

Exodus 12:42

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled "Exodus 12:42." I want to share some of my comments in this article.

The power of Exodus 12:42

Like most of my friends, I am highly invested in the meaning of Exodus 12:42. I have had the opportunity to rehearse the meaning of that verse for 50 years.

- When we were younger, my wife and I usually hosted guests in our home on that evening.
- Occasionally, there were times when we were guests in a friend's home.
- After our congregation built our church building 23 years ago, we have participated in gatherings in our building. Sometimes the gathering involved more than 100 people and at other times the gathering involved a cozy group of 20 people.
- This year, we are scheduled to have another cozy gathering in our building on Friday evening, April 15—reflecting upon the Son of God as our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) being offered at 3:00 p.m.

Not the Jewish Seder

Someone could ask: Since you accept the Son of God as your Passover Lamb, why have you kept the ceremonial dinner called the Jewish Seder?

My answer: My wife and I don't keep the ceremonial dinner called the Jewish Seder. Quite frankly, I don't even know the details of the ceremonial dinner.

Description, not a proper name

Since I often share my perspective with my friends, they are aware that I don't like the "title" that many of my friends give to the event mentioned in Exodus 12:42.

Most of my friends call the event "the night to be much observed."

Where do they get that phrase? The phrase is mentioned in Exodus 12:42 in the King James Version of the Bible. (More about that later.)

Notice some logical conclusions about that phrase.

- That phrase is not a title.
- That phrase is an action statement.
- That phrase was a description, a goal, a target and an approach.

Someone could say: “What’s the difference?”

Let me give you two clear examples.

■ Do you call your wedding anniversary “the day to be much observed”?

Most would say: “But our wedding anniversary is a day to be much observed.”

Absolutely!

Your wedding anniversary is certainly a day to be much observed—but it is called your wedding anniversary.

■ Do you call the Day of Pentecost “the day to be much observed”?

Most would say: “The Day of Pentecost is a day to be much observed.”

Absolutely!

The Day of Pentecost is certainly a day to be much observed—but it is called the Day of Pentecost.

What event is being described?

Should the event of Exodus 12:42 be called the Passover or the first day of Unleavened Bread?

That depends on how a Bible student explains a phrase in Exodus 12:6 (“in the evening”)—also called “between the two evenings” and “at twilight.”

Exodus 12:6—“Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”

When is the twilight?

Is it the early 14th?

Is it the later 14th?

Let me ask you a question: Will you be successful in showing maturity and godly love?

Romans 14:12-13—“So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.”

For most people, the history of the Old Testament Passover does not affect the following two important New Testament facts.

■ Many disciples (who have different perspectives about the Old Testament history of Exodus 12) observe the memorial of the suffering and death of the Son of God on the *same night*—on the night picturing when the Son of God was betrayed.

■ Many disciples (who have different perspectives about the Old Testament history of Exodus 12) observe the memorial of the suffering and death of the Son of God with the *same three symbols*—foot-washing, broken bread and a little wine.

Let me ask you another question: Will you be successful to avoid a mistake made by Christ's disciples?

Luke 22:23-24—"Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing [to betray the Son of God]. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest."

Coming out of Egypt

Let's spend the rest of the article focusing on the meaning of Exodus 12:42.

Let's notice Exodus 12:42 in nine Bible translations.

Night to be much observed

King James Version—"It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."

New American Standard Bible—"It is a night to be observed for the LORD for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations."

New King James Version—"It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations."

The Lord kept watch

Revised Standard Version—"It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations."

James Moffatt Translation—"It was a night when the Eternal was on the watch to bring them out of Egypt, a when all Israelites must keep watch for the Eternal, age after age."

Lord watched, we watch

The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text—"It was a night of watching unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this same night is a night of watching unto the LORD for all the children of Israel throughout their generations."

New International Version—"Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honour the LORD for the generations to come."

God's Word Translation—"That night the LORD kept watch to take them out of Egypt. (All Israelites in future generations must keep watch on this night, since it is dedicated to the LORD.)"

Contemporary English Version—"On that night the LORD kept watch for them, and on the same night each year Israel will always keep watch in honor of the LORD."

Not bondage, true liberty

Here are a few extra scriptures about escaping bondage and experiencing true liberty.

- Exodus 20:1-17
- Leviticus 26:11-13
- Psalm 105:23-29
- Luke 4:18
- 2 Corinthians 11:20
- Galatians 2:4
- Galatians 5:1-15
- Jude 4
- 2 Peter 2:19-22