

Exodus 13:3-10

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The Lord gives commands regarding the annual festival of Unleavened Bread and Passover.

After the LORD declared His ownership of all the firstborn in Israel, in verses 3 – 10 Moses repeated (with some new information) the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Here, *Moses said to the people, 'Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery.'* To “remember” is more than mentally recalling an event – it is actively engaging other senses to recount the mighty works of the LORD. The mighty work to be remembered was that *by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place.* The phrase “by a powerful hand” occurs also in verses 9, 14, and 16, and it depicts God’s sovereign activities, whether they be deliverance or judgment.

An important part of remembering was that *nothing leavened shall be eaten.* In verse 4, Moses clarified to what *this day* in verse 3 referred. It was *in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth.* As said earlier, the “month of Abib” was the same as March-April in our calendar. Then Moses declared when the Israelites were to begin celebrating the feast. *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.* So, they were to begin celebrating it when they entered the land of Canaan (that is, the land “which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey”) that was inhabited by the ethnic groups listed in verse 5.

To sum up, the Israelites were to begin celebrating the feast on the 15th day of Abib after they entered the Promised Land. Furthermore, Moses told them again that *for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread,* and after that *on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord.* In verse 7, Moses reminded them that *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.* As mentioned in chapter 12, leaven came to symbolize that which was unclean, unacceptable, and sinful. This was never to be part of worshipping the LORD by any of His covenant people.

Since the remembrance of the LORD's Passover was declared to be permanent ([Exodus 12:24](#)), Moses instructed fathers that the Law required them to *tell their son on that day* why the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to continue. The father was to say to his son that *it is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt*. The Israelites were to never forget the LORD's mighty deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Also, Moses stated that *it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead*. Something placed on one's hand or forehead would be continually visible to others. Many Orthodox Jews take this literally even today. They wear small pouches (called phylacteries) containing portions of [Exodus 13](#) and other texts.

The feast was to be a constant reminder to each generation of Israelites of the LORD's powerful deliverance from Egypt. In the same way, the Lord's Supper is to be a constant reminder to New Testament believers of the deliverance Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross ([Luke 22:19](#); [I Corinthians 11:24f](#)). The Lord's Supper was instituted from a portion of the ceremonies of Passover, while Jesus was celebrating the Last Supper with His disciples ([Mark 14:12-25](#)).

The result of this constant reminder of the Passover is *that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth*. The observance of the Passover feast was considered an "ordinance" (12:14, 17, 24) or "law." Thus, each generation of Israelites was to observe the Passover feast and recite the reasons for celebrating it to everyone in the household. They were to obey the "law" by keeping the Passover and also to speak of not only why they were to do so but also how they escaped Egypt – it was because *with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt*. Their deliverance was totally the work of their sovereign, omnipotent LORD. They were never to forget that, and they were always to speak of it. Because of the importance of the Passover feast, the LORD tells His people that they must *keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year*.

Biblical Text:

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. ⁴ On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. 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. ⁶For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. ⁷Unleavened 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. ⁸You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' ⁹And 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. ¹⁰Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.