

H0013 3-21-92 Hoeh Pasadena E Passover NT and OT

Good afternoon to all of you, the individuals who are responsible for the sermon topics suggested that I should address a question here, which I want to keep somewhat different from the way I addressed it for the ministry and the ministerial refreshing program.

It's the subject of the Passover fundamentally in the Old Testament and why we do the things we do and how we should understand the events coming up this next month.

The subject of the Passover has already in part been addressed in terms of the function of the New Testament Church and yourselves as individuals.

I should like to take a look at some of the interesting things that might be of help without giving the background presentation of details that the ministry normally would be responsible for but covering them more from a story perspective so that we understand the seasons as they come along and in this particular case the beginning of the sequence of annual festive occasions, serious events that in fact distinguish what Christianity should be from those that have become confused on these issues that should have distinguished the Jewish nation but they set certain limits on what they were willing to receive as a revelation from the Almighty and so they are without some of the remarkable fulfilling scriptures that are recorded and are available to us in the Christian Bible.

Our story of course goes back to events that you should have some general awareness of quickly.

We are dealing with the choice of a particular family through whom ultimately a written revelation would be preserved over a period of many centuries.

This particular family came out of the region of what we now know as southern Iraq and traveling into northern Syria in the upper Habor area by the way where the excavations that we participate in through the foundation at Tel Mozan is centered and one is reminded if you want to know what that land is like when you're down in southern Iraq one is simply reminded of the date palms along a river and sand and heat a measure of humidity by the water but otherwise rather dry but when you get into northern Syria one thinks of Kansas without any question.

The feel is of Kansas there is no irrigation other than that which falls naturally and then we pick up the story in the person of Abram who was asked to visit a land that he had not visited before. Now he had been a traveler without a question when you come from southern Iraq to northern Syria that's a journey that many people in the Middle East don't even make today.

So he journeyed southward came through Damascus and in Jewish tradition there are things that have been said the Bible tells us also that Eleazar who was born in his house was also of Damascus so we are here dealing with an Aramean population through which he was migrating till he comes to the land of Canaan that we historically have known for centuries as Palestine a Roman term for an area that was earlier settled by Canaanites those tribes related to people historically that we think of as Phoenicians and he wandered through the land and came down to an area bordering on a non Canaanite tribal group the Philistines whom the Arabs define as Berbers historically. If you've ever read Arabic literature of course you will remember just as in the Bible we have the story of Goliath who was a prominent man in the Philistine military in Arabic tradition he is Jalut the Berber and the Philistines played a relationship to other peoples much as in more modern history the Berbers of northwest Africa have played with respect to their Arab neighbors from our point of view they would

be very difficult to distinguish one from another but they were a branch of Mitsarites and of course the eastern Mediterranean was anciently called the Sea of Egypt so we encounter the impact of a population from northeast Africa as we also encounter a population of Canaanites along the coast and Abraham came to the area where it was possible to have as we are in this time of the year grassland taking care of goats and sheep and perhaps other smaller livestock among the cattle but Abraham found a land that was subject to drought went into Egypt and came back and you know the story as it developed we move from the experience of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob and in Jacob's time there was a tragic situation where a father and mother or husband and wife whatever perspective you wish to define it as took sides with respect to two boys Isaac had a favorite son and Rebecca had another son who was favorite and that led to a controversy and Jacob went all the way back to where Abraham had met other members of the family in the plains of north central Syria after that we have Jacob coming down with his sons 11 of them the 12th was born on the way and daughters and the family settled in the hills of the region that the Jews historically called Judea but as it turned out there was again another catastrophic problem that the family faced and Jacob for many years lived with a puzzle and the premise the puzzle was why one of his sons should have died and the premise was that indeed he was dead after all that blood soaked garment was rather strong evidence that's before they knew how to test blood as to whether it's human or some variety of animal life other than man but it's rather obvious that Jacob must have been troubled by the significance of something that was anticipated through that son Joseph who had dreams and now he disappears and he knew on the other hand that he wasn't always sure that he could trust his own children Joseph's other brothers but the evidence certainly seemed there to be true and now it was for many years that he had lived without any understanding approximately two decades no understanding that Jacob that Joseph had turned up anywhere in some other way that this was a misunderstanding about that blood soaked garment but as you know in reading the book of Genesis you have the story given where Joseph rises to some prominence enters into a period of difficulty as a result of his master's wife ends up in jail and of course it's an interesting part of the story too the prison system is one of the gifts that we associate historically with Egypt is one of the earliest records of a prison system and Joseph came to prominence there also in the eyes of the man who was responsible for it in Pharaoh's house was a government operation then came a period in which Egypt was blessed and you know the story that Joseph came to prominence at a very time when Pharaoh was puzzled by a dream and this dream was in a sense very pleasant and very frightening for a part of it seemed all positive and another part seemed so negative that he didn't know what to make of it Joseph therefore was called upon because he had interpreted also a dream of Pharaoh's two courtiers that at one time had a little trouble with Pharaoh and so Joseph came before Pharaoh heard Pharaoh's dreams and gave an explanation and offered Pharaoh advice we are here of course in the early part of the 13th dynasty historically after the great middle kingdom of the 12th dynasty had come to a general termination and Joseph was chosen to manage the affairs of state when it came to directing the solution to problems pertaining to an overabundance of food production which could have driven down the crop prices so Pharaoh saw that here was a man who had contact with spiritual understanding and was willing to give advice didn't just offer himself though Pharaoh quickly saw the logic that the man who could give this kind of advice ought to be the one so appointed and so it was that Joseph made a proclamation throughout the country that Pharaoh would buy up certain amounts of grain over and above the normal production of the land to keep the market at a good price and that would be available for those tragic seven years that he foresaw as a result of the dream that Pharaoh had meantime of course as with many Jacob had expanded in his family to accommodate to normal years and so there arose a crisis when the normal rainfall no longer occurred and there wasn't enough grain available there were seven rather prosperous years no doubt in the land of Canaan nothing is said of that otherwise in the text but most certainly from

the rains in central Africa giving rise to a wonderful Nile and the flooding of the flood plain of the Nile River the crops were abundant in Egypt Egypt of course was a land then noted for grain production as it was even in Roman days and so Jacob was doing very well but there was no hint of what was coming except that in the land of Egypt the court of Pharaoh was prepared not that everybody in Egypt understood this but at least those who were in charge of events and Joseph came to be responsible for the distribution of goods for year one and then year two of those seven years of disaster and what we have of course is Joseph discovering that an elderly man in the land of Canaan Hebrew had sent some of the sons down to acquire a grain for the family then we learn of course that the second year this was the case I won't tell you the story of how Joseph decided to deal with the brothers that you can read for yourself a rather remarkable account which indicates that Joseph was showing that he had insight into which of those brothers was behaving perhaps more as an enemy in times past than the others or did behave the story of Simeon you remember where he was chosen so we have a situation where the family was puzzled whether they should go down again because there were some difficulties having opened the sacks at the end of that first trip they saw that they might be accounted as thieves and that tended to restrain them because they didn't want to be chargeable with having stolen goods and so when they finally decided in the second year to go down there were some problems that seemed to be solved the story is a remarkable insight into human behavior and how brothers behave one toward another one could have a whole sermon on that family there that would be well worth thinking about in terms of child rearing but as a result of the second year of famine it was concluded that Jacob should come down and all of the children and this included Benjamin all the family moved down Benjamin was of course the young brother of Joseph and they came to dwell in the northeast delta area of the land of Egypt which was excellent for pasturage that was an area as a whole in which the Egyptians did not spend significant time for the simple reason that then Egyptians had a certain attitude toward shepherds others could shepherd their livestock but they did not want to be involved in that particular occupation and held it in disdain so here was an unusual situation a people whose ancestors had been promised the land of Canaan having lived there essentially as guests now leave the land which they had not inherited other than small areas that they had bought or made arrangements for or simply took as nomads sometimes do and settled areas that are not otherwise settled this family grew to significant proportions you have a time in which there is a transition a decline in power all during this time of the 13th dynasty and a rise to prominence of foreign peoples coming out of the coastal regions of the land of Canaan and the upper Sinai all of that area these were shepherd rulers to use a translation so the children of Israel according to the bible were there for a period of time in growing prosperity after the seven years of famine were over you have a situation where they were certainly favorably treated Joseph was not only remembered for those events but other public service other peoples also were in the area the Egyptians retained their independence in upper or southern Egypt the longest but in Egypt there were some serious problems because you had ultimately in the middle of the Hixos period as the shepherd kings who came from the land of Canaan were want to be known and they dominated the area we have monuments and small numbers but certainly artifacts scattered over much of the Middle East in the Mediterranean and in Iraq to show that there was a prominent occupation of Egypt by a people who were not Egyptian who had come to terms with respect to upper Egypt as to who would dominate what areas and the Israelites in the meantime were simply multiplying and growing in numbers until there came a time when war tore the valley of the Nile from south to north and ultimately the foreigners were expelled who had dominated in the government and a new dynasty or the 18th had risen to power and early in that dynasty they made a decision to dispose of the little boy babies of the Israelites because they might ultimately be a kind of fifth column in the land of Egypt to which the foreigners might latch on in some future strife with Egypt and they did not want to have this problem but they did not mind their service so this is a story

that leads us to the fact that Aaron an older brother had survived and he was not required let's say to be tossed in the river Nile but when Moses was born who was three years younger than Aaron the decision had already been made and so we are dealing here with the ruler of the first dynasty sorry the first a ruler the first king of the dynasty who made these decisions now you pick up the story later of Moses when he was 80 years of age so we have here an indication that the children of Israel suffered oppression for certainly some eight decades in the meantime of course Moses you read the story in the scripture had grown up in the court of Pharaoh as a result of a remarkable turn of events in which his relatively shrewd parents had a very very shrewd daughter not every little girl could walk along the Nile talk with somebody in the court of Pharaoh talk about her little brother without them knowing that he was in fact this little Moses that wasn't his name to start with was in fact her little brother and offer this little child's mother as someone who might be interested in nursing her now you'd have to recognize that Miriam was quite a remarkable girl to have the presence of mind to know how to deal with the court of Pharaoh but it was a remarkable family and it doesn't mean that because the bible tends to emphasize the man's responsibility that it does not at the same time show what a woman can do as presence of mind and so it was that although Moses was nursed in the family home I would take it some two to three years later he was reared thereafter in the court and it become familiar with the court and how the court operates I've had the privilege of course of visiting a court I was a guest of Leopold of Belgium in 1968 it was time goes by and I have to think of some of these years you learn my mother taught me some things so she was never in a court I think there were certain family traditions because on the family side and my mother's side one of the lineages drew up for the Habsburg dynasty the introduction and the conclusion of the Augsburg Confession and certainly traditions of court were known I was always told from a child that if you ever meet a dignitary you always see that you do not walk a breast but one step behind to a side Leopold made some comments to me Leopold of Belgium after my wife and I had been there and Paul Kroll was also there I should mention that on that occasion you learn something about the court Moses did we took a look at the slides of Leopold of Belgium his trips to Venezuela Brazil the Congo Nepal other areas of the world made a selection on behalf of the ambassador college campuses and libraries but Leopold of Belgium said to me on one occasion he said I very much appreciate the fact that in handling my slides not one ever fell you know you have them here on a light table not flat but running across with a light behind and you make a decision and of course I knew that if any of those slides started to tumble and then more tumble and that can always happen if you've ever worked with them that would hardly be the way one deals with his majesty's work so the king not only noted that he told me that he appreciated it now Moses must have learned some of these things and then we had lunch with his treasurer and secretary and engaged in a conversation and one picks up to what extent they can be at that level free to communicate as human beings human beings I have not been directly associated with any other court though I've dealt with the people who serve his majesty and her majesty in particular his majesty's court and it's amazing what they will talk about but you also learn from experience when you have made a few mistakes we all make a few mistakes here and there along the way and you should be able to spot them immediately and not repeat them I made one it was a habit I used to use more often when I was younger yes sir or no sir but one never addresses the king as sir but sire and Leopold glowered at me uh which was his right and I realized there that I should make not a public apology but amends to show that I had properly understood his majesty um Moses learned the same thing you have to know how a court operates and in this sense Moses' training of some 30 conscious years that he must have remembered at the court of Pharaoh 35 years depending on what he remembered as a little child it would be very significant in terms of his ultimately coming to court and approaching the court at a later time which wasn't necessarily in his mind but God had his reason for doing these things and so we are introduced to the tragedy of a people who had multiplied and multiplied and become the basis of a nation essentially equivalent to

the then uh comparatively smaller population of Egypt where they did not seem to have had the ideas of today of simply multiplying and multiplying the Egyptians were among the first to practice birth control of which we have any record I'm not sure how successful it was but it does appear they didn't have that many children for the children of Israel are depicted in the bible as even from the Egyptian point of view as essentially equaling the population which was a potential threat to have a foreign population in the country that might have been nearly the same even if they were servants or slaves in some capacity anyway Moses got into certain troubles that you will read of in the bible fled to the Sinai which in a sense was within the realm of Egypt in terms of what we would call an undefined border the southern part of the Sinai essentially was unoccupied by the Egyptians in any way in the central northern area was not uncommonly frequented in 1971 in the winter I had the privilege of being asked along with one or two others to visit with the former president of Hebrew University to visit the state of Israel to commemorate the death of professor Nelson Glick and on this trip it was in February March that period of time it was in February but toward the end of winter we took a trip to the Sinai and had the chance this was the time of Israeli occupation before it returned to the Egyptian government there we had the company of the first governor general of Sinai the Israeli governor general who was in charge in 1956 he went along with us the major a major general and a delightful individual and we met and were introduced formally to the then president governor general who interestingly for whatever reason was visiting St. Catherine's that is the monastery supported by the Russians over many centuries and built from the days of Justinian he was there meeting with the Bedouin and so we had a chance to be introduced also later to the Bedouin but we had the opportunity of meeting two governor generals and engaging in the conversation we soon discovered that these two Jews had different views on Mount Sinai that's the first thing they discussed in this case it was not two Jews and three opinions but only two Jews and two opinions the president governor general was sure that Sinai was in the north and major general Rotem was sure that Sinai was there where we were anyway I also we also had the privilege of taking the trip further that is we left Sinai and drove all the way to the southern tip of the Sinai which Moses certainly would have had sense enough not to do an utterly desolate area I think that the area of the traditional Mount Sinai was about as far as sensible people would have gone in that date the rest of it was absolutely desolate I have never seen anything like it in all my life one camel there wasn't any other living thing we saw until we got to where the Israeli encampment was but where the Sinai was there was water available trees a pastureage at that time of the year but Moses had you see training at the court of Pharaoh and now he's had training how to survive in the Sinai Peninsula and he spent more conscious years in the Sinai than he spent even at the court of Pharaoh because when it was all over he was 40 years approximately there and 40 years approximately from infancy in Egypt so he had remarkable experience in training God often does this brings people through experience it turned out of course that one of the typical bushes called a Rotem that's how Major General Rotem got his name he was named after the bush there this particular one didn't burn that Moses saw on the mountainside and there the god of Abraham the god of Isaac and the god of Jacob revealed himself to Moses and explained to Moses what he had in mind that Moses should be used to deliver the children of Israel and to bring about the opportunity of this family to receive their inheritance as promised in the covenant in fact covenants that were made with Abraham initially and confirmed in the succeeding generations Moses of course needed his brother under the circumstances that he was not really emotionally prepared to do the job that he should have had done and he really argued with God to the point that that was clearly a flaw in Moses character instead of relying on God to make the difference Moses now had to play the role of someone who had a speech impediment for the rest of his life and his brother would make a certain presentation Aaron seems to have been a man of significant capacity he certainly seemed comfortable playing his role and when you look at the history of the lineage of Aaron one is impressed of course by the fact that Moses was considered

the best-looking man one of the tallest men in his generation was a person of commanding presence but a serious vocal defect as slow of speech Aaron was a person whose sons contributed to the story of the high priesthood for centuries Aaron was the man whose household if you please the priestly family probably contributed more of the prophets than any other lineage most of the tribes contributed none and a few came from one or another you had sometimes individuals outside of the family of Levi but most of the Levites were priests and if so they came from the family of Aaron a truly remarkable branch of the family as a whole that we know of as Levi and so the original events around here the person of two brothers and an older sister that's the way often God does work their families that he can use and others come to their support as we have in the history of the church anyway Moses goes back and God tells him what he wants done what God first does is to explain to Moses that he's going to have to have certain signs after all Moses raised the question why don't they don't believe me God said I will have you perform certain signs now of course the Egyptians were known you don't have to look at the Bible you can look at the classical material written in Greek or Latin by Greek or Romans mostly Greeks writing on the story of the miraculous in ancient Egypt and for that matter in contemporary Egypt of the early Roman republican period the Egyptians also had recognized through history that indeed those people who came to be known as Jews in history a word that was not originally used for these people as a whole in the land of Egypt that they themselves had been in Egypt the Egyptians in the days much later of Alexander the great made a petition to Alexander after he had first in 332 BC passed through the land of Canaan and in passing through the land of Canaan the Jews you see with Jews in different countries had asked that they be not held responsible for military service a grant that the Persians earlier had made the Jews in the days of David and the later kings had always protected their nation but once they were scattered they were not about to adopt the idea that the Jews would just join everybody's army and shoot well shoot is not the word here unless you're thinking of arrows but that could be misunderstood let's say and slay one another so they asked to be treated simply as conscientious objectors and when the Greeks came in they told Alexander the high priestly family did that they wanted certain prerogatives if he would kindly grant them and they would live peaceably in his realm as they had sought to in the Persian realm and Alexander was impressed for varied reasons I won't go into here but when Alexander later in 332 came into Egypt the Egyptians posed the question when are we going to get our gold and silver and jewels and all those valuables that were stolen from us in the days of Moses Alexander of course heard their story Josephus records this and Alexander told them that he would be very glad to see that they would have this returned if they were first of all going to pay the wages of those who had been in slavery and that was a fair exchange I think Alexander made a rather judicious decision but what is of significance there of course is a recognition that indeed there were such people the Egyptians would not have needed to invent a group of people with this disaster as recorded in the Hebrew scriptures if it was not an experience that they themselves had had as a problem emotionally and otherwise for a long time that had not been redressed now the children of Israel how would you get them out of this land because they were in servitude uh Moses would never have thought of the plan in fact God never told Moses what the plan was he only said well what we should do now is have a particular series of events I will show my power and gradually bring the Egyptians to understand what it is that they should learn from me and in the meantime I want the children of Israel to learn of my power and so I will I have here the Jewish translation the modern one and also the new king James version in case we need to take a look but first of all God chose to reveal himself in a miraculous manner first to the Egyptians after Moses sorry first to the family of Israel after Moses and then to the Egyptians now when we turn to the book of Exodus we see the story developing in the third chapter we are introduced to the story in the Sinai in the early verses God revealing his relationship to Abraham Isaac and Jacob and now to the children and so the picture is made clear beginning with verse 18 of chapter 3 then they will heed your voice and you

shall come you and the elders of Israel to the king of Egypt so God said that when the Israelites see certain miracles there isn't any question they're going to be taken by these things and will listen to you and believe you to start with they'll heed your voice then you can come with the elders that is those who represent each of the tribes some of whom in fact had been appointed by the pharaonic court to supervise their nation under the Egyptians who were responsible for the tasks that then were government funded and so we read what are you to tell the ruler of Egypt you shall say the Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us now as far as the Egyptians were concerned they saw these people as part of a greater group called Hebrew people not merely named after Jacob meaning Israelites but a part of a broader term going back to the family of Heber the Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us and now please let us go three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God here our story begins and I'm giving you some of the extensive background here because we not only have the story of Passover but we have the beginning of the days of unleavened bread and there are some very significant and important parts to the story that we should understand correctly with respect to the night to be much observed that often has escaped our attention so the Egyptians of course would not tolerate the slaughter of animals some of whom you remember the sacred ram the sacred bull of the Egyptians this in fact was not what the Egyptians would have wanted to take place in their country and Moses makes the proposal but let us then as servants we can leave goods behind but let us take a three days journey into the wilderness because the God of the Hebrews has asked us to sacrifice to him now of course the God says I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go not even by a mighty hand that is with all this power that I can show you'll be surprised how stubborn this is going to prove to be the situation so God said I'll stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in its midst and after that Pharaoh will let you go and I'll give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians and it shall be when you go that you should not have to worry you will not go empty handed every woman shall ask of her neighbor does not demand responsibility you know in this part of the world this is also true of Arabic Asia West Asia as it is of much of North Africa that's Islamic and various areas of Black Africa also that men and boys uh are together once the boys are a certain age otherwise women and girls and young boys tend to be together that is the little children and the women the men leave essentially the village and do their work the women are in the village they go to get water together they have their own social life and every Israelite woman would then ask of her neighbor namely of her of her who dwells near her house articles of silver articles of golden clothing and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters so shall you plunder the Egyptians now I'll just read that section here which is interesting in the same third chapter because there's a little different translation that might give you a a picture that I haven't found in other English translations as well expressed verse 22 each woman shall borrow from her neighbor and the lodger in her house so there was a close relationship not merely the neighbor or not merely one who dwells near her house as the traditional rendering is but in this case one who was a lodger in her house and there were Egyptians young Egyptian girls who certainly would have served the older women even among the Israelites in her house objects of silver and gold clothing and you'll put them on your sons and daughters so one of the first things is the children of Israel were told that they would not have to go out with no reward they would be given ample reward because God would see that the Egyptian women would be favorable to the request of their Israeliteish near neighbors so there was a very close relationship wherever the people lived centering around what we would call northern or lower Egypt now Moses is introduced in chapter four presenting himself to Pharaoh so you here have the background we also have the time setting showing up barely fairly soon there were certain miraculous matters that were presented to the Israelites and to Pharaoh's court we won't go through the details but we now remember that God intended a sacrifice to be made Moses then after the story let's say here talks about Moses meeting the Egyptians and it's talking about what Moses would

also have to say to the children of Israel I should point out that this is still a discussion this whole third chapter a discussion about what is yet to come so Moses knows when he is to tell the Egyptians these things and then there were the two signs in chapter four that he performed and he was to perform when he got to Egypt and in so doing when in chapter four he arrives in Egypt beginning with verse 18 after departing from his father-in-law meeting Moses they are introduced to the children of Israel at the very last verse of chapter four then chapter five Moses and Aaron Aaron went in and told Pharaoh and the summary is given let my people go that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness the question of course is who is this Yahweh or Adonai the plural of Adon or Lord as we would typically translate it that I should obey his voice and let Israel go and so the controversy builds beginning in chapter five now Moses did not say that we're going to leave Egypt he didn't tell the court ultimately what God had in mind he merely said let us go for a short distance now this is called diplomacy you don't tell everything at first you simply tell something that is reasonable perhaps Pharaoh will agree that we could at least go three days and then we see how far we get in negotiating further that's the way you often have to deal and so in the Middle East in an area where Abraham could bargain with God and come to some possible solutions in the case of Locke so here Moses says well we would like to keep a festival let us go three days journey verse three of chapter five or else God might punish us if we don't do these things the answer of Pharaoh was simply to get back to your labor then as chapter five moves along we discover the children of Israel have greater difficulty now even understanding Moses because things seem to be going wrong further their work increased they were told that they were idle so Moses returns to God in verse 22 to the Lord and asks him now look we've been here I've made an appeal to the court of Pharaoh how many times do you want me to go back I thought you told us that you'd use me to deliver them so God says that there is in a sense quite a bit more you'll have to do now and chapter six begins with the story of what else was needed to be done step by step a certain number of miracles occur henceforth in the meantime the story of the family of Moses and Aaron is written up here for the record in modern book form we might have put this in an extended footnote it's not a direct continuation of the story it is simply background material then in chapter seven God begins to introduce Aaron to the powers that he has when he should come before the court of Pharaoh what his experiences were during those 40 years Moses was gone we do not know but anybody of Aaron's prominence most certainly would have meant men from the court if he ever himself had appeared we don't know before Pharaoh but you meet people of the court they may or may not may not introduce you at any one time to the king a number of plagues are discussed henceforth one plague in chapter seven a second plague in chapter eight as also a third and fourth we won't go into those details a fifth plague in chapter nine and a sixth and a seventh in chapter 10 and eighth plague Moses hasn't pushed any further than at least to get them to have an opportunity to fulfill a festival now we haven't yet come to the nature of this festival in Moses discussion chapter nine sorry chapter 10 has the ninth plague then the Lord says in chapter 11 that there is coming a very serious plague by which the Egyptians will let you go and this is the story speak now to the hearing of the people in the hearing of the people verse two and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor articles of silver and articles of gold so now we pick up the story Moses had been told what to do but here in chapter 11 God says there's coming one more plague of great disaster so now is the time uh after all of these plagues that the Egyptian women have been shall we say softened up and let your women ask their neighbors acquire those things that you have need of there is going to be the slaying of the firstborn in the land of Egypt from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne verse five even to the firstborn of the maid servant who is behind the handmill and all the firstborn of the beasts so you see the Egyptians had their nobility the court of Pharaoh the nobles the priestly cast has not mentioned here and they also had their maid servants who were Egyptian foreigners too without any question functioning in that role so we learn that this is the story of the deliverance of

what are called the firstborn now what is significant here is this begins to do what we learn elsewhere in the bible that there are events in the old testament that foreshadow things to come the reality of which was not always made clear to the children of Israel at the beginning but there is a deliverance of people who are called firstborn and a deliverance at the expense of others who did not have the provision for escape because either they refused it or did not understand it we learn the nature of this provision shortly chapter 11 is a short chapter we are introduced here to the close of what will turn out to be a new kind of year and the introduction of another year taking place somewhat unexpectedly we discern in tradition as well as from this scripture that the ancient civil year of autumn to autumn was fundamental to the reckoning of the nation the solar lunar calendar beginning in the what we would call the autumn end of summer but now after they were told about acquiring a certain remuneration and that the firstborn would be punished but the children of Israel should escape this was a an example that there would come a time in the future where there would be certain ones delivered who would be born first and others who would not escape this is not a discussion of all those who were not born first that is not even the issue this is a ceremony involving a small group of people out of maybe families of six eight ten you have a situation where just those born first are involved now the story unfolds in particular we are told that they will surely drive you out all together chapter 11 verse 1 now how is that to be developed so we turn to chapter 12 the lord spoke to moises and aron in the land of egypt and here we are introduced to the beginning of a spring to spring solar lunar calendar and interestingly we learn here that a lamb or a kid was to be set aside on the tenth day of the month later we should learn from jewish literature when this tenth day fell on the sabbath day that this event was simply not postponed to the day after but was priests it was selected on the day before or the ninth as not something that would override the sabbath i say that because it is interesting that if you take the later tradition that we have in the christian world around us you have a palm sunday and a friday crucifixion and if you have that and then recognize the biblical record of the crucifixion on a wednesday you move that sunday back to the previous friday but friday would be the ninth day of the month not the tenth day if the 14th is a wednesday friday is the ninth in the preceding week and of course that is the time that's the that in the christian world is attributed to sunday you see if the crucifixion were really on a friday then there should have been palm monday not palm sunday but the christians remembered that indeed it was that many days before that's in the record itself the evening before that great event when jesus was accepted uh was six days before the Passover and so on the day after that that morning and that afternoon into the evening the great celebration occurred so that clearly dated it and the fact that that was on a ninth day of the month when the lamb of god was selected and not the tenth gives the strongest proof from the old testament and new testament that indeed at the time of the crucifixion of jesus pass over the 14th when the lamb was slain was a wednesday and the tenth would have been a saturday but that was not the day that this event occurred it was in fact a friday and when he got into the area of the temple he looked around and went out that evening which was the beginning of the sabbath friday evening so what normally occurs on the tenth would have occurred except on that occasion when the 14th falls on a wednesday the tenth would have been a saturday the lamb was then chosen on the day before as the proper way not to postpone it to the day afterward now what they were to do was to save this lamb or goat and they were to kill it in the twilight between the two evenings now we're leaving it to the ministry as a whole and i'm summarizing it slightly further here for you but the ministry as a whole is being held responsible to clarify some points we have never questioned what twilight means essentially from sunset to dark between the evening of the afternoon of the day and that evening which begins nightfall the only question that troubled the church for many years was whether that time that we call twilight or dusk falls at the beginning of a natural day or at the end of a natural day Mr Armstrong for decades assumed it was the beginning of a natural day day for the simple reason and correctly in reasoning he assumed that since twilight was

between sunset and dark and if all holy days are customarily celebrated from sunset he took for granted what we all did for years that the natural day also begins at sunset that is in fact the proper time to set aside every hallowed period but the natural day begins with nightfall you don't have to go far to discover that in scripture the evening in the morning were the first day and that evening was called night you you even have that described in terms of how a day can be understood in middle eastern terms there in genesis one but we will note in a moment i will get back to this that the lambs or the kids were to be offered between the two evenings or a dusk that means essentially if you were dealing with something around the period of at this time we would probably assume 6 30 to 8 o'clock in that time frame is is probably a reasonable figure if you were to think in modern terminology the lambs were to be slain in the individual households and then they were to place the blood on the doorposts and the lintel over the doorway and that night they were to eat the roasted flesh so it takes approximately if you say 6 30 to 8 during this period of preparing the lamb for slaughter and having everything ready and then getting it onto the spit and then you assume something like two and three quarter to three hours of roasting which is the traditional period of time for whole roasted young animals of this nature you are dealing with a meal that was certainly somewhere between 10 10 30 and 11 o'clock beginning and all those who participated in the meal were those who remained in were those who were also asked to remain until the morning hours had come in verse 10 because it was in the middle of the night that the death angel was to pass over now this lamb came to be called the Passover what is important here is we are introduced to that unique ceremony of all ceremonies no other ceremony involving the death of an animal recorded anywhere else in the Old Testament is commemorated by some Christian ceremony today with the use of symbols such as unleavened bread or wine everything else is expounded verbally this is the only sacrifice preceding anything in the law of moses the only sacrifice for which we have new testament symbols jesus having given us an example now the problem of course that was in the mind of the church for a long time was simply centered about the question of when a day begins and we would never resolve this until essentially after Mr Armstrong died that we had ideas but the question was how were you going to explain it clearly so that he would understand and for that matter most people when the church as a whole took for granted that a new day naturally began with sunset there was no solution to the problem until we faced the reality that the natural day begins with nightfall and by that we mean that the daylight dominates even after sunset and the new day begins when the daylight is no longer dominant and the darkness of night has set in once that is understood all the rest falls into place that is we hallow time earlier than the moment the day begins but in terms of a natural work day we have the parallel in the book of exodus a little bit later not a part of this story but in the story of the daily offerings chapter 29 two lambs of the first year day by day continually are to be offered now one lamb you offer in the morning and the other you offer at twilight this of course was one that we simply didn't know how to press until we clearly saw the picture and knew how to put the description in simple terms if you have two lambs offered day by day and the first one is offered in the morning and the other one is offered at twilight that is between the two evenings being our by aim is the term the same as when the Passover lamb was originally sacrificed now you discover that since these are offered in a day that whatever happens twilight the time when the second lamb is offered on that day is still in that day and that means that the twilight or the close of a day is not at sunset the close of a natural day is with nightfall and once that falls into place then we understand why the Jews who found it difficult to understand why the church came to its view and didn't know how to explain it even Jews in our own fellowship found it difficult to distinguish between when holy time begins and when a natural day begins but once we recognize that that was the center of the problem everything else fell into place the Jews who have used these terms have recognized that between the two evenings always pertains to the day that is closing in terms of any ceremonial function and so this is the story of what happened toward the

close of the 14th in Egypt at that particular dramatic occasion called the Passover the lamb was eaten the evening that followed the beginning hours after roasting before midnight the meal and then the death angel goes over and then we discover of course that the Egyptians suffer a very great tragedy in the meantime the children of Israel were asked not to go out until the morning now the morning is a term that must be understood in a perspective that is very important here let me read you a part of the story in the account of Jesus own life there is an interesting verse where we are told this is mark 135 we'll turn quickly to that Jesus got up early in the morning and does the morning begin with sunrise mark 135 now in the morning having risen a long while before daylight he went out and departed to a solitary place and there he prayed morning may begin much earlier than daylight it's like evening beginning after noon morning begins after midnight not necessarily the idea of an exact period of time so our story here which continues is really the story of events pertaining to the Passover in which the children of Israel now offer a lamb which last week I believe it was though I wasn't attending this congregation Mr. Albrecht addressed the importance of the role of Jesus Christ the Messiah is the Lamb of God to deliver those who are called first who are like the firstborn and without that deliverance the firstborn would not have escaped among the children of Israel and all who sought protection in the houses so it was that the lamb was slain on the 14th and the death angel passed over at the midnight following the festive occasion of that night to be much remembered and somewhere between one and two o'clock and all probability the children of Israel had received official warning and anybody knows in the dark of night the means by which you quickly communicate is by fire signal a method that had been used in the by the Jews and other people throughout the Middle East until certainly Roman times and they all knew what that meant and so they marched out of the land of Egypt having been essentially ordered to get out by the Egyptian leadership this is the story of the children of Israel who had gathered to celebrate the Passover at a community in lower Egypt that then was not populated and they gathered at a town that in our day we now know by another term but in that day was known also by another term and in the interim came to be known by the term Ramses named after a ruler of a later dynasty the 19th this particular area when the children of Israel left was uninhabited and that's why they could gather together there that is not a major Egyptian city the children of Israel left burned the remains in the early morning hours while it was still yet the dark of night and went out and they kept on marching there came dawn and they kept on marching in this case they did not return it was no question now of a three days journey and sacrifice and coming back they were now leaving because the Egyptians had expelled him so here's the story of a small group of people whose lives were rescued with all the rest as a type of a small group who later that is the churches of God through history I use that in terms of the various organized groups of people that God has used through time these represent the people whom God first calls the overwhelming majority are not now called so we start out with a focus on the deliverance during this age of the church with a small group of people who are delivered tragically there are some who are cut off from such blessings because they have chosen to depart and not remain faithful and loyal to the church of which Jesus Christ is the living head our story takes us then through the rest of the events which are better explained during the festival but let me summarize it this way there came a time later when this lamb was fulfilled by Messiah Jesus the Christ in that day the Passover was not slain by the individual heads of household at the same time in that day when many people didn't have livestock didn't know how to butcher Moses even foresaw that when they entered the promised land this was necessary so it came to be that instead of the Passover being limited as the Sadducees had it to just between the two evenings the religious community as a whole brought back the meaning of between the two evenings to include let's say a period of time that began after the beginning of the first evening rather than after the end of the first evening so later in rabbinic tradition Pharisee tradition between the two evenings took on a broader meaning ending at nightfall but beginning after the first evening began so it was between the

beginning of the first evening that was a later interpretation and it was necessary because many people wouldn't know how to butcher I would hesitate to be your lamb or your kid and have you start to butcher on the basis of your experience that's why God had to priest to it and why it had to be done by a small group of people one after the other after the other and so it was typical that shortly after 3 p.m somewhere about 3 30 to 5 30 in that time frame the lambs were slaughtered in order that everybody could have it done in sufficient time and then they would go out and away from Jerusalem in the smaller villages around unless they themselves lived right in Jerusalem did christ recognize the validity of that the answer of course is yes because he died shortly after 3 p.m he did not die after sunset as the messiah he died at the close of the 14th shortly after three o'clock his blood was shed for the forgiveness of sin as we read in eyes in luke 2220 and of course from isaia 53 12 he poured out his soul unto death now what is unusual that we also need to understand that was difficult for a long time a recognition that the unleavened bread and the wine represent the sacrifice of that paschal lamb symbolic of the fact that christ the messiah's body was broken before he died having shed his blood for the remission of sins and so the new testament ceremony was never meant to replace the eating of the roasted lamb even though that was a traditional but erroneous thought it was meant to commemorate all that happened to jesus christ the lamb of god before he died and his death so the blood commemorates his death the unleavened bread commemorates what his body endured up to that time the beating the torture that occurs with crucifixion something you never would have done with a lamb in the new testament times jesus set aside the evening of the 14th before midnight the evening hours of the 14th before midnight before the lambs were ever slain and he tells us now to get into that spiritual understanding and mood and be prepared to fully understand this day because you must think not just in terms of the death only you must think in terms of all that i was willing to endure this entire day the betrayal if you please of judas the problems of the jewish and roman government in dealing with this one who said he was a king the brutality of the roman soldiers the duplicity of the religious leaders all of that the departure of the disciples who left him to himself we are asked to commemorate all of that that we can read of in scripture by starting that day jesus did not say the evening before he died i'm doing it now but i want you to celebrate it some other time he said i am desirous of eating this Passover the new testament symbols because what he presented was not a leg of lamb what he presented to them was unleavened bread and wine that also was called a Passover it's a new testament Passover that commemorates the slaying of the lamb that commemorates what preceded that the suffering of the lamb of god so now we have a whole new perspective and there will be more sermons coming where we deal specifically with these remarkable points that have been lost and really have taken us decades to fully recover and understand or to put it in simple terms in conclusion what the church of god has done as the Passover at the beginning of the 14th which would seem to have been the issue was not the issue at all what at what was at issue was what we ought to have understood we were commemorating the festival that is called the night to be much observed on the 15th where instead of merely thinking of the children of Israel going out we discovered that that was the night at which the children of Israel were delivered and all the things that the children of Israel must have thought through when their firstborn were rescued that is in a sense the night that pictures the deliverance of a nation just as the blood of messiah pictures our deliverance as the firstborn of the human family we are the firstborn if you are a part of the church of god with the holy spirit you are a part of a firstborn group of people that have escaped the consequences of the death penalty because you were willing to die in the sense of yourself being buried through baptism and now you come up yielded to Jesus Christ who has covered all sin as we acknowledge those sins and they come to our attention we are in that sense the church of the firstborn as the children of Israel had among them the firstborn that were rescued and so the night to be much observed following the Passover is really a focus on the significance of ultimately our deliverance as the church of the firstborn just as the

children of Israel that night were delivered i hope that you will be able between now and then to read the rest of the story through chapter 12 and 13 a parallel in some of the journeys in the book of numbers and then look at the new testament and now we have no problem whatsoever we have Jesus celebrating with the disciples celebration in the spiritual sense not a holiday sense the new testament symbols of the Passover at the beginning of the day but when it came to offering himself he died at the time that those lambs were regularly slain in the afternoon and so it is true that the jews Passover was fulfilled at the time that Jesus himself died if he was the true Passover lamb he could not have died at any other time that the land then that the lambs were officially approved to be sacrificed in the same way he rose from the dead and departed the tomb at the time that that first the wave sheaf we call it better translated omer was cut and just as that omer was ultimately presented the Sunday morning so Jesus was accepted of the father in heaven you read that of course in Matthew and John that account we'll listen to later as we read the scripture but Jesus fulfilled the ceremony of the Passover he fulfilled the ceremony of that first sheaf of grain that was cut because among the first born if we speak of those in the first resurrection as the rest of it he himself has preeminence as the only begotten son of god the only mortal human being in terms of the flesh who had as his father no mortal man but god the father in heaven through the holy spirit and that's why that very special sheaf of an omer's weight was in fact cut to show the story of the resurrection and the acceptance of the messiah so every one of these were fulfilled in terms of the person of Jesus the christ our living messiah and head of the church today