

of months. This was the inauguration of the nation, and from this point their calendar was to be reckoned. (1 Kings 6:1.) This month Abib, called Nisan after the Babylonian captivity (Neh. 2:1), was henceforth the beginning of the Jewish sacred year. It corresponds with the latter part of March and the beginning of April. Their civil year began with Tisri, corresponding with the latter part of September and the first part of October.

Vs. 3, 4. *Speak ye unto all the congregation.* They called the elders together (v. 21) and through them communicated the tidings to the people. *In the tenth day of the month.* The lamb was to be taken on the tenth day, and kept till the fourteenth, perhaps to emphasize the fact of its being set apart for a sacred use. *A lamb;* or kid, the young of either sheep or goat. In the later history of Israel the young of a sheep was taken exclusively. *According to the house of their fathers.* It was to be a domestic festival for united families, not for indiscriminate companies. *If the household be too little;* "too few to consume it at one sitting." All participated, men, women and children. Later on, usage fixed the least number at ten.

V. 5. *Your lamb shall be without blemish.* As a typical substitute for the firstborn, it should be perfect, without defect. This became a requirement in all sacrifices. (Mal. 1:7, 8; 1 Pet. 1:19.) *A male of the first year;* this means either a full year old, or within the first year. It was to take the place of the male firstborn. (Delitzsch.)

Vs. 6, 7. *The whole assembly of the congregation.* This does not mean that they were to assemble at one place as in the time of the Tabernacle or Temple worship, but throughout the land of Goshen each head of a family was to kill it at his own house. Every head of a household was to act as the household priest. *In the evening;* "between the evenings," from about three to six o'clock. *They shall take of the blood;* because the blood represented the life (Lev. 17:14) and constituted the essence of the sacrifice. *And strike it;* by means of a hyssop branch (Ps. 51:7), thus putting the sign of atonement

around the door by which the destroyer would enter in. This was a covenant in blood. (The illustration on the page opposite shows the *side posts* and the lintel, or *upper door posts*.)

V. 8. *They shall eat the flesh.* The eating was a symbol of their receiving and appropriating what God did for their salvation. It was entering into a covenant with God and with one another. *Roast with fire.* Fire is the symbol of consecration; roasted whole, of complete consecration. *Unleavened bread;* symbolical of the purity of life required. *Bitter herbs;* in memory of their bitter bondage in the land of Egypt.

Vs. 9, 10. *Eat not of it raw;* lest blood be eaten (Lev. 3:17). *Nor sodden;* that is, boiled. No part of its savor was to be removed. *Head, legs, and purtenance* (or intestines, which were first taken out and washed, then replaced) were all to be roasted. *Let nothing of it remain until the morning.* It must not be divided into two separate meals. *That which remaineth . . . ye shall burn with fire;* to prevent profanation or decay. These regulations afterwards became permanent in the sacrificial ritual of their worship.

V. 11. *Your loins girded . . . shoes . . . staff;* indicative of the highest readiness for departure, like soldiers standing on their arms and ready for their marching orders. *Ye shall eat it in haste;* as those who await the summons to go out of the land. *It is the Lord's passover;* "ordained by Him, observed in obedience to Him, a service sacred to Him." (Green.) The word for passover means "transition," "as if a thunder-cloud had passed over the house without bursting upon it."

II. The Wondrous Deliverance, 12, 13.

V. 12. *For I will pass through.* The Lord Himself will execute judgment. *Against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.* Animals were worshipped in Egypt; hence the firstborn of beasts were also smitten to show the helplessness of the deities of the land in their contest with Jehovah.

V. 13. *The blood shall be to you for a token;* a sign of your faith and obedience. *When I*