**Session 14: Week 8a**

***God of Deliverance***

**Exodus 12:43 – 14:4**

**14-15 November 2022**

**Review** – We saw in our last session the nation of Israel at long last leaving Egypt. They have been delivered by *blood*. But they are not free of danger yet: they will also be delivered by *water*. These two concepts are very important, echoed elsewhere in Scripture.

**Slavery** – When the Lord gives instructions for keeping the Passover, He specifically mentions that slaves that are bought with money can take part in Passover once they are circumcised. But why would the Israelites, who have just come out of their own bitter slavery, purchase slaves for themselves? When we read the word “slavery,” we tend to think of the North American slave trade, i.e. our own history in the United States as it relates to slavery, which is man stealing. But the Hebrew concept of slavery was more that of a servant, specifically the practice of “debt servitude” which enabled you to work for someone else until you got back on your feet financially.

**Circumcision** – The Lord gives detailed instructions about who can and cannot celebrate Passover, centering on circumcision. Given the prominent importance of this practice to Jewish people, it is no wonder that when the New Testament church was founded, with its mixture of Jews and Gentiles, one of the greatest matters of concern and controversy was circumcision. Shouldn’t all believers be compelled to be circumcised? The book of Acts is another “birth narrative” that parallels in many ways the book of Exodus, and there we find that what was (circumcision) is not done away with but expanded upon in light of the new covenant.

**Passover Revisited** – Moses gives more detailed instructions for observing the Passover as he continues his chiasmic argument. He knows that he won’t be able to go with the children of Israel into the Promised Land, and he wants to prepare them for how to live once they get there. His concern is touching, much like that of a parent sending a child off to college for the first time. Moses reminds them that they are coming out of polytheistic Egypt, where God has toppled every idol, and they are going into polytheistic Canaan, so they need careful instruction on how to serve the one true God.

**Teaching the Next Generation** – Moses tells the Israelites that God’s law is to be on their hands, between their eyes, and in their mouths. In other words, it is to be shaping their *deeds*, their *thoughts*, and their *words*. [This theme is carried all the way to Revelation, where we read the negative warning about the mark of the Beast being put on the hands and on the forehead. Whatever the physical ramifications of this mark may be, we know that end time followers of anti-Christ will reflect their ungodly worldview in their thoughts, deeds, and words.] The Israelites were also instructed to explain to their children *why* they observe Passover the way they do. Some questions we need to ask ourselves are, “Are we telling our *own* stories of deliverance? How are we handing over to the next generation the accounts we have been studying in Exodus and elsewhere in Scripture? Who are we handing these stories over to, as they were handed to us?” When the next generation looks at us, do we look like those whose hands are doing and whose heads are thinking and whose mouths are speaking in accordance with these stories? Do we have the words of the faithful and the deeds of the faithful and the thoughts of the faithful? The younger generation can spot and smell hypocrisy from a mile away!

**Equipping the Next Generation** – It is vital that we TELL the next generation about the things of the Lord, but let’s not just tell them, let’s EQUIP them. We ourselves have been spending much time digging into the Word so that we can understand it better and apply it to our lives and remember it. Our children’s school teachers and college professors will be urging them to spend *a lot of time* on their secular studies . . . so why should *we in the church* tell them, “I know you are busy; why don’t you have a quiet time of *just five minutes* every morning”? We definitely need to *tell* them to study God’s Word, but let’s not stop there. Let’s take some of the tools that we have been learning here, and let’s give those tools to them as well. **If we believe that these stories are of utmost importance, and if we believe that there are very real consequences for not communicating them and very real rewards for doing so, then we will not view children as “the church of tomorrow”, we will view them as “the church of today,” and we will train them accordingly.**

**Consecration of the Firstborn** – Why did God make such a big deal of redeeming the firstborn? We saw in our homework that later on the Levitical priesthood would actually function as the firstborn. The truth is that each one of us has something in our life that we treat as a “firstborn” in that we set our hopes on it and try to realize our dreams through it. And God says, “No, you are to consecrate that person or thing to Me.” God is not being cruel by doing this. What He does is take it away so that He can *redeem* it and then return it to you. One New Testament application of this principle is, “Whatever you do, work at it as unto the Lord.” (Colossians 3:23) And think about Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. God asked him to sacrifice his son, and then He redeemed Isaac with a ram and returned him to Abraham. Abraham understood as he perhaps had never understood before that the firstborn is to be consecrated unto the Lord.