**Sabbath Day Sermon of March 13th, 2021.**

By Rev. Dr. Flint Chika, Bishop

**The Biblical First Month of the Year**

**Exodus Chapter 12**

According to God Almighty’s calendar, the month of Abib in which we celebrate the Feast of Passover is the beginning of months, the first month of the year. Certain holy days were instituted by God Almighty himself. Seven Feasts of the Lord mark the Biblical calendar. The major feasts are Passover, Pentecost, and the Tabernacles, when all believing males are to appear before the Lord God Almighty (Exodus 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16). The first is the Passover, and the unleavened bread, which we celebrate in the first month of the year.

God Almighty instituted these holy Sabbath days for His children to remind them of what He has done for them. These holy Sabbath days should be important to us today, too, as annual reminders of what God Almighty has done for us as Christians (Leviticus 23). Now understand that these Feasts were instituted by God Almighty for all people to observe, not just for the Jews. So, they are not simply Jewish holydays, but the Lord God Almighty’s Feasts or holydays as it says in Leviticus 23:2; Exodus 20:8. Therefore, “observing My Sabbaths or holydays would be a sign between the LORD and you, that you know that I AM is the LORD your God,” says the Lord God Almighty (Ezekiel 20:20; Exodus 31:13, 16, 17).

For the Israelites to be spared from the plague of death, a lamb with no defects had to be killed and its blood placed on the doorframes of each home. The children of God Almighty today are spared from the plagues in our time by the sinless blood of Jesus Christ placed at the doorframes of our hearts. The lamb was a sacrifice, a substitute for the person who would have died in the plague, as Jesus was for us when he shed his blood for the sins of the world. From this point on, the Hebrew people would clearly understand that for them to be spared from death, an innocent (animal) life had to be sacrificed in their place until Jesus comes and will take away their sins forever (Hebrews 10:1-23).

6-10. The Passover was to be an annual holy Sabbath Day in honor of the night when the LORD ‘Passed over” the homes of the Israelites. The lamb was to be got ready four days before and that afternoon on the 14th day of the month they were to kill it as a sacrifice; not strictly, for it was not offered upon the altar, but as a ceremony of their freedom, acknowledging God Almighty’s goodness to them, not only in preserving them from but in delivering them by, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians heathens.

The lamb so slain they were to eat, roasted, in their several quarters, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, because they were to eat it in haste, and to leave none of it until the morning; for God Almighty would have them to depend upon him for their daily bread, and not to take thought for the morrow. He that led them would feed them. Before they ate the flesh of the lamb, they were to sprinkle the blood upon the doorposts and none was to leave or enter after the door was shut. By this, their houses were to be distinguished from the houses of the Egyptians, and so their first-born secured from the sword of the destroying angel.

The Hebrews followed God Almighty’s instructions by placing the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their homes. That night the firstborn of every Egyptian family who did not have blood on the doorposts was killed. The lamb has to be killed to get the blood that would protect them. This act foreshadowed the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God Almighty, who gave His blood for the sins of all people.

Inside their homes, the Israelites ate a meal of roast lamb, with unleavened bread and bitter herb. The unleavened bread could be made quickly because the dough did not have to rise. Thus they could be ready to leave at any time. Bitter herbs signified the bitterness of slavery.

11-16. Eating the Passover feast while wearing traveling clothes was a sign of the Hebrews' faith in God Almighty’s Word. Although they were not yet free, they were to prepare themselves, for God Almighty had said he would lead them out of Egypt. Their preparation was an act of faith. Thus foreshadowing the rapture of the Church at the return of Jesus Christ. Preparing ourselves for the fulfillment of God Almighty’s scriptural promises, however unlikely they may seem, demonstrates our faith in the Word of God Almighty.

17-28. Passover became an annual rehearsal of how God Almighty delivered the Hebrews from Egypt and will deliver all who call upon His name. Each year the people would pause to remember and celebrate the day when the destroyer passed over their homes. They gave thanks to God Almighty for saving them from death and bringing them out of a land of slavery and sin. Believers today have experienced a day of deliverance as well, the day we were delivered from spiritual death and slavery to sin. The Lord’s Last Supper is the Christian Passover remembrance of our new life and freedom from sin as we celebrate the Passover feast.

29-33. Dreadful work was made this night in Egypt; all the first-born both of man and beast were to be slain, and judgment executed upon the gods of Egypt. The idols which the Egyptians worshipped were destroyed, those of metal melted, those of wood consumed, and those of stone broken to pieces, whence Jethro infers, “The Lord God Almighty is greater than all gods” ([Numbers 33:4](http://www.biblestudytools.com/numbers/33-4.html)). The same angel that destroyed their first-born demolished their idols, which were no less dear to them. For the protection of Israel from this plague, they were ordered to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the door-posts, their doing which would be accepted as an instance of their faith in the divine warnings and their obedience to the divine precepts.

 Observe, that in times of common calamity God Almighty will secure his people, and set a mark upon them; they shall be hidden either in heaven or in hollow of His hands, preserved either from the stroke of judgments or at least from the sting of them. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus over the doorframes of our hearts is the saint’s security in times of common calamity, as in the ongoing Coronavirus. It is this that marks us for God Almighty, pacifies conscience, and gives us boldness of access to the throne of grace, and so becomes a wall of protection around us and a wall of partition between us and the children of this world.

This day of their deliverance was and is to be annually observed as a feast of the Lord by all people in all generations, to which the feast of unleavened bread was annexed, during which, for seven days, the Hebrews and since the Pentecost true Christians were to eat no bread porculated with yeast, known as unleavened bread, in remembrance of their being confined to such bread, of necessity, for many days after they came out of Egypt. This was and is to teach them and us how to resist leaven in our lives which represents sin.

29-30. Every firstborn child of the Egyptians died but the Israelites’ children were spared because the blood of the lamb had been placed on their doorposts. So begins the story of redemption, the central theme of the Bible. If you ask, “What is redemption?” Redemption means “to buy back” or “to save from captivity by paying a ransom.” One way to buy back a slave is to offer an equivalent of a superior slave in exchange.

That is the way God Almighty chose to buy us back from Satan, to whom Adam had delivered our God Almighty’s given dominion (Genesis 2:26-30; Luke 4:6). God Almighty offered His Son in exchange for us and we have regained everything Adam delivered to Satan when he disobeyed and sinned against God Almighty. Before Jesus came, God Almighty accepted symbolic offerings. When Jesus came he substituted his perfect life for our sinful lives, accepting the penalty for sin that we deserve. Thus he redeemed us from the power of sin and restored us to God Almighty. Therefore, Jesus’ sacrifice made animal sacrifice no longer necessary.

For those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, you must know that if you want to be freed from the deadly consequences of your sins, a tremendous price must be paid. But you do not have to pay it, because Jesus Christ, our substitute, has already redeemed you by his death on the cross. Your part if you are willing, is to trust him and accept his gift of eternal life. Again, understand that your sins have been paid for, and the way has been cleared for you to begin a relationship with God Almighty (Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:13-15, 23-26).

37-38. The total number of people leaving Egypt is estimated to have been about two million. The “mixed multitude” may have been Egyptians and others who were drawn to the Hebrews by God Almighty’s works and who decided to leave Egypt with them. Everyone in Christ Jesus, may celebrate and eat the Passover (Galatians 3:26-29).

48-51. Who may eat the Passover? As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ. For there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are one in Jesus Christ. If we all be of Jesus Christ, then are we all Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:27-29; Romans 8:17).

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