

The Shepherd of Israel



THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, P.O. Box 1331, ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. 07632

Inside this issue:

On the Doorposts of Your Heart

Caleb, a frightened boy running desperately through the small Egyptian town, knocks on the door of Benjamin, the son of Gideon. "We do not take the command of Moses concerning the Passover literally," he explains.

The boy runs off. A second house. A third. Finally he finds Abner sprinkling lamb's blood on the doorposts of his home and he and his family are safe.

This story takes place in 1491 B.C. What possible meaning could it have for you—today?

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The Broken Matzoh by J. H. Cohn

The Passover, celebrated in Egypt the night before the Exodus, contains many symbols which probe the depths of God and His Messiah.

One is the middle matzoh, one of three wrapped in silk, but the only one broken in half. Why? And why is it later brought back to once again make a whole?

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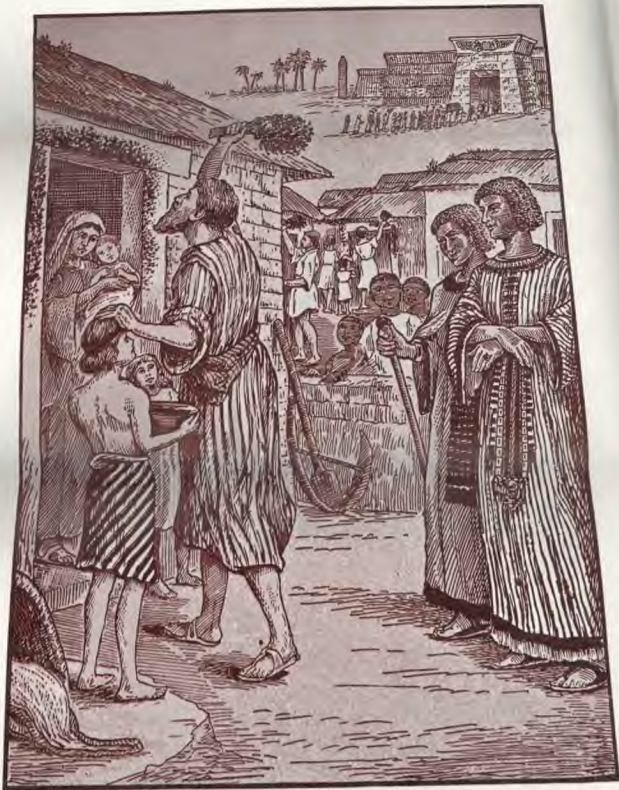
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On The Doorposts Of Your Heart



The Lord "passed over" the doors on which the blood was sprinkled, hence Passover, Exodus 12.

*Between the lines of this
4,000-year-old event
is God telling us something
about the fear of death?*

CALEB was becoming alarmed. "My father!" he exclaimed, as the little family of two adults and four children rested for a few minutes at the edge of the village "surely it will be impossible for us to reach Succoth before night. You and mother are tired and they tell us it is a full day's journey from this place. It is already past the sixth hour."

He glanced at the hurrying people in the street. "It is becoming dark as if a storm were coming. It is getting cold, too. And no one is able to tell us the way."

Caleb's father, an austere man of advanced years, drew his garment resolutely about him. "We must go at all costs, my son. We are certain to find many more Hebrews in Succoth than here in Rameses. These people seem to be either Egyptians or members of the mixed multitude."

"But, my father," urged the boy with a gesture of appeal; "it was our uncle Simeon who told us of Moses' proclamation. He showed me the writing, and it will soon be the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan, when the lamb must be killed and its blood struck on the doorposts of the house."

Caleb's mother, much younger in years than Ephraim, her husband, and fair of face and compassionate of expression, looked at her son with deep concern. "And if the blood is not there?" she asked in a low voice.

"The Lord will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast," quoted Caleb. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

"My husband," said the mother, turning with agitation toward Ephraim, as the smaller children huddled about them, "would it not be wise to do as Caleb suggests? He is now a man"—after a moment's pause—"and our first-born."

"But where can we stay?" and Ephraim looked helplessly at the darkening sky and the hurrying people. "I know the whereabouts of none of our people in this heathen village, besides Simeon. And he will not take us."

However, Ephraim was prevailed upon to stay in Rameses that night, and Caleb was sent to find a house where they might lodge and eat the Lord's passover.

From Simeon, the son of Issachar, Caleb obtained the names and locations of three Hebrew families in Rameses.

"You must go alone," said Simeon, "I am an old man. As I told your father, we are overcrowded here. This has been a day of gloom and much confusion. Fear has taken hold of every one. They think the Angel of Death is about to strike. But it is still the sixth hour of the fourteenth day. There is yet time. Go!"

The House of Benjamin, the Son of Gideon

So Caleb started out in search of the first house.

Only after Caleb had knocked several times was the door opened slowly and cautiously. "Peace be unto you," said the boy, "I seek Benjamin, the son of Gideon."

"I am he," answered a deep voice from the darkness, "Who are you?"

"Caleb, the son of Ephraim of Rameses. There are six of us, my father and mother and four children. They are here at the end of the street. We seek a house in which to eat the passover."

"Why come you here?" droned the lifeless voice.

"Your name was given me by Simeon, the son of Issachar, and I see on your doorpost the proclamation of Moses."

A bearded face thrust itself out of the murk and peered down at Caleb. The boy went on rapidly, "This is the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan. Will you kill a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year, and will you take of the blood and strike it on the doorposts, as Moses commanded?"

There was a painful pause in which Caleb could distinctly hear his heart pounding. Then the unfriendly voice made reply:

"We do not take the command in its wholly literal meaning. Our firstborn has grown up and left us. We think it sufficient to display the proclamation on our doorpost to show that we believe it and that it will surely come to pass. You and your family will be safe here if you can find room. But we do not intend to kill a lamb and strike its blood upon our doorposts." The bearded face slowly took on a puzzled expression, for Caleb had faded away into the darkness and confusion of the street.

The House of Levi, the Son of Reuben

Beginning to feel desperate, Caleb sought the next house. He had some difficulty in finding it as it was in a different section of the village from the others. He finally identified it, as he had the other, by the proclamation on the door.

A woman answered his rap. She was brisk and cheerful with lively eyes. A little too friendly, Caleb thought. He wasted no words: "Tell me quickly, my mother," pointing to the proclamation. "Will you sacrifice the lamb and will you strike the blood upon the doorposts this night?"

"Come in, my son." She looked the boy over appraisingly. "The lamb has been sacrificed and the blood is ready. Sit down and I will call my husband."

Levi appeared and Caleb told his story, the story of his family's predicament.

Levi, a tall man, heavy-featured and slow of movement, said, yes, he understood. He sympathized. He spoke reassuringly. That point about striking the blood upon the doorposts; there was a difference of opinion about that. However, Caleb need not worry about it. Some might feel that it was necessary to put the blood upon the doorposts actually but, as for him, well there were other things to consider too. "You see," he went on in his deliberate way, "We have only recently cleaned and painted the outside of our house and we would not like to mess it up by sprinkling blood upon the doorposts. God knows and sees everything; therefore, He knows we offered the lamb and He can see we have the blood in the bowl here on the table. Be at peace about the matter and bring your father and your family. You will be welcome here."

"But God had said to strike the blood upon the doorposts, and Moses taught that God had said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you,'" cried Caleb, and turning away with a sinking heart he left the house.

The House of Abner, the Son of Abidan

With one chance left, Caleb ran with all his might to the end of the street. After several inquiries, he found the house of Abner. One glance told him that his search was over. In the doorway stood a man with a basin in one hand and a bunch of hyssop in the other, dipping the hyssop in the basin and striking the two doorposts and the upper doorpost with the blood-drenched hyssop.

Caleb blurted out his story, beside himself with joy. Nor was he disappointed, for Abner stopped his work and with glowing face, turned to Caleb with these words:

"Bring your father and your family here at once, my son. I am Abner and I have already heard about you from Simeon the son of Issachar. My house has obeyed the proclamation to the letter. The lamb has been sacrificed in exact accordance with Moses' command and the blood is now being struck upon the doorposts. You will be safe here."

What Did Isaiah Prophecy?

Caleb, in the story you have just read, lived in the year B. C. 1491, when Pharaoh was king of Egypt. You, who have read this story, live in the twentieth century, or almost 4,000 years later.

Caleb and his people were the first to observe the Lord's passover during that time of terror between the evenings of the fourteenth and fifteenth day of Nisan.

But the Jewish people do not observe the passover today in the way that Caleb observed it. Today there is no passover lamb and no blood, but instead only unleavened bread, the four cups of wine, the bitter herbs, the shankbone of a lamb.

Why is this and what is the meaning of the change? Nearly two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus Christ,

Israel's true Messiah, laid down His life at three o'clock in the afternoon at exactly the time when the passover lamb was to be sacrificed, and He became the true Passover of whom the passover lamb was merely a shadow or type of our holy Messiah who became the "lamb without blemish" and was slain for our sins. John, the son of the Jewish priest Zacharias, when he saw Jesus coming towards him, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Our prophet Isaiah also said of Him, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed

He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

Now what are you to understand from the story of Caleb, the son of Ephraim and how does it apply to you? We will endeavor to point out:

If you believe the words of John, the son of Zacharias, and the words of Isaiah the prophet, *and do nothing about it*, then you are in the first house, the House of Benjamin, the son of Gideon.

If you believe that Jesus our Messiah really died and shed His blood, *but that the blood need not be applied*, you are in the second house, the House of Levi, the son of Reuben.

But if you believe that Jesus our Messiah IS the Lamb of God, and that He really died and shed His blood, *and the blood should be by faith in Him applied to the doorposts of your heart*, then you may enter and abide forever in the third house, the House of Abner, the son of Abidan.

If you ask how this can be done, the answer is very simple: You tell the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for you, that you accept Him as your Saviour and Messiah, and ask Him to cleanse your heart from all sins. This is striking the blood upon the doorposts of your heart. When this is done, you will know beyond all shadow of doubt that you are safe from the Angel of Death.

Every winter the celebration of Chanukah seemed to get lost somehow in the onslaught of the Christmas season. But when spring came around not even Easter could eclipse the eight-day observance of Pesach.

The Passover season was a very special time, even in non-orthodox homes such as mine. Yet, something always bothered me about the holiday; and more than that, about my faith itself. What's left when you strip away all the beautiful traditions?

As proud as I was of the Judaic heritage, every time I stood to fervently sing out the *Shema*, the watchword of the Jewish faith, I knew deep down I never understood what it was all about.

My Jewish upbringing had taught me to . . . *love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*, but had never shown me how to do that.

After all, how can you love someone you don't know?

I came to know and to love the God, Who for so long had only been "out there somewhere," in a very personal way by coming to Him in the way He had commanded. Through the Son,

At last I've found the key which unlocked the mystery of God; Jesus the Messiah, Passover came alive! Now as I sat at the Seder table, it dawned on me for the first time that the Exodus wasn't just a fairy tale but the true account of God's gracious deliverance of my own kinsmen.

The Almighty God Who had spoken to Moses from the burning bush is the same One with Whom I now commune in prayer. No longer a vague supernatural force, God had become a loving father to me.

My Jewish upbringing had never given me the opportunity to appreciate my own Messiah; but now my faith in Jesus has given me a love and an ap-

preciation for the faith which my forefathers passed down to me, greater than I'd ever had before.

God's Passover Lamb has explained not only *Pesach* to me, but God Himself. As it is written, *the only begotten Son . . . hath declared Him.*

Art Pinzur

"My Jewish upbringing had taught me to . . . love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might . . . but had never shown me how to do that."

