

**Exodus 11, 12:1-36**  
**July 20, 2014**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

I love the study of Exodus, especially this series on the plagues, because these next two chapters that detail the final plague convey a Christ-shadowing that is worthy to explore in the next hour. By looking at these next two chapters closely, we will walk away with a deeper appreciation of the gospel message that is foreshadowed in Exodus.

When I say “gospel,” I am referring to the good news found in the New Testament. The majority of you (I assume) will have a good handle on the elements of the gospel message, but nevertheless, I am going to pretend that you would like a refresher and get clearer and more grounded on what God has offered to each of us through Jesus Christ.

The way I would like to approach today’s lesson is by reading through these two chapters in sections like we always do, but then I will facilitate exploring the gospel message based on what we’ve read in Exodus and draw the parallels to the gospel message found in the New Testament.

**Transition:** So my invitation to you is to look for ELEMENTS of the gospel message that are triggered in our reading of Exodus 11 and 12, and then let’s compare it to the New Testament teaching of the gospel message.

**BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Ex 11]**

Observations/Process Qs-

V.1:

- Now the LORD had said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely.”

V.2:

- Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold.”

V.3:

- (The LORD made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh’s officials and by the people.)

V.4:

- So Moses said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.

V.5:

- **Every firstborn son in Egypt will die**, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. [**Rom 6:23 – Wages of sin is death, No one is good enough to escape God’s judgment**]
- Process: Ex 4:22-23 as a refresher.

V.6:

- There will be **loud wailing** throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. [NT: **Weeping and gnashing of teeth**]

V.7:

- But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.
- **Q:** Think about it – Were the Israelites being spared of losing their firstborn sons because they were “good people?” “good works?” [NO!]

V.8:

- All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.” Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

V.9:

- The LORD had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.”

V.10:

- Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

## **Chapter 12 [Read Ex 12:1-11]**

V.1:

- The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,

V.2:

- “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

V.3:

- Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

V.4:

- If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to **determine the amount of lamb needed** in accordance with what each person will eat. [I Peter 3:18, “**Christ died for sins once for all**, the righteous and the unrighteous, to bring us to God.]

V.5:

- The **animals you choose must be year-old males without defect**, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. [**The sacrificial lamb must be without blemish**]

V.6:

- Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

V.7:

- Then they are to **take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses** where they eat the lambs. [**The blood of the lamb who takes away the sin of the world.**]

V.8:

- That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

V.9:

- Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts.

V.10:

- Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

V.11:

- This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

**[Read Ex 12:12-16]**

V.12:

- “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. [God will bring judgment on anyone who has not accepted His son, Jesus, as the lamb who was slain for us. It's another way of bringing condemnation on any other gods or idols we have before us.]

V.13:

- The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. [For those who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, when God the Father looks upon us, He sees the blood of Christ who has cleansed us from all sin.]
- **Q:** Have the Israelites up to this point in time ever seen blood used on doorposts as a sign of God's protection over them? [No. They had to make a decision to trust God at His word.]
- **Process:** How does faith fit into the gospel message? [Everyone has to make the decision as to whether they believe God's Word. Assuming they do, then they must exercise faith through obedience. Putting blood around the frame of the doorpost was foreign to them. They had to exercise faith by doing what God told them to do.]

V.14:

- “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.
- **Q:** What do we celebrate every year that most closely resembles Passover? [Easter]

V.15:

- For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel.
- **Q:** Why was yeast not allowed to be in the bread? [Yeast symbolized corruption and evil]

V.16:

- On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do.

**[Read Ex 12:17-28]**

V.17:

- “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

V.18:

- In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.

V.19:

- For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born.

V.20:

- Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”

V.21:

- Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb.

V.22:

- Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning.

V.23:

- When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the **destroyer** to enter your houses and strike you down. [**Satan is the destroyer**]

V.24:

- “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.

V.25:

- When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony.

V.26:

- And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’

V.27:

- Then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’ ” Then the people bowed down and worshiped.

V.28:

- The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

**[Read Ex 12:29-36]**

V.29:

- At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.

V.30:

- Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

V.31:

- During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested.

V.32:

- Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me.”

V.33:

- The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. “For otherwise,” they said, “we will all die!”

V.34:

- So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing.

V.35:

- The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing.

V.36:

- The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.

**LOOK:**

God has made a way for all to be saved. He has offered His only Son, Jesus, as the unblemished lamb who was crucified for our sins. His shed blood on the cross is what cleanses us from sin as soon as we receive Him as our Lord and Savior. Acts 4:12 tells us that “there is no other name under heaven by which man can be saved.” Salvation occurs the moment we accept Christ as our Savior. Salvation is never based on our works or our “goodness” as a human being. The Bible is very clear that our “works are like filthy rags.” Rom 3:10 tells us that “there is no who is righteous, not even one.” Eph 2:8-9, “For it is by grace we’ve been saved through faith...

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 11–12:42). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

The key to this section is the lamb. The Passover marks the birth of the nation of Israel and its deliverance from bondage. This great event also pictures Christ and His work on the cross (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 1 Peter 1:18–20).

#### **I. The Lamb Needed (11)**

“One plague more!” God’s patience had run out and His final judgment—death to the firstborn—was about to fall. Note that death was to come to all (11:5–6; 12:12–13), unless they were protected by the blood of the lamb. “All have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). God specifies that the “firstborn” will die, and this speaks of God’s rejection of our first birth. All people are “firstborn” who have not been “twice-born.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh ... you must be born again” (John 3:6–7). People cannot save themselves from the penalty of death; they need Christ, the Lamb of God.

For years, the Jews had slaved for the Egyptians without pay, so now God permits them to ask for (not “borrow”) their just wages. See Gen. 15:14 for God’s promise, and Ex. 3:21 and 12:35ff.

From a human point of view, there was no difference between the firstborn of Egypt and the firstborn of Israel. The difference was in the application of the blood (v. 7). All are sinners, but those who have trusted Christ are “under the blood” and saved. This is the most important difference in the world!

#### **II. The Lamb Chosen (12:1–5)**

The Jews have a religious and a civil calendar, and Passover marks the beginning of their religious year. The death of the lamb makes a new beginning, just as the death of Christ makes a new beginning for the believing sinner.

##### *A. Chosen before it is slain.*

Selected on the tenth day, and slain “between the evenings” of the fourteenth and fifteenth days, the lamb was set aside for death. So Christ was the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20).

##### *B. Spotless.*

The lamb was to be a male without blemish, a picture of the perfect Lamb of God in whom there was no spot or stain (1 Peter 1:19).

##### *C. Tested.*

From the tenth to the fourteenth days, the people watched the lambs to make sure they were satisfactory; similarly, Christ was tested and watched during His earthly ministry, especially

during the last week before He was crucified. Note the progress: “a lamb” (v. 3), “the lamb” (v. 4), “your lamb” (v. 5). This parallels “a Savior” (Luke 2:11), “the Savior” (John 4:42), and “my Savior” (Luke 1:47). It is not enough to call Christ “a Savior” (one among many), or “the Savior” (for somebody else). Each of us must be able to say, “He is my Savior!”

### **III. The Lamb Slain (12:6–7)**

A living lamb was a lovely thing, but it could not save! We are not saved by Christ’s example or His life; we are saved by His death. Read Heb. 9:22 and Lev. 17:11 to see the importance of the shed blood of Christ. Of course, killing a lamb seemed like foolishness to the wise Egyptians, but it was God’s way of salvation (1 Cor. 1:18–23).

The blood of the lamb had to be applied to the door of the house (12:21–28). The word “basin” in 12:22 can mean “threshold,” so that the blood of the lamb was caught in the hollow place at the threshold. The blood was then applied to the lintel over the door and the posts at the sides of the door. Anybody who went out of the house walked on the blood (see Heb. 10:29). Christ was slain on the fourteenth day of the month, just at the time when the Passover lambs were being offered. Note that God speaks of Israel killing it (the lamb), not them (lambs); for to God, there is but one Lamb—Jesus Christ. Isaac asked, “Where is the lamb?” (Gen. 22:7), and John the Baptist answered in John 1:29, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” All of heaven says, “Worthy is the Lamb!” (Rev. 5:12)

### **IV. The Lamb Eaten (12:8–20, 43–51)**

We often neglect this important part of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven (yeast) in the Bible is a picture of sin: it works silently; it corrupts and puffs up; and it can only be removed with fire. The Jews had to put all leaven out of their homes at Passover season, and they were not allowed to eat leavened bread for seven days. Paul applies this to Christians in 1 Cor. 5; read the chapter carefully.

The blood of the lamb was sufficient to save from death, but the people had to feed on the lamb to get strength for their pilgrim journey. Salvation is just the beginning. We must feed on Christ if we are to have the strength to follow Him. Christians are a pilgrim people (v. 11), always ready for their Lord’s orders to move on. The lamb was to be roasted with fire, which speaks of the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Nothing was to remain to be eaten later; no “leftovers” can satisfy the believer, for we need a whole Christ. We need a completed work on the cross. Furthermore, leftovers would become corrupt, and this would ruin the type; for Christ did not see corruption (Ps. 16:10). Alas, too many people receive the Lamb as their salvation from death, but they do not feed on the Lamb daily.

Verses 43–51 give further instructions concerning the feast. No stranger could participate, nor could a hired servant or one who was uncircumcised. These regulations remind us that salvation is a birth into God’s family—no strangers are there. It is by grace—no one can earn it. And it is through the cross—for circumcision points to our true spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11–12). The feast was not to be eaten outside the house (v. 46), for the feast cannot be separated from the shed blood. Modernists who want to “feed on Christ” apart from His shed blood are fooling themselves.

### **V. The Lamb Trusted (12:21–42)**

It took faith to be delivered that night! The Egyptians thought all these things were foolishness, but God's Word had spoken and that was enough for Moses and his people. Please keep in mind that the people were saved by the blood and assured by the Word (v. 12). No doubt many of the Jews were safe under the blood who did not "feel safe," just as we have saints today who doubt God's Word and worry about losing their salvation. God did exactly what He said He would do. And the Egyptians urged the Jews to leave the land, just as God said they would (11:1–3). God was not one day late. He kept His Word.

**Toussaint, S. D. (1985). Acts. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.)The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. (Vol. 2, pp. 125–129). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*Plague 10: Death of the firstborn (11:1–12:36)*

From the three cycles of three plagues, the land lay in ruins. God had demonstrated His mighty power by showing up the impotence of the gods of Egypt. And by devastating that powerful nation economically, He struck fear into the hearts of her populace. He had caused the Egyptians to be eager for the removal of the Israelites though Pharaoh was yet to be humbled. The 10th plague would bring great sorrow to *every* Egyptian family with children. This plague would result in the release of God's people.

(1) The announcement of the last plague (chap. 11).

11:1–3. After **one more plague**, God said, **Pharaoh** would release his slaves without any reservations (cf. 8:25, 28; 10:11, 24). Up to then **Moses** did not know how many plagues would befall the nation of **Egypt**. In light of their soon-coming deliverance the Israelites were to request **silver and gold of the Egyptians**, who apparently were more kindly **disposed** to them than was Pharaoh (cf. 3:21–22; 12:35–36). Even **Moses himself was highly esteemed by Pharaoh's officials** (probably because of the miracles they had seen) **and by the people**. This helps explain why the Egyptians gave some of their expensive jewelry to the Israelites.

11:4–8. Like plagues three, six, and nine this 10th one came with no warning to Pharaoh and with no opportunity for him to repent beforehand. Possibly these verses continue the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses in 10:24–29. The judgment was specific: in **every** Egyptian family the **firstborn son** would **die** in the middle of the night—**from the poorest of the poor (the firstborn son of the slave girl) to the royal household (the firstborn son of Pharaoh)**. A firstborn son received special honor and a Pharaoh's son, heir to the throne, was even considered a god. The **wailing** over the loss of sons would be unprecedented.

Why would God bring such a calamity on the Egyptians? It must be remembered that God is sovereign over all human affairs. People's prosperity or judgment is not because of God's favoritism or lack of it but because He desires to accomplish His will on earth. Since He alone is holy, He has the right to use and dispose of mankind as He wills. Anything God does is right because He is God! (Ps. 115:3) Also one must remember that the Egyptians were polytheists, worshiping many idols and false gods. Refusing to worship the true God, they became objects of His judgment (cf. Rom. 1:18–23).

The goddess Isis, the wife and sister of Osiris, supposedly protected children. But this plague showed her to be totally incompetent to do what the Egyptians trusted her for!

In this great plague the Israelites would lose no one. In fact at midnight **not a dog would bark** (lit., "not a dog will sharpen its tongue"). That is, no dog would growl or bite because no harm would come to God's people. By this special treatment of the Hebrews, **Egypt** would know

that God favored **Israel** (cf. Ex. 8:23; 9:4). Therefore Pharaoh's **officials**, who after eight plagues urged their king to release the Israelites (cf. 10:7), would directly urge Moses to take his people away.

In several of the other confrontations **Moses** gave Pharaoh opportunity to release the people as a means of warding off the announced plague. Not so this time. The plague would come; *then* Pharaoh would let the people go. Moses' angry pronouncement was final. Never again would he confront **Pharaoh** with the option to repent (cf. comments on 10:28–29). In the previous plagues Moses and Aaron had a part, but not in the final judgment; this was to be the work of God alone.

11:9–10. These verses summarize Pharaoh's recalcitrant spirit (God had said **Pharaoh will refuse to listen**; cf. 7:22). This refusal led to God's **wonders** being displayed in an idolatrous land and to the Lord's hardening of the ruler's **heart** (cf. comments on 4:21).

(2) The celebration of the first Passover (12:1–28). Rather than focusing on the confrontations of Moses with Pharaoh, the narrative now shifts to Moses and the people of Israel. This passage has two parts: the Lord's instructions to Moses concerning the feast (vv. 1–20) and the observance of the festival (vv. 21–28).

12:1–2. First God told **Moses and Aaron** about the time of the Passover. This feast was to mark a new age in the history of Israel (**the first month, the first month of your year**). Though the events in this chapter occurred in the seventh month according to the civil year (which began in September–October) this is the first month in Israel's religious calendar. This month is called Abib (lit., “fresh young ears” of, e.g., barley). This was when barley was to be harvested (March–April). With a new calendar the Israelites were to receive a new identity as the favored people of the true God.

After Israel was taken into captivity the names of 4 of the 12 months were given Babylonian names, and April was called Nisan (cf. Neh. 2:1; Es. 3:7), which means “early” or “start.” (See the chart “Calendar in Israel.”)

12:3–6. The phrase **the whole community of Israel** (cf. v. 6) is used here for the first time in the Old Testament to refer to the nation. The word suggests a new beginning. The celebration of Passover was centered in homes. **On the 10th day of the month** (March–April) **each** Israelite family was to select **a lamb** or a goat (*seh*, the word trans. **lamb**, can mean either a young sheep or goat; cf. v. 5). If a family was **small** and not able to eat an entire animal, arrangements could be made to **share** the meal with another family. The animal was to be a **one-year-old** male **without** blemish. Four days later (on **the 14th**) each animal was to be killed **at twilight**. This meant either between sunset and dark or between 3 and 5 P.M. The latter time period is probably correct because it would allow more time for slaughtering and preparing the animal, which would be needed later when many sacrifices would be offered at the sanctuary.

12:7–11. In these verses instructions are given on how to observe the Passover. Though the feast was observed in each Israelite home, their united and simultaneous worship would help weld them together as a single community (cf. v. 3). **The blood** of the animals was to be placed on **the doorframes of the houses**, the animal **meat roasted**, and the people were to **eat it with bitter herbs and bread ... without yeast**. The slaying of the animals (instead of the Israelites' firstborn sons, v. 13) and the sprinkling of blood prefigured the substitutionary death of Christ. He is “our Passover Lamb” (1 Cor. 5:7), “a Lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:19; cf. John 1:29). His own sacrifice is the means whereby individual believers escape the horrors of spiritual death.

Bitter herbs (probably endive, chicory, dandelions) symbolized sorrow or grief (cf. Lam. 3:15) for past sin, or the Israelites' bitter experience of oppression in Egypt. The bread without

yeast symbolized their leaving in haste (Ex. 12:11, 39; Deut. 16:3). The **meat** was to be roasted, not eaten **raw** as some pagans did. The people were to eat the entire meal quickly while dressed ready for travel (on the **cloak tucked into the belt**, see comments on “Brace yourself like a man,” Job 38:3; 40:7).

Thus under the protection of shed blood, the congregation was to be reminded of cleansing from sin (cf. Heb. 9:22) and that they were sojourners in a strange land. **It is the LORD’s Passover** means the Passover lamb was for the Lord (cf. “a festival to the LORD,” Ex. 12:14).

12:12–14. God said that **on the very night** (at midnight, 11:4; 12:29), after the Israelites had eaten the Passover lambs with herbs and bread, He would kill the **firstborn** son and animal in every Egyptian family (cf. 11:5; 12:29–30). The purpose of this final plague was like the others: to **bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt** (cf. Num. 33:4), thus showing that God is **the LORD**. Pharaoh’s eldest son and successor supposedly had divine properties. Min, the Egyptian god of reproduction, and Isis, the goddess of love who attended women at childbirth, were judged as impotent by this climactic plague and catastrophe.

The sprinkled **blood** on the Israelites’ **houses** provided protection from death when God destroyed the Egyptian firstborn. From the verb, **pass over** (*pāsaḥ*) comes the noun that designates the feast, the Passover (*pesaḥ*). As the blood of an animal was the means of deliverance and of escaping death, so Christ’s blood is the means of redemption for believers (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7).

The Passover was to be observed annually (**for the generations to come**) as a **lasting ordinance** (cf. Ex. 12:17, 24; 13:10). Other annual events and feasts and Levitical regulations were also called “lasting ordinances” (e.g., 27:21; 28:43; 29:9; 30:21; Lev. 16:29, 31, 34; 23:14, 21, 41). The Passover was a **festival to the LORD** (cf. Ex. 5:1; 10:9).

12:15–20. God then gave instructions for **the Feast of Unleavened Bread** as a national celebration of Israel’s redemption from Egypt. The Passover and the Unleavened Bread feasts were so closely connected that the two were often considered as one feast (cf. Luke 2:41; 22:1; Acts 21:3–4, and see comments on Luke 22:7–38; John 19:14). The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be **for seven days** (Ex. 13:6–7), from the 15th to the 21st of the **month** (Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17). Of course **no** bread with **yeast** (leaven) was to be eaten on the Passover either (Ex. 12:8). Homes were to be cleansed of **yeast** (vv. 15–16), a symbol of sin (1 Cor. 5:8). The absence of yeast suggested that those who were under the safety of shed blood were free from the corruption of sin before a holy God. If anyone ate **anything with yeast** in those feast days he would be **cut off from ... Israel** (Ex. 12:19), that is, excluded from the camp, separated from covenant rights and privileges, possibly resulting in death. Also on the **first** and **seventh** days of the feast the people were to gather together for special services. And **no work** other than **food** preparation was to be done all week. Like the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a **lasting ordinance** (v. 17; cf. v. 14) to benefit forthcoming **generations**. Together the Passover and Unleavened Bread feasts were an “ordinance” to be obeyed (vv. 14, 17, 24) and a “ceremony” to be observed (vv. 25–26). And the Passover was a “festival” (v. 14) involving a “sacrifice” (v. 27). Verses 19–20 repeat the instructions in verses 15–16, perhaps for emphasis.

12:21–28. **Moses** now gave **the elders** instructions (vv. 21–23) for **the Passover** similar to those that the Lord gave Moses (vv. 3–11). **The blood** to be placed on the doorframes (v. 7) was to be applied with a **bunch of hyssop**, a common bushy plant that grows on rocky surfaces. It was widely used in Israel’s rites of purification (cf. Lev. 14:4, 6, 49, 51–52; Num. 19:6, 18). **The destroyer** (cf. Heb. 11:28) who killed the firstborn may have been the Angel of the Lord (the preincarnate Christ; cf. comments on Gen. 16:9) or an angel. Then God’s people were told to be

sure to **observe** the Passover in **the land that** God had **promised** to give them. Also they were to teach its meaning to their **children** (Ex. 12:26–27; cf. 13:14–15). **The people**, grateful for their soon-to-come deliverance from centuries of slavery, **worshiped** the **LORD**. Then they carried out His commands.

(3) The destruction by the plague (12:29–36). The lengthy instructions about the Feasts of the Passover and Unleavened Bread added to the suspense that led to the climax in which judgment fell on the Egyptian firstborn (vv. 29–30), and the Israelites were released (vv. 31–36).

12:29–30. The 10th plague is described as to its time (**midnight**), extent (every **firstborn**; cf. 4:22–23), and effect (**loud wailing**; cf. 11:6). Great sorrow gripped the nation as God destroyed the favored sons of families in every stratum of society, from royalty to political **prisoner** (cf. 11:5). This presents a vivid reminder of the fury of God against sinners and the awful price that sin exacts. Obviously “a mighty hand”—God’s—had compelled Pharaoh to let His people go! (3:19)

12:31–33. In response to the tragedy, **Pharaoh** released the Israelites that same **night** without any restrictions. He even *demand*ed that they **leave**. God had predicted, “He will let you go” (3:20; 6:1). Amazingly the Pharaoh, who was considered a god, was now humbled to the point of asking that **Moses and Aaron.... bless** him (cf. 8:28). He wanted to be under Yahweh’s blessing, not the curse of His plagues. Even the Egyptian people urged the Israelites to leave quickly for fear they too would **all die**.

12:34–36. The Exodus happened so quickly that **the people took** unleavened bread **dough**; they had no time to make bread (v. 39). The plagues, evidencing God’s power, so **favorably disposed** the **Egyptians** toward **the Israelites** that they were willing to do anything to hasten their departure, even giving away valuable jewelry and **clothing** (cf. 3:21–22; 11:3). This fulfilled God’s promise to Abraham about his descendants’ captivity (Gen. 15:13–14). From the Egyptians they received some “wages” for their 400 years of servitude.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 101 – 104). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**11:3** Self-praise is condemned in Scripture (Pr 27:2), yet Moses, traditionally viewed as the author of the Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible, appears to praise himself here. Such complimentary statements about Moses appear also in Nm 12:3 and Dt 34:10–12. The Pentateuch, however, has been subjected to a process of transmission, even in an oral stage, and it is by no means certain that Moses himself inserted these words. It is possible that they come from the same editor who provided the account of Moses’ death (Dt 34:5–12). The inspired scriptures came into being when “moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God” (2 Pt 1:21), but all their names may not be known to us. Still, even if Moses wrote these self-complimentary words, they are not so much an attempt to glorify himself as they are a declaration of the degree of respect the Israelites and their leader had gained among the Egyptians.

**11:10** For a discussion of the Lord’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart, see note on 4:21.

**12:3–7** Was the Passover animal supposed to be slain at the sanctuary, or at home? According to Dt 16:1–7, the only permissible place to sacrifice the lamb or goat was at the place where the Lord would choose to put His name—that is, at Jerusalem; it was forbidden to slay the animal at a person’s home. But of course this requirement was not applicable to the Israelites while they were still slaves in Egypt. The instructions provided in Ex 12:7 applied specifically to the first

Passover, and perhaps also the Passovers that were celebrated prior to the construction of the temple in the days of Solomon.

**12:5** This passage appears to contradict Dt 16:2 regarding which animals may be used for the Passover sacrifice. The instruction of Dt 16:2 allows animals of the herd—that is, cattle or oxen—as well as lambs or goats from the flock. But a careful reading suggests that these two passages are addressing different issues. Exodus 12:5 deals with the animal that is to be eaten as part of the Passover meal, on the first night of an eight-day celebration that included both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the other hand, Dt 16:2–8 mentions the kinds of sacrificial animals that were to be used for different purposes throughout the festival period. The guidelines of Dt 16:2 are spelled out in greater detail in Nm 28:16–31, which specifies that bulls, sheep, and goats were to be sacrificed on each of the days of this lengthy celebration.

**12:7** It was the people’s obedience to God that saved them, not the blood on the doorpost. Those who obeyed the Lord’s instruction to place the blood of an unblemished male lamb or goat on the doorposts of their home were spared. By doing so, they demonstrated that they were placing their trust in a sacrificial death prescribed by God for their salvation. Since the days of the apostles, Christians have seen in this event a foreshadowing of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, “our Passover” (1 Co 5:7), whose blood spares us from the coming wrath of God (Rm 5:9).

**12:12** For a discussion of what animals the Egyptians would have had left for the Lord to kill, see note on 9:6.

**12:13** God knows all things (1 Jn 3:20) and did not need to make an inspection tour through the land, noting the blood on each doorpost to discern who was obedient to Him. The blood was the “distinguishing mark,” a sign for the benefit of the Israelites that confirmed their obedience to God and His promise of salvation. The phrase “when I see the blood” is used figuratively to indicate the Lord’s knowledge of those who trust Him. The expression looks ahead to God’s response to those who, having entered into the death of Christ (Rm 6:3–7), are protected by His blood from the wrath of God’s judgment.

**12:31** If the exodus occurred as the Bible describes it, why does it receive no mention in Egyptian records? The probable answer is that the official Egyptian records were written by government functionaries not to provide an objective recording of historical events, but in order to support the existing political and religious powers of their day. Egyptian annals glorify the accomplishments of the Pharaohs and reinforce the prevailing Egyptian religious convictions. Any set of events that cast Egyptian gods and their Pharaoh (who was himself considered a god) in a bad light would hardly be mentioned in an official Egyptian document.

**12:35** Some have suggested that Moses’ scheme to gain Israel’s freedom was to mislead Pharaoh and the Egyptians into thinking Israel would make only a brief pilgrimage into the wilderness, temporarily “borrowing” others’ possessions, while his secret intent was a permanent departure. The Bible’s narrative does not support this view. Far from a secret departure, Israel was publicly forced by the Egyptian government to leave the land for good, and the general Egyptian population supported Pharaoh’s decision (vv. 31–33). For a discussion of Israel “stealing” from the Egyptians, see note on 3:22.