

Exodus 12:43-51

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-12/exodus-1243-51/>

Verses 43 – 51 contain more details about how and who could celebrate Passover. It was probably necessary to add these rules because so many non-Hebrews exited Egypt when they did. The main rule in this section is that only those who have been circumcised could celebrate Passover, and no one who was uncircumcised could eat the Passover meal. This means that if non-Hebrews wanted to celebrate Passover, they and all the males of the family needed to be circumcised first. This includes servants and sojourners alike.

In light of their departure from Egypt, the LORD added more instructions about celebrating the Passover. They concentrate on who can and cannot participate in the Passover meal. In verses 43-45, the LORD declared *the ordinance of the Passover*. The Hebrew word for “ordinance” is related to the verb that means “to engrave, inscribe.” In other words, what was said here is to be a permanent rule for observing the Passover. The rule was simple – *no foreigner is to eat of it*.

The word “foreigner” refers one who was not an Israelite. The exception to the rule was that *every man’s slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it*. So, if an Israelite purchases a “slave,” that slave could celebrate Passover if he was circumcised. But like the “foreigner” just mentioned, *a sojourner or a hired servant shall not eat of it*. A “sojourner” was a person who was present among the Israelites but was not residing with them. A “hired servant” (similar to what is now called a “day worker”) was an individual (presumably non-Israelite) who was hired to do a job for wages.

Circumcision was required because the non-Israelite had to demonstrate his faith in the promises the LORD made to Abraham. Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, so to be circumcised identified the person with the LORD of Abraham.

The focus changes in verse 46 to the Passover meal itself. The rules are:

- *It was to be eaten in a single house*. It was a family celebration, not one involving a gathering of families (community).

- The people were *not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house*. The meal was not to be shared with others outside the household.
- The people were *not to break any bone of it*. This is a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who was prophesied to have no bones broken in His death ([John 19:36](#)).

In contrast to the “foreigner,” “sojourner,” and “hired servant,” in verse 47 the LORD proclaims that *all the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this*. Verse 48 speaks of a non-Israelite who takes up residence among the Israelites. The rule for such a person is *if a stranger (the Hebrew word here is different than the one in verse 46, which speaks of a non-Israelite that was not residing with Israel) sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land*. The LORD wanted those who wanted to join the “congregation of Israel” were free to participate as long as all those in the family were circumcised. Again, the LORD emphasized that *no uncircumcised person may eat of it*. This was the LORD’s Passover, therefore *the same law shall apply to the native (i.e. Israelite) as to the stranger who sojourns among you*.

Verse 50 is very similar to verse 28. It describes how the Israelites obeyed the commands of the LORD. The response here, as earlier, was that *all the sons of Israel did so*. In other words, *they did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron*. They were faithful here, but it will not be long before they rebel against Him ([Exodus 32](#)).

Verse 51 summarizes this section of the chapter – *And on that same day the Lord brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts*. Once again, “that same day” refers to the day of Passover discussed in verses 1 – 28, and the use of the word “hosts” implies that the LORD led them out in an organized way. Notice that the emphasis is on the LORD bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. They were not able to leave because of their power – they had none. The deliverance from Egypt was the LORD’s work completely.

Biblical Text:

⁴³ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; ⁴⁴ but every man’s slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it. ⁴⁵ A sojourner or a hired servant shall not eat of it. ⁴⁶ It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the

house, nor are you to break any bone of it. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this. ⁴⁸ But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. ⁴⁹ The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.”

⁵⁰ Then all the sons of Israel did so; they did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹ And on that same day the Lord brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.