

**February 7, 2016
A Day of Deliverance
Exodus 12:1-14**

¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,

² **“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.**

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.

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.**

⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

⁶ **Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.**

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.

⁸ **That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.**

⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs.

¹⁰ **Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.**

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.

¹² **“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.**

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.

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.**

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ! Can you believe it? We are at the 2nd first Sunday of 2016 and Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. The time is rushing on and we as people of God must always be prepared for scripture tells us that no one knows the time or the hour when this world will end and another begin. No one knows but the God who spoke this world into being. So since no one knows it just makes sense to me to praise Him while I have a chance. Praise Him for clean air to breath and clean water to drink. Praise Him for the availability of fresh produce. Praise Him for some of the things we take for granted that others do not have. Praise Him for the opportunity to praise Him! Let everything that has breathe praise the Lord.

Many of you know that prior to studying Theology and Education I was a passion student of History. I have always been fascinated by the past and how it shapes and forms the future. As I looked at the passage for our study this morning I saw a history lesson and I was eager to teach it. But history by itself can be very dull and dry, but sometimes if you work at it history can come alive and enrich our lives and the way that we live. Yet in order for us to learn from history, we must have a clear grasp of the story. So I am going to ask you to pray with me and for me as we consider:

THEN, NOW AND LATER!

SHALL WE PRAY!

Father God we come this morning to your throne of grace and ask that you have mercy on us. We are hungry for your Word and we need to be fed. We are thirsty to walk in closer relationship with you but we need for you to send water. We desire to do justice but there is so much evil that we need your discerning spirit. Father, we ask that you send us what we need and teach us to use it all for your glory. Abba, the past week has been rough... but your people need a Word from heaven. Give me the strength, the courage, and the insight to preach your Word. Allow me to be the best that I can be in all the things you call me to do. Amen and Amen.

THEN, NOW AND LATER!

THEN

The people called the Children of Israel, the Hebrews, and/or the Israelites are all the same people.¹ Later these same people will be called Jew or Jewish.² They were the descendants of Jacob, whose name had been changed to Israel after he had wrestled with the angel. Jacob's family had moved to Egypt after Joseph, one the sons, had become a great ruler under Pharaoh. Jacob's family grew into a large nation but they were different from the Egyptians.

Jacob's family worshipped One God
Egyptians worshipped many

Jacob's family were wanderers or nomads
Egyptians had a deeply rooted culture

Jacob's family were shepherds
Egyptians were builders

These people who had been given land of their own in Goshen north of the great Egyptians cultural centers became slaves because Pharaoh became afraid that they would become bigger and stronger. Although they were not a conquered people but an invited guest the new Pharaoh made them slaves.

It makes me think of:

*"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,"³*

An invitation to come but when you arrive you are treated as less than, you are denied human rights, you are **not called** slaves but you can't find a job that pays a living wage, you depend on the government and then are condemned for not pulling yourself up by your own boot straps but you don't have any boots, wait that is another sermon!

Slaves wherever they are found wish to be free and these people were no different. They prayed to God to be set free and after 400 years God answered their prayers. In 400

¹ <https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20060815193808AA8qni1> accessed 02/06/2016

² <http://www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/hebrews> accessed 02/06/2016

³ <http://www.howtallisthestatueofliberty.org/what-is-the-quote-on-the-statue-of-liberty/> accessed 02/06/2016

years they had grown from a family of 70 into a nation numbered in scripture as 600,000 men and no count of the women and children was recorded.

We join the story after the 9 plagues have been sent and God is preparing them for the 10th and final plague. It reads like this:

¹² “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

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.

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.

This ordinance would stand until the death and resurrection of Christ. Every person who wished to serve the true and living God was instructed to obey the ordinance.

²⁴ “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. ²⁵ When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. ²⁶ And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ 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.

That was **THEN**

But you and I are living in NOW!

What do I mean when I say we are living in now. We are not under the old ordinance but we live under the new ordinance brought to us by Jesus the Christ, the Son of a Living God. This new ordinance or covenant is established for us during the Festival of Unleavened Bread or the Passover during the final week of Jesus life. All four Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record the event. I will read selected passages from Luke.

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

⁹ “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

¹⁰ He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there."

¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

*¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**"*

*²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**"*

These words ought to have some impact on you. Jesus was telling the disciples and therefore telling you and I that there is no need to bring a sacrifice for our sins. There is no need for us worry about how we will be able to regain right relationship with God. There is no need to believe that all is lost. We as Disciples of Christ have a new life. A new life because God in the person of Jesus the Son will die for all of our sins. And in dying for our sins we are free. All that is asked is that we keep the covenant that Jesus established at the last Passover He celebrated with the Disciples before Calvary.

That is the now in which we are living: a now, full of hope and possibility because we have already been redeemed.

LATER

As believers in Christ we each probably have our favorite passage of scriptures that we hold onto as we think about **LATER**, that time when Jesus will return to separate the sheep from the goats and take us to live with Him. I don't what yours might be so I will share a few of mine.

When I was a little girl we lived in a two-bedroom apartment. My two sisters and I shared a bed. I was too little to see that there was a time when things would be different. So I dreamed of later: a later where I would have a room of my own! My scripture of later

14 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ”⁴*

I dreamed of a later with a room of my own.

Because my parents were older when they had their daughters I went to a lot of funerals, funerals of church members, cousins, uncles, and family friends. I wanted to know what happened when you died so I learned another scripture for **LATER**.

¹³ *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ⁵*

Now that was good news for me. Not only would I get to see those who had gone before me but also I was going to be with the Lord God forever. That scripture gave me comfort as I buried 5 uncles; two brothers; my father and many friends. But as I grew older I needed something else. Something that would sustain me until my **later arrived**. It was then I embraced:

⁴ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14&version=NIV>

⁵ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+4&version=NIV>

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁶

Your personal then was all that you were before you found Christ.

All your attitude

All your negativity

All your my way or the highway

All your alcohol and drugs and inappropriate sex

All your your living, cheating and stealing

All your stuff you thought you had hid but God saw

Your personal now begins when you accept Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life.

Your personal now begins when you ask God to help you be a new you.

Your personal now can begin today.

I invite you to accept Christ!

For your LATER is a promise from God. And God keeps His word.

⁶ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28&version=NIV> accessed 02.06.2016

