The old NKJV may be the best translation “in orderly array.” As J Vernon McGee rightly observes “The Israelites had just come out of slavery, and they were not prepared for warfare. The Israelites coming out of Egyptian slavery had no weapons to fight with; so God graciously took them through the wilderness.” And so **McGee** suggests that the word here is “means that the children of Israel left Egypt in an orderly manner. They did not come out of the land like a mob but in an organized way. They did not have an army but they lined up five in a row. If you had seen them going through the wilderness, you would have observed a most orderly group.”

**NET Note** says **martial array** “is a rare word with uncertain meaning. Most translations have something to do with “in battle array” or “prepared to fight” if need be (cf. Josh 1:14; 4:12). The Targum took it as “armed with weapons.” The LXX had “in the fifth generation.” Some have opted for “in five divisions.”

**Exodus 13:19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you."**

**Currid** - And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because he made the children of Israel truly swear, saying, ‘God will certainly visit you, and you will bring up my bones from this [place] with you.’

- **for he had** - Ge 50:24,25 Jos 24:32 Ac 7:16
- **God** - Ex 4:31 Ge 48:21 Lu 1:58 7:16
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOSES CARRIES OUT AN OATH SWORN 400 YEARS EARLIER!**

**Background** - Genesis 50:24-26 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but **God will surely take care of you** and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.” 25 Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will **surely take care of you**, and you shall carry my bones up from here.” 26 So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.” Note he was embalmed, place in a coffin but not buried. **Guzik** points out that “Genesis 50:25–26 says specifically that Joseph was never buried. His coffin laid above ground for the four hundred or so years until it was taken back to Canaan. It was a silent witness all those years that Israel was going back to the Promised Land, just as God had promise. Now the promise was being fulfilled.”

MacArthur - Some 360 years earlier he had foreseen the day when God would bring about the Exodus, and his instructions about his bones being carried to the Promised Land indicated just how certain he was of Israel’s departure for Canaan.

Joseph’s assurance in God’s promises was recorded in the Hebrews “Hall of Faith”...

**By faith** Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. (Hebrews 11:22<sup>+</sup>)

**Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear**- Joseph had made his brothers take a solemn oath to carry his bones out of Egypt.

**Saying, "God will surely take care of you -** "God will certainly visit you." CSB = "God will certainly come to your aid," describes Joseph's firm belief in divine deliverance. He did not realize it would be four centuries later, but he believed it would occur. Beloved, we too can believe that we will be transported to the true "Promised Land" of Heaven, either when we breathe our last breath or the Lord returns to Rapture us into His presence. The Rapture could be soon (it is 2020 and the Coronavirus has impacted the entire world) or it could be centuries later, but rest assured, it will come to pass for Jesus Himself promised in John 14:3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Joseph firmly believed God concerning the Promised Land and so he confidently spoke a prophecy regarding God's watchcare over His chosen people, even before they were actually an independent nation.

**Take care** (visit) (06485)([pequddah/pāqadh/paqad](#)) conveys the root idea of something that is attended to or set in order. The basic meaning to intervene, to inspect, to pay attention to, to care for. That is the idea in this passage (also used twice in Joseph's original declaration in Ge 50:24 and Ge 50:25). Here in Ex 13:19 and both uses in Genesis 50 the Septuagint translates with two related words, the noun [episkope](#) (a favorable visitation as the presence of divine power to benefit or save) and the verb [episkeptomai](#) meaning to look out for, to be concerned about and in Lk 1:68+ used to describe the truth that the God of Israel "has visited us (Israel) and accomplished redemption (through His Son, the Messiah) for His people."

**And you shall carry my bones from here with you -** Joseph knew that Egypt was not to be Israel's home, but that God had Promised a Land for them and so with great faith declared that God would "bring you up from this land to **the land** which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." (Ge 50:24) After 40 years of carrying his coffin in the wilderness, Joseph's remains finally reached their resting place in Shechem as recorded in...

Joshua 24:32 Now they buried **the bones of Joseph**, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at [Shechem](#), in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons.

**J Vernon McGee** comments that "Joseph wanted to be buried in the Promised Land. But why remove his body and bury it in the land? If Joseph knew he would be raised from the dead someday and taken up to heaven, what difference would it make if his launching pad was in Egypt or in the land of Israel? Well, the fact of the matter is that he was not expecting to go to heaven. He expected to be raised in the resurrection of his people in that land for the [Millennium](#)—and then for eternity. This will be heaven for them. This was the hope of Joseph, and it is also the hope of Moses. By faith Moses takes the bones of Joseph to the Promised Land." (Thru the Bible)

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**EXODUS 13:19**—Does the preservation of Joseph's bones support the Roman Catholic belief in the veneration of relics?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** In Exodus 13:19 "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him [out of Egypt] because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath" (see Gen. 50:25). Roman Catholic scholars use this verse to support their dogma that "it is permissible and profitable to venerate the relics of saints" (Ott, 1960, 319). The Council of Trent declared: "Also the holy bodies of the holy martyrs and of the others who dwell with Christ . . . are to be honored by the faithful" (Denzinger, 1957, no. 985). Ott says that "the reason for the veneration of relics lies in this, that the bodies of the saints were living members of Christ and Temples of the Holy Ghost; that they will again be awakened and glorified and that through them God bestows many benefits on mankind" (Ibid.).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The Catholic dogma of venerating relics and images is without foundation in this Scripture or any other.

The Exodus passage states clearly the purpose for taking Joseph's bones out of Egypt and it was not to venerate them. We read, "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath." He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place" (Exod. 13:19).

Even noted Catholic authority Ludwig Ott admits that "Holy Writ does not mention the veneration of relics" (Ibid.). And the so-called "precedents" in Scripture do not prove the Catholic point. For the bones of Joseph were not venerated; they were simply preserved (Exod. 13:19). Hence, to use this as a biblical proof for venerating relics is to jerk the verse out of context.

Moreover, God condemned the veneration of sacred objects. When the brazen serpent, which God had ordained for the salvation of the Israelites in the wilderness, was later venerated, it was considered idolatry (2 Kings 18:4).

God clearly commanded his people not to make graven images or to bow down to them in an act of religious devotion (Exod. 20:4, 5). This is the same error of the pagans who "revered and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25). The Bible forbids us ever to make or even to "bow" down before an "image" of any creature in an act of religious devotion: "You shall not make for yourselves any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the



waters under the earth; you shall not bow down nor serve them" (Exod. 20:4–5 NKJV, emphasis added). (Norman Geisler, Ron Rhodes - When Cultists Ask)

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**From Gotquestions** - . [How should a Christian view relics?](#) - Here is an excerpt of their answer...

One of the dangers inherent in the veneration of relics is the temptation to commit idolatry. This is exactly what happened in ancient Israel. God had told Moses to make a [bronze serpent](#) in order to save the Hebrews from a plague of poisonous snakes (Numbers 21:8–9). That bronze serpent was kept by the Israelites as a reminder of God's goodness and salvation; however, by the time of King Hezekiah, the "relic" had become an object of worship. Hezekiah's reforms included breaking "into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan)" (2 Kings 18:4). Physical aids to faith, if not commanded by God, are unnecessary and inevitably lead to superstition and idolatry.

There is absolutely no power in Christian relics. Even if the entire cross of Jesus were discovered intact, it would have no spiritual value. Relics do not, in any manner whatsoever, enable us to get closer to God. The humerus of a saint can do nothing for your spirit. Relics should not be prayed to, worshiped, or in any way be used as a means to better connect with God. Using relics in such a talismanic way is blatant idolatry (Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 42:8). An elaborate church filled with relics is no more valid a place for worship than a simple tent in a jungle. We worship the Lord in spirit and truth (John 4:24), not by idols, icons, or relics, whether genuine or fake.

**Exodus 13:20 Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness.**

- Nu 33:5,6
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ON THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS

**Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness** - The exact site of either of these locations is uncertain. Etham is described as a region in Nu 33:6 and appears to be equated with the [Desert of Shur \(see map\)](#) (Ex 15:22). The important point is that this was (1) the place Yahweh wanted His people and (2) a location bordering on the desert area to the East of Egypt. Regarding comments on the locations, respected commentator Walter Kaiser bluntly states "Everyone is guessing!" (EBC-Ex)

"Succoth was evidently north and west of the Bitter Lakes (v. 20). Today the Suez Canal connects the Red Sea with the Mediterranean by way of the Bitter Lakes. Archaeologists have not yet identified certainly the sites referred to here such as Succoth and Etham as well as many of those mentioned in the records of the Israelites' journey (e.g., Num. 33). Consequently it is virtually impossible to pin down their exact locations. Many of these sites were nothing more than stopping points or oases. They were not established towns. Kaiser wrote concerning their locations, "Everyone is guessing!" (Constable)

**Currid** remarks that "the Hebrews are now at the gate of freedom, arriving at the final town or outpost before escape into the wilderness. Nothing appears to be standing in the way of their deliverance."

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Israel began the first step of a long journey that would forever change the history of this world and the next. Their journey reminds me of **Rich Mullins'** great song, [Step by Step \(Sometimes by Step\)](#)

Sometimes the night was beautiful  
Sometimes the sky was so far away  
Sometimes it seemed to stoop so close  
You could touch it but your heart would break  
Sometimes the morning came too soon  
Sometimes the day could be so hot  
There was so much work left to do  
But so much You'd already done

Oh God, You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
Oh God, You are my God

And I will ever praise You  
I will seek You in the morning  
And I will learn to walk in Your ways  
And step by step You'll lead me  
And I will follow You all of my days

Sometimes I think of Abraham  
How one star he saw had been lit for me  
He was a stranger in this land  
And I am that, no less than he  
And on this road to righteousness  
Sometimes the climb can be so steep  
I may falter in my steps  
But never beyond Your reach

Oh God, You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
Oh God, You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
I will seek You in the morning  
And I will learn to walk in Your ways  
And step by step You'll lead me  
And I will follow You all of my days

And I will follow You all of my days  
And I will follow You all of my days  
And step by step You'll lead me  
And I will follow You all of my days  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Sometimes the night was beautiful)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Sometimes the night)  
(Sometimes the night was beautiful)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Was beautiful)  
(Sometimes the night was beautiful)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(So beautiful)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Oh God, you are my God)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Oh God, you are my God)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Sometimes the night was beautiful)  
And I will follow You all of my days  
(Sometimes the night)  
And I will follow You all of my days

**Exodus 13:21 The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.**

- Ex 14:19-24 40:34-38 Nu 9:15-23 10:34 14:14 De 1:33 Ne 9:12,19 Ps 78:14 99:7 105:39 Isa 4:5,6 1Co 10:1,2
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A THEOPHANY PROVIDES CONTINUAL GUIDANCE

Ex 13:17 stated "God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines," and now Moses explains how Israel was led to take a logistically less favorable route, albeit one that was much safer because it was in the center of Yahweh's will, always the safest place to be no matter how circumstances (or human counselors) might suggest otherwise!

All the way my Savior leads me,  
Cheers each winding path I tread;  
Gives me grace for every trial,  
Feeds me with the living Bread.  
--Fanny Crosby

**The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night** - The pillar was clearly a theophany (I favor a Christophany) for in Ex 13:19 we read that "The angel of God, Who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them." Clearly the **pillar** is associated with the **angel of God**. (See the [Angel of the LORD](#)). Ex 14:19 also supports the pillar was a Person "The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them."

**NET** - "God chose to guide the people with a pillar of cloud in the day and one of fire at night, or, as a pillar of cloud and fire, since they represented his presence. God had already appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, and so here again is revelation with fire. Whatever the exact nature of these things, they formed direct, visible revelations from God, who was guiding the people in a clear and unambiguous way. Both clouds and fire would again and again represent the presence of God in his power and majesty, guiding and protecting his people, by judging their enemies." (NET)

**Guzik** - The **pillar of cloud** by day and of **fire** by night was also there as a sun and a shield: He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night (Psalm 105:39); or as it says in Psalm 84:11: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly....According to Cole, the ancient Hebrew for **pillar** literally means "something standing." It was probably more of what we would think of as a column than a pillar.

Psalm 105:39 describes the sheltering effect of the **pillar of cloud by day** - He spread a cloud for a **covering** (screen, defense, veil; Lxx = **skepe**), And fire to illumine by night.

The noun **skepe** = shade as afforded by trees suggesting protection and security. **Skepe** is not found in the NT but is found in 39 verses in the OT - Gen. 19:8; Exod. 26:7; Jdg. 5:8; Jdg. 9:15; 1 Sam. 25:20; Est. 4:14; Job 21:28; Job 24:8; Job 37:8; Ps. 17:8; Ps. 36:7; Ps. 61:4; Ps. 63:7; Ps. 91:1; Ps. 105:39; Ps. 121:5; Cant. 2:14; Isa. 4:6; Isa. 16:3; Isa. 16:4; Isa. 25:4; Isa. 28:2; Isa. 30:3; Isa. 49:2; Ezek. 31:12; Ezek. 31:17; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 14:7

**Wiersbe** on pillars for guidance - We don't have this same kind of visible guidance today, but we do have the Word of God which is a light (Ps. 119:105) and a fire (Jer. 23:29). It's interesting to note that the pillar of fire gave light to the Jews but was darkness to the Egyptians (Ex. 14:20). God's people are enlightened by the Word (Eph. 1:15-23), but the unsaved can't understand God's truth (Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:11-16). The Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Truth, guides us by teaching us the Word (John 16:12-13). Just as God spoke to Moses from the pillar, so the Lord communicates with us from the Scriptures by making them clear to us. There are times when we aren't sure which way God wants us to go, but if we wait on Him, He will eventually guide us. How foolish it would have been for the Jews to pause in their march and take a vote to see which route they should take to Mount Sinai! Certainly there's a place for community counsel and referendum (Acts 6:1-7), but when God has spoken, there's no need for consultation. On more than one occasion in Scripture, the majority has been wrong. (Be Delivered)

**John Currid** - Moses now presents Yahweh in theophany. In the Old Testament, the appearance of Yahweh arrives in many forms: at times he appears as a man (e.g., Gen. 18:1-33) or in a bush (Exod. 3:1-6). Often he would appear as a glory cloud, called the Shekinah glory by some writers. The glory cloud was a visible symbol of God's presence among his people. In the present story we see Yahweh in a double theophany. It is, as Kline remarks, a 'double-columned cloud-and-fire revelation of the Glory-Spirit at the exodus'. The reason for the two theophanies is clear: it is so that Yahweh would be with his people and lead them 'by day' and 'by night'. The use of the two opposites underscores the all-inclusive nature of God's presence with Israel. Both occurrences of the word 'pillar' are introduced by a form of the preposition beth. Here it is probably used as a beth essentiae, meaning 'as' rather than 'in'. This grammatical point accentuates the fact that both the cloud and the fire are no more nor less than theophanies. For the Hebrews these manifestations of God were no small thing. Although they were traversing unknown territory they had no reason to fear. Yahweh 'was going before them', guiding, directing and leading them. (EPSC-Ex)

**J Vernon McGee** - The children of Israel are moving toward the hot, burning desert that even Moses called a great and terrible wilderness. They went through it and did not even get sunburned because they had a pillar of cloud over them by day. This nation had something that no other nation has ever had: the Glory, the visible presence of God. When Paul was defining his kinsman, he said, "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory...." (Rom. 9:4). These people had the glory, the visible presence of God. Not even the church has the visible presence of God with it. Nothing visible has been given to the church. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that God "...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." They were looking forward to the coming of Christ, and we look back to an historical event. We do not need the visible presence of God in order to walk by faith. They needed the "glory" because the redemption had not yet been worked out in history as it has now. God made every preparation for every eventuality in order to bring His people safely through the wilderness.

**Youngblood** - "Like the burning bush (Ex 3:2), the pillar was the visible symbol of God's presence among His people. The Lord Himself was in the pillar (Ex 13:21; 14:24) and often spoke to the people from it ([Exodus 19–20; ] Nu 12:5–6; Dt. 31:15–16; Ps. 99:6–7). The later hymn-writers of Israel fondly remembered it (Ps 78:14; Ps 105:39). A similar cloud of smoke came to represent the glory of the Lord in the Sanctuary throughout much of Israel's history (Ex. 40:34–35; 1 Ki 8:10–11; Isa. 4:5; 6:3–4)."

**Pillar of cloud** - 12x in 11v - Exod. 13:21; Exod. 13:22; Exod. 14:19; Exod. 33:9; Exod. 33:10; Num. 12:5; Num. 14:14; Deut. 31:15; Neh. 9:12; Neh. 9:19; Ps. 99:7

**Pillar of fire** - 6x in 6v - Exod. 13:21; Exod. 13:22; Exod. 14:24; Num. 14:14; Neh. 9:12; Neh. 9:19

**THOUGHT** - While believers do not have a visible pillar of cloud and fire as Israel did, we have something even better, the Spirit of Jesus Christ living inside of us to lead us and guide us in our journey through the wilderness of this world, which is filled with Satan's snares and traps that continually seek to destroy our testimony and our usefulness for the LORD God. Paul spoken of the Spirit's leading "But I say, **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit even to obey this command](#)) **by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Gal 5:16+) And again Paul said "But if you are **led** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle) by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." (Gal 5:18+) And in Romans 8:13-14 Paul warns if you are **living** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle) according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are **putting to death** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle) the deeds of the body, you will live. For **all who are being led** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle) by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Don't miss several critical truths in these passages, especially shown in the Romans passage. Believers have a responsibility to "kill sin" (putting to death = [100% Responsible!](#)), but we can only do it with the Spirit's enabling power (= [100% Dependent!](#)) And when we are experiencing this quality of life, it provides assurance that we are (1) being led by the Spirit and (2) that we are sons of God, truly born again members of the family of God (John 1:12+). The corollary is if we are not killing sin, then we are deceiving ourselves if we think we are genuine believers, but Paul makes it crystal clear that "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die." Note that when Paul uses the present tense calling for this to be the believer's lifestyle, he is not speaking of perfection, but direction. Perfection is our future glorification, but direction is our present sanctification. Is your life generally "heavenward" or generally "hell-ward?" Only you can answer that question, but it behooves you to be honest lest you be shocked by Jesus as He warned in Mt 7:21-23+ - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle = Not perfection, but direction!) the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **"Many** (READ THAT FRIGHTENING WORD AGAIN!) will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO **PRACTICE** ([present tense](#) - continually, as your lifestyle) LAWLESSNESS."

**Related Resource:**

- [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible' \(100/100\)](#)

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**Question:** "[What did the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night signify?](#) (Exodus 13:21-22)"

**Answer:** The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night guided the Israelites during their exodus from Egyptian bondage. This allowed them to travel by day and by night. Exodus 13:21–22 explains that God gave them the pillar of cloud by day to lead them in the way He wanted them to go and the pillar of fire by night to give light. The pillar was not just symbolism but a real phenomenon. We have no way of knowing how God made the pillar, but it was obviously a miraculous event that God used to lead them for their forty years in the wilderness. During the day the pillar guided their journey. During the night it gave light and, no doubt, comfort.

In addition to guidance for the Hebrews, the pillar was a testimony to other nations concerning God's involvement with and protection of His people Israel. In Exodus 14:24 God troubled the Egyptians through the cloud, and Moses used this in Numbers 14:14 in his plea to God to not destroy the Hebrews because of their sin. God's provision of the pillar was remembered in the prayer of the Jewish leaders in Nehemiah 9 as an instance of God's care and provision for His people.

Exodus 13:22 says, "Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people." The pillar is a picture of God's faithfulness and a lesson to us that God never leaves nor forsakes His people. He reminds us of this in Hebrews 13:5–6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me." (Source: [Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org)) (See also [What is a glory cloud? Is a glory cloud biblical?](#))

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## **WILDERNESS WANDERINGS** Exodus 13:21-22

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people" (Exodus 13:21, 22).

In Ruth Ainsworth's retelling of The Pied Piper of Hamelin,

"he put his pipe to his lips . . . and from every door the children ran. Boys and girls, big and little, all followed the piper . . . to live in a land where everything was better and brighter. . . . The fruit would be sweeter, the flowers would be gayer, and even the sparrows would be as bright as peacocks."

Although Israel followed a cloud by day and a fire by night on their journey to a land flowing with milk and honey, their story is no fairy tale; it is an account of real people and a loving God who guided them through four decades of desert wanderings.

The forty-year pilgrimage began when God paved a high and dry freeway through the Red Sea and then closed it up again before His enemies could use it. Israel packed no picnic lunches; God provided first-class dining daily.

But He not only gave His children fine food, He taught them how to live and worship. Unfortunately, they spurned His loving leadership. Rejecting His good guidance, most of them died in the barren land—over one million of them. But...God is not driving the lead car in a funeral procession; He points the way to life.

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## **Exodus 13:17-22; 14:19-20 The Cloud And The Spirit**

The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way. —Exodus 13:21

The Lord led the children of Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21). Commentator Arthur Pink draws a significant parallel between this cloud in the wilderness and the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

Pink points out that just as the cloud was a gracious gift to the Israelites, so the Holy Spirit is a gift to the trusting child of God.

Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper" (John 14:16). The pillar of cloud was provided to guide the children of Israel. So too, the Holy Spirit leads the Christian. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (16:13).

Even as the cloud remained with Israel in the wilderness, so Jesus promised that the Father would send the Spirit, who would "abide" with believers forever (John 14:16). Think of it! God Himself dwells within our hearts. We who know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are temples of His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

When we are led by the Spirit, our lives will be characterized by love, joy, peace, and self-control (Galatians 5:16,22-23). We will be effective witnesses for Christ as we travel through the wilderness of this world. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Blest Holy Spirit from above  
With all Thy quickening powers  
Come, shed abroad the Savior's love  
And that shall kindle ours.  
—Watts

The power that compels us comes from the Spirit who indwells us.

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## Exodus 13:17-22 A Path Through The Woods

The Lord went before them . . . to lead the way. —Exodus 13:21

Daddy built a tepee in the woods for 5-year-old Bree and her 3-year-old sister Abby. Then he constructed a playhouse for them in a nearby fallen tree. When the leaves were off the trees, the children could see the family cabin from their hideouts. But in the tangled underbrush of summer, the girls thought they were deep in the scary woods.

So Dad took an ax and clippers into the woods and cut a trail from the back door of the cabin to the playhouse, then to the tepee and back to the cabin. The sisters felt safe and secure because the path was easy to follow.

We may wish that God would blaze a trail for us through the deep woods of the future, but that's not His way. He doesn't leave us without guidance, though. We learn something of His loving character when we see what He did for Israel as they left Egypt. He "went before them" and showed the way by the pillars of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21).

Today we aren't led by dramatic signs like fire and cloud. But God has given something better—the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26; Gal. 5:16,18).

You may never see a clear path through life. But as you follow the Holy Spirit's leading and God's written Word, you'll know where to turn when the way isn't clear. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### He leadeth me! O blessed thought!

O words with heavenly comfort fraught!  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.  
—Gilmore

You don't need to know where you're going if you know God is leading.

**Exodus 13:22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.**

- **He did not take away** - Ps 121:5-8
- **pillar of fire** - Rev 10:1
- [Exodus 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONSTANT DIVINE "COMPANION"

**He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people-** This reiterates the sure guidance of Israel by Jehovah which remained over the Israelites until they entered Canaan under Joshua.

**THOUGHT** - How does He lead today? The Word and the Spirit. Ps 119:105+ = "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." Romans 8:14+ = "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Gal 5:18+ = "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." This begs an important question? Are you in the Word daily, that the Spirit might have Words to work with in leading you throughout the day? Don't miss a day without hearing your "marching instructions" from your Father in the Throne Room of Heaven!

**Currid** comments "He did not remove/take away ...' The subject is clearly Yahweh from verse 21. The verb is in the third person masculine singular, a Hiphil causative stem. The point is that Yahweh is the one who appeared as the cloud and fire, and he is the one who controlled and decided the length of time that these manifestations were to appear. Obviously they were constantly before the people because God had not removed them." (Ibid)

**Guzik** makes a comment we all need to ponder - Israel could draw great assurance from this visible evidence of God's presence. Nevertheless, there were still many occasions after this when they seemed to doubt, to rebel, and to act as if God was distant.

**THOUGHT** - Are we not so often like Israel? (Rhetorical question of course!) We have seen God's hand move numerous times in our lives and the lives of our children or brethren in Christ and yet when the test comes, we falter and our faith stumbles and begins to doubt God's presence and power. And we begin to fear (the



antithesis of faith). Dear Father please give us the faith to utter the words of that distraught father who cried out "'I do believe; help my unbelief.'" (Mk 9:4). In Jesus' All Sufficient Name. Amen.

**F B Meyer** has an interesting (albeit imaginative) description of the pillars - When the excessive heat made it necessary for Israel to march at night, the light of the Fiery Pillar was enough to light the way: and when in the day the scorching glare of the sun was blinding, the cloud spread itself abroad like a great umbrella, so that the women and children could travel in comparative comfort [cf. Ps. 84:11]."

**John Currid** applies this section - How often God does not lead his people by what they perceive to be the easiest and shortest way! He knows our hearts, that they would falter in times of danger. **Oh, how like the Israelites we are!** Thus God will frequently take us by the long road in many things. In that way, he protects us from danger and destruction. His leading also has a didactic purpose, to teach us to rely upon him and his timing. We think we know best: 'There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death' (Pr. 14:12). But, even today, God is always with his people. In the barren wilderness, God travelled with the Hebrews by day and by night as a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. He is also with us even in times of distress, turmoil and suffering. Many are the saints who had a clear perception of the presence of the Almighty during such periods of danger. (Ibid)

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## **Rod Mattoon - THE PILLAR OF DIRECTION- Ex 13:21-22**

God was the true guide on the zig zag trail. The pillar was the visible sign of His presence. It indicated that He was among them. Based upon Exodus 14:24, the two descriptions of cloud and fire are combined.

Exodus 14:24-And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

It seems that the pillar did not change its form. The upper portion was a pillar of fire that would illuminate the skies at night and be more visible at night.

The lowest portion of the pillar was a blanket of clouds and smoke, shading them from the sun. This seems to be the description of the pillar.

Isaiah 4:5-And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

## **The pillar took several forms.**

### **1. It took the form of a pillar.**

### **2. It was a wall of protection.**

Exodus 14:19-20-... And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: [20] And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

### **3. It was also a roof or awning.**

Psalm 105:39-He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

Isaiah 4:5-6-... And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. [6] And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain

1 Corinthians 10:1-2-... Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

We are led to conclude that this covering cloud was composed of aqueous particles for the cooling of the atmosphere and refreshment of themselves and their cattle. He represents the whole camp as being sprinkled or immersed in the humidity of its vapors.

With the mention of God's guiding pillar, we are reminded of the work of the Trinity in the book of Exodus.

God the Father: He heard the groaning of Israel and kept His promises and covenant. He raised up a deliverer.

God the Son: Jesus is pictured in the spotless lamb whose blood secured salvation, protection from judgment, deliverance and freedom from bondage for those who by faith obeyed God's instructions by applying it to the door posts. The innocent lamb died for the guilty.

God the Holy Spirit: The Spirit of God is seen in the pillar of cloud that led them across the wilderness. The pillar is a picture of the Holy Spirit for several reasons.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Pillar in the Wilderness**

#### **1. It was not given to Israel until they had been delivered from Egypt.**

First, there was the slaying of the lamb, then the giving of the cloud. In the New Testament, the cross came first, then the resurrection, then Pentecost when the Holy Spirit in His fullness of power was given to the church.

#### **2. The pillar of cloud was a gracious gift to Israel.**

No one asked for a guide. It was God's provision of His grace and mercy. The apostles did not request a comforter either, but the Spirit of God was given to the church after the ascension of Christ.

John 14:16-17-... And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Parakletos which means "one called along side of us to help." He is also our advocate or defense attorney when we sin.

Notice 1 John 2.

1 John 2:1-My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: The Holy Spirit also prays for us. Notice Romans chapter eight.

Romans 8:26-27-... Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27] And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

#### **3. The pillar was to guide Israel through their wilderness journey.**

The Holy Spirit guides the believer through life if he will let Him.

John 16:13-Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Psalm 32:8-I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Romans 8:14-For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

#### **4. The pillar gave light.**

Israel was thoroughly furnished day or night. Travel at night was cooler. The pillar would provide warmth and light.

Numbers 9:21-And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

The Holy Spirit gives us light. He teaches and reveals insights to us.

John 14:26-But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

1 Corinthians 2:10-But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Isaiah 30:21-And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

#### **5. God spoke from the pillar.**

Psalm 99:7-He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

Exodus 33:9-And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.

The Holy Spirit speaks to our heart today. He especially uses His Word.

Romans 8:16-The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

1 John 3:24-And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

### **The pillar was "darkness" to the Egyptians.**

Exodus 14:20-And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

God not only reveals, but He conceals. Those without Christ do not understand the things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14-But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Matthew 11:25-At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

### **6. When they went through the wilderness, the pillar was never taken away.**

Nehemiah 9:19-Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

Even when Israel was rebellious and murmuring, the pillar did not leave. The Holy Spirit will not leave the believer either.

Hebrews 13:5-Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

John 14:16-And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Ephesians 1:13-In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

The fact that we are sealed indicates security, ownership, and a finished transaction.

The story is told about a woman who had waited until the last minute to send Christmas cards. She rushed into a store and bought a package of 50 cards without really looking at them. Still in a big hurry, she addressed 49 of the 50 and signed them without reading the message inside. On Christmas Day, when things had quieted down somewhat, she chanced to run upon the leftover card and finally read the message she had sent to 49 of her friends. Much to her dismay, it read like this: "This card is just to say / A little gift is on the way." Suddenly she realized that 49 of her friends were expecting a gift from her-a gift that would never come.

Beloved, there are many people that are expecting to go to Heaven when they die, but will not, because they have never put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to take them to Heaven when they die. Is Christ your Savior?