

Reformation Fellowship Notes • September 25, 2016
Teacher: David Crabtree
Handout #14
Exodus 12:42-14:12

I. Introduction

- A. We are in a break in the narrative.
 - 1. Verses 40-41 took a pause to reflect on the historical moment.
 - 2. Our passage begins with a couple of digressions.
- B. After two digressions, we resume the historical narrative.
 - 1. First digression explained who is to participate in the celebration of the Passover.
 - 2. Second digression explained the origin of the Festival of the First-Born.
- C. The narrative left off with the Israelites scurrying around to get ready to leave Egypt.

II. Exodus 12:42-51

- A. Passover is to be celebrated by all the people of Israel for all time.
 - 1. "This night is for the Lord."
 - a) A night of watch or scrupulous observance
 - b) Just as God was watchful over the Israelites to protect them when the Egyptians were begin killed, the Israelites are to be watchful to keep the Passover
- B. Regulations regarding the Passover
 - 1. Who may not participate in the Passover?
 - a) No foreigner may eat it.
 - (1) "Outsider"—has not identified with Israelites
 - b) Slaves may, if they have become part of community.
 - c) A resident alien may not—has not identified with Israelites.
 - d) A hired servant may not (foreign laborer).
 - 2. How is it to be eaten?
 - a) In a single house
 - (1) Reminder of the situation of the first Passover
 - b) All consumed in the house
 - (1) "All in"?
 - c) No broken bones
 - (1) To make the association with Jesus?
 - (2) Other explanations
 - (a) Rabbis: they should not be so hungry as to want the marrow.

(b) A. Scheiber, "Ihr Sollt Ken Ben dran Zerbrechen," VT 13 (1963) 95-97.

(c) F. J. Stendebach, "Das Verbot des Knochenzerbrechens bei den Semiten," BZ 17 (1973) 29-38.

3. Who must eat the Passover?
 - a) A sojourner who wants to become part of the community may do so.
 - (1) To be part of the community, he just needs to be circumcised.
 - b) There is equality between sojourners who have converted and natives.
4. The people did as they were instructed.

III. Exodus 13:1-10

A. Institution of the Festival of the First-Born

1. God killed the first-born of the Egyptians (men and animals).
 - a) He showed his right to the first-born.
2. He graciously spared the first-born of the Israelites;
 - a) But only on the basis of a sacrifice that redeemed them.

B. Reason for the Festival

1. When God brings you into the land
 - a) They did not celebrate these festivals for the 40 years in the wilderness.
 - b) At the time, they probably expected to be in the promised land in just a few months.
2. God saved you from slavery.
3. He showed his powerful hand.

C. Celebrate this festival in the land.

1. When God drives out the Canaanites and gives you this good thing which he promised long ago

D. How you will celebrate it:

1. Beginning with Passover, you will eat only unleavened bread for seven days.
2. At the end of the seven days, you will have a feast to the Lord.
3. Have no leaven around.
4. It is in remembrance of God's graciousness when he brought you out of Egypt.
 - a) You will pass this knowledge on to your sons.
 - (1) First-born was responsible for passing it on to family.
5. Notes on forehead and hands were like tying a ribbon around one's finger.

- a) It served to keep something in mind.
- b) Because God acted mightily on your behalf,
- c) So you will celebrate this feast annually.

IV. Exodus 13:11-16

- A. Now God establishes rules with respect to the first-born.
 - 1. When you go into the land
 - a) A celebration for when they have moved into the land
 - 2. All first-born males (men and animals)
 - a) They belong to God.
 - (1) They are devoted to God.
 - (a) This means they must be sacrificed to God.
 - b) Bigger animals and sons are to be redeemed rather than given as sacrifices.
 - (1) A donkey can be redeemed with a lamb.
 - (a) Otherwise it must be killed by breaking its neck.
 - (2) Every first-born son must be redeemed with a sacrifice.
 - c) When your son asks for the significance of this ritual—
 - (1) Tell the story of the first Passover.
 - (a) God killed all the first-born of the Egyptians.
 - (b) Therefore, I redeem my first-born son.
 - (2) This celebration serves as a reminder of what God did.

V. Exodus 13:17-22

- A. God let them by an unexpected route.
 - 1. There were two (Stuart) or three (Cassuto) routes to Palestine from Egypt.
 - a) The Way of the Sea—this went along the shore of the Mediterranean.
 - (1) Shortest, easiest, most heavily fortified (the route the Egyptians usually used)
 - (2) According to Cassuto, this route is not mentioned.
 - (3) According to Stuart, this is the Way of the Land of the Philistines.
 - (a) It would have put the Israelites in an untenable position.
 - b) The Way of the Land of the Philistines (Cassuto)
 - (1) This route goes from Egypt through the Negev to Palestine.
 - (2) They would arrive in Palestine in just a few days.
 - (a) Not enough time to develop an appreciation for their freedom
 - (b) They would soon be faced with war against the Canaanites and turn and go back to Egypt.
 - c) Southern route
 - (1) Took them further from Palestine.
 - (2) Hardest, longest route (used for getting metals and ores)

2. Where is the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds)?
 - a) Suez
 - (1) Defended by no one I have read
 - b) Gulf of Aqaba
 - (1) Colin Humphries
 - (2) Could explain some of the features of the text, but very far away
 - (3) Lakes of east Delta
3. In martial array
 - a) Expecting to have to fight
 - b) Not really ready to fight
 - (1) No fighting experience
 - (2) No knowledge of survival in wilderness
 - (3) Little knowledge of God
4. Bones of Joseph
 - a) Fulfilling an oath made 400 years earlier (Genesis 50:24-25)
 - (1) Joseph knew God would bring his people out and fulfill his promise.
 - b) The Israelites are leaving for good; this is not just a three-day trip.
5. Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire
 - a) I don't know what this is.
 - (1) Humphries says they are from a volcano.
 - (a) I don't see how this works.
 - b) Close and responsive enough to be reassuring, far enough and unresponsive enough to be dismissed

VI. Exodus 14:1-4

- A. God creates the illusion of confusion.
 1. He has them double back.
 2. Pharaoh reads this as a lack of unity and/or clarity of direction.
 - a) He thinks they are trapped.
 - b) God hardens Pharaoh's heart yet again.
 - (1) God will be honored.
 - (2) Egyptians will know that Yahweh did this.
 3. Israelites did what they were told to do.

VII. Exodus 14:5-9

- A. Pharaoh and his advisers see this as an opportunity to gain the Israelites back.
 1. Change of heart
 - a) What have I done?
 - b) We have seen this happen several times.
 - (1) Pharaoh is very reluctant to yield his power; he engages in counterproductive behavior.

- c) Stuart points out that in the Egyptian worldview, the gods are not omnipresent and they are capricious.
 - (1) Pharaoh is thinking Yahweh has moved on and is no longer protecting the Israelites.
- d) He readies an army of chariots to go after the Israelites.
 - (1) 600 chariots with officers
 - (2) Can travel quickly
- e) Pharaoh overtook the Israelites camped by the sea.

VIII. Exodus 14:10-12

- A. Pharaoh pins the Israelites against the sea
 - 1. Israelites became afraid.
 - a) They mocked Moses.
 - (1) Why did we have to come out into the wilderness just to die?
 - (2) We told you to leave us alone because we knew this would happen.
 - (3) We were better as slaves than dead.
 - b) This is revisionist history and exaggeration.
 - (1) There is no indication they expressed these concerns.
 - (2) They Egyptians don't want to kill the Israelites.
 - (3) They have just witnessed eight months of demonstrations of God's power and loving concern for them.

IX. History Matters

- A. The past is important.
 - 1. It is critical for understanding the present.
 - 2. It is key for projecting into the future.
 - 3. It is the body of knowledge from which we can learn.
- B. It is so important that we are constantly fighting over it.
 - 1. We know that whoever controls the story of the past controls how we think about the present and the future.
 - 2. So there is a HUGE tendency to manipulate the story of the past so that the hearers will think about the present in the way the teller wants them to think.
 - a) We all do this. We are all revisionist historians.
 - b) Example: History of World Cup of Skiing
 - (1) Many stories are being told.
 - (2) My father-in-law is outraged because they are not true.
 - (a) And he was there.
 - c) It is not enough for an account to be factual; it needs to be true.
 - (1) Outrageous lies can be factual.
 - (2) It is the difference between a portrait and a caricature.

- C. History is one of God's most important means of self-revelation.
1. We learn about him by seeing how he acts.
 2. But he rarely acts overtly.
 - a) Those events need to be kept clearly in mind.
 - b) Without them, it is easy to be deceived into thinking God does not have control of the affairs of man.
 - (1) We go decades or centuries without seeing God act overtly.
 - (2) It is easy to lose sight of the reality of God.
 - (a) We are just plodding through life with our heads looking down.
 - (3) We need to be reminded that God is there and is in control.
 - (4) He acted in the past and will act again.
 - c) Example of chemistry
 - (1) It appears as though a piece of metal is solid.
 - (2) But, in fact, it is mostly space.
 - (3) If we think a piece of metal is solid, it seems as though the greatest force is a big hammer.
 - (4) But, if we understand atoms, we know there is a far greater force.
 3. God's actions in Egypt constituted a grand, overt act to bring salvation to the people of Israel.
 - a) They were sorely in need of salvation.
 - (1) For 430 years they had been in Egypt.
 - (2) Many years of oppression
 - b) The situation looked hopeless.
 - (1) Egypt was the most powerful country in the world.
 - c) But God acted just as he had promised he would.
 - (1) Abraham had said that his descendants would be in Egypt for 400 years.
 - d) God not only saved the Israelites, he began the process of forming them into his people.
 - (1) They had become Egyptians by culture.
 - (2) They had absorbed Egyptian values.
 - (3) All that needs to change.
 4. The Passover was a big deal!
 - a) The plagues (in particular the tenth plague) needed to be remembered forever.
 - b) Instituted as an annual celebration (Passover) forever
 - (1) Part of the celebration is passing on to the children what happened.
 - (2) Eyewitness testimony passed on to children
 - (a) They, in turn, pass the eyewitness testimony on to their children.
 - c) There would be long stretches of time when God did not do anything so overt.
 - (1) During those times, it would be hard to believe that God is who he said that he is.

- (2) The memory of what God did was supposed to help them keep track of what is true.
- 5. Why celebrate the Passover and not the crossing of the Red Sea?
 - a) Both are remarkable acts of God on behalf of the people of Israel.
 - b) But the Passover is a rich picture of the more important salvation of God's people.
 - (1) The Passover was a dress rehearsal of the spiritual salvation of his people.
 - (2) The events of the Passover help to give context and make sense of the death of the Messiah.
- 6. What is at stake?
 - a) Paul said that if Jesus did not rise from the death, our faith is in vain.
 - b) I would assert that if the Passover did not occur, our hope in God is in vain
 - (1) It is our proof that God has the power to save his people and is willing to use it for that purpose.

