

Chapter Thirteen – The First Passover

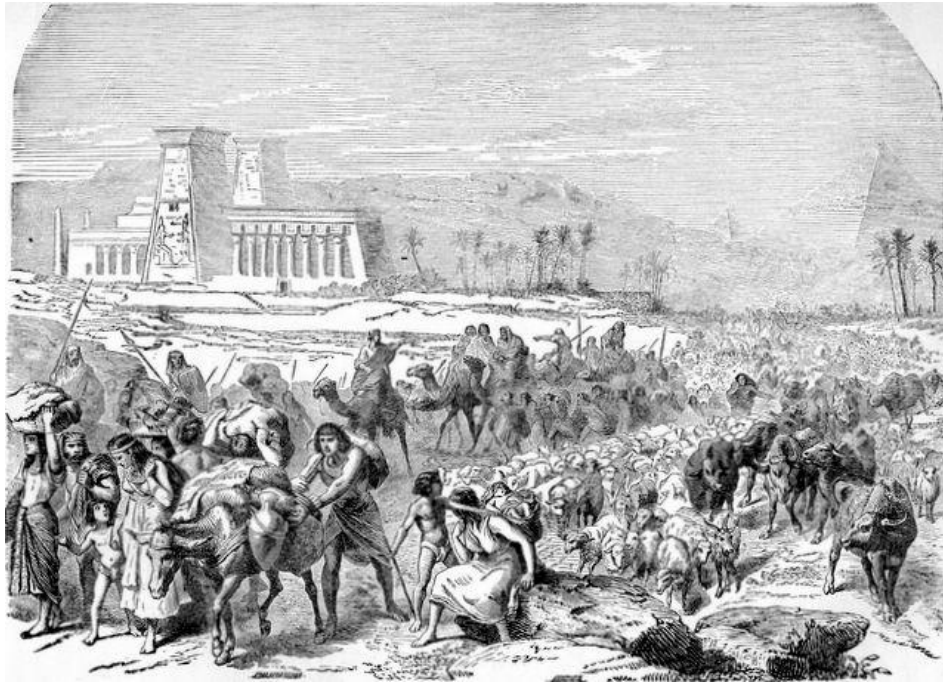
Instead of letting the Israelites go, Pharaoh made them work even harder. So God sent nine plagues, one after another. Each time Pharaoh promised to let the people go, the plague stopped; but as soon as one plague was over, he changed his mind and God sent another plague. The nine plagues were: the plague of blood when all the waters of the rivers were changed into blood; the plague of frogs when the land was covered with thousands of frogs; the plague of gnats when all the dust was turned into gnats; the plague of flies that came in millions and stung everyone; the plague of the death of animals when a large number of Egyptian animals died of a terrible disease; the plague of boils which covered the people and animals with open sores; the plague of hail-stones which fell like small pieces of ice and destroyed all the crops; the plague of locusts which ate up all the crops; and the plague of darkness which covered the land in sand and dust.

Pharaoh was so stubborn that even after the nine plagues he still refused to let the Israelites go. At last, God sent the tenth plague – the death of the first-born sons. Before this plague took place, God gave instructions to Moses and Aaron saying, “Each family has to choose a lamb and kill it to celebrate the Passover Festival, and then wipe its blood on the doorposts and the beam above the door. No one should leave the house until morning. When the Angel of Death goes through Egypt, he will see the blood and pass over the house. From now on, you will celebrate this day as a festival to remember that you were freed from slavery in Egypt.”

Then, at midnight the last plague fell on Egypt. Pharaoh and all the Egyptians rose up in the middle of the night and all over Egypt there was loud crying in every house because the first-born sons and animals were dead, including Pharaoh’s son. It was still night when Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “Get out of my kingdom, you and your people.” The Egyptians too urged the people to leave quickly as they were very afraid. Then the Israelites set out with their flocks and herds. Moses took with him the body of Joseph. This was the beginning of what is sometimes referred to as the Exodus.

However, again, Pharaoh and his people changed their minds about letting their slaves go. So Pharaoh took all the troops with him and chased after them. Fear fell upon the Israelites; they cried out to the Lord when they looked back and saw Pharaoh and the Egyptians closing in behind them. Then the Lord’s command came to Moses, “Lift up your staff and stretch your hand over the Red Sea, parting it, so that the people can cross through to the other side.” At the same time, the angel was there to protect the Israelites. God also sent a pillar of cloud which made it so dark that the Egyptians could hardly see. After all the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch your hand over the sea again so that the water will flow back upon the Egyptians, their chariots and their horsemen.” Moses did so and the water rolled back on the Egyptians as they tried to run back and they were all drowned.

After leaving the shore of the Red Sea, the Israelites went into desert lands. When they had no drinkable water and no food, they complained to Moses. Moses prayed to God and once again God took care of them by providing them with food and water.



The Exodus from Egypt

Questions:

1. Why did the Pharaoh eventually allow the Israelites to go?
2. Why did the Pharaoh change his mind yet again?
3. What does the Passover Festival celebrate?
4. How do human beings bring plagues to the world nowadays?
5. Draw a picture of one of the plagues or a composite picture of the ten plagues.
6. Imagine you were one of the Israelites fleeing from the Egyptians. Write a diary entry about the event.