
EXODUS 13:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

God establishes the law concerning the first-born, and commands that all such, both of man and beast, should be sanctified unto him, Exo 13:1, Exo 13:2. Orders them to remember the day in which they were brought out of Egypt, when they should be brought to the land of Canaan; and to keep this service in the month Abib, Exo 13:3-5. Repeats the command concerning the leavened bread, Exo 13:6, Exo 13:7, and orders them to teach their children the cause of it, Exo 13:8, and to keep strictly in remembrance that it was by the might of God alone they had been delivered from Egypt, Exo 13:9. Shows that the consecration of the first-born, both of man and beast, should take place when they should be settled in Canaan, Exo 13:10-12. The first-born of man and beast to be redeemed, Exo 13:13. The reason of this also to be shown to their children, Exo 13:14, Exo 13:15. Frontlets or phylacteries for the hands and forehead commanded, Exo 13:16. And the people are not led directly to the promised land, but about through the wilderness; and the reason assigned, Exo 13:17, Exo 13:18. Moses takes the bones of Joseph with him, Exo 13:19. They journey from Succoth and come to Etham, Exo 13:20. And the Lord goes before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, Exo 13:21, which miracle is regularly continued both by day and night, Exo 13:22.

Verse 1

The Lord spake unto Moses - The commands in this chapter appear to have been given at Succoth, on the same day in which they left Egypt.

EXODUS 13:2 "Sanctify to me all of the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of animal. It is mine."

Verse 2

Sanctify unto me all the first-born - To sanctify, שָׁדַךְ *kadash*, signifies to consecrate, separate, and set apart a thing or person from all secular purposes to some religious use; and exactly answers to the import of the Greek ἀγιάζω, from α, privative, and γη, the earth, because every thing offered or consecrated to God was separated from all earthly uses. Hence a holy person or saint is termed ἅγιος, i.e., a person separated from the earth; one who lives a holy life, entirely devoted to the service of God. Thus the persons and animals sanctified to God were employed in the service of the tabernacle and temple; and the animals, such as were proper, were offered in sacrifice.

The Hindoos frequently make a vow, and devote to an idol the first-born of a goat and of a man. The goat is permitted to run wild, as a consecrated animal. A child thus devoted has a lock of hair separated, which at the time appointed is cut off and placed near the idol. Hindoo women sometimes pray to Gunga (the Ganges) for children, and promise to devote the first-born to her. Children thus devoted are cast into the Ganges, but are generally saved by the friendly hand of some stranger - Ward's Customs.

Whatsoever openeth the womb - That is, the first-born, if a male; for females were not offered, nor the first male, if a female had been born previously. Again, if a man had several wives, the first-born

of each, if a male, was to be offered to God. And all this was done to commemorate the preservation of the first-born of the Israelites, when those of the Egyptians were destroyed.

EXODUS 13:3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

EXODUS 13:4 This day you go out in the month Abib.

EXODUS 13:5 It shall be, when the LORD shall bring you into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month.

Verse 5

When the Lord shall bring thee into the land - Hence it is pretty evident that the Israelites were not obliged to celebrate the Passover, or keep the feast of unleavened bread, till they were brought into the promised land.

EXODUS 13:6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD.

Verse 6

Unleavened bread - See Clarke on Exo 12:15 (note), and Exo 12:16 (note).

EXODUS 13:7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and no leavened bread shall be seen with you, neither shall yeast be seen with you, in all your borders.

EXODUS 13:8 You shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'It is because of that which the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'

EXODUS 13:9 It shall be for a sign to you on your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.

Verse 9

And it shall be for a sign - upon thine hand - This direction, repeated and enlarged Exo 13:16, gave rise to phylacteries or tephillin, and this is one of the passages which the Jews write upon them to the present day. The manner in which the Jews understood and kept these commands may appear in their practice. They wrote the following four portions of the law upon slips of parchment or vellum: Sanctify unto me the first-born, Exodus 13, from Exo 13:2-10 inclusive. And it shall be, when the Lord shall bring thee into the land, Exodus 13, from Exo 13:11-16 inclusive. Hear, O Israel, the

Lord our God is one Lord, Deuteronomy 6, from Deu 6:4-9 inclusive. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently, Deuteronomy 11, from Deu 11:13-21 inclusive. These four portions, making in all 30 verses, written as mentioned above, and covered with leather, they tied to the forehead and to the hand or arm.

Those which were for the Head (the frontlets) they wrote on four slips of parchment, and rolled up each by itself, and placed them in four compartments, joined together in one piece of skin or leather. Those which were designed for the hand were formed of one piece of parchment, the four portions being written upon it in four columns, and rolled up from one end to the other. These were all correct transcripts from the Mosaic text, without one redundant or deficient letter, otherwise they were not lawful to be worn. Those for the head were tied on so as to rest on the forehead. Those for the hand or arm were usually tied on the left arm, a little above the elbow, on the inside, that they might be near the heart, according to the command, Deu 6:6 : And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. These phylacteries formed no inconsiderable part of a Jew's religion; they wore them as a sign of their obligation to God, and as representing some future blessedness. Hence they did not wear them on feast days nor on the Sabbath, because these things were in themselves signs; but they wore them always when they read the law, or when they prayed, and hence they called them תפלין tephillin, prayer, ornaments, oratories, or incitements to prayer. In process of time the spirit of this law was lost in the letter, and when the word was not in their mouth, nor the law in their heart, they had their phylacteries on their heads and on their hands. And the Pharisees, who in our Lord's time affected extraordinary piety, made their phylacteries very broad, that they might have many sentences written upon them, or the ordinary portions in very large and observable letters.

It appears that the Jews wore these for three different purposes: -

1. As signs or remembrancers. This was the original design, as the institution itself sufficiently proves.
2. To procure reverence and respect in the sight of the heathen. This reason is given in the Gemara, Berachoth, chapter i: "Whence is it proved that the phylacteries or tephillin are the strength of Israel? Ans. From what is written, Deu 28:10 : All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord (יהוה Yehovah) and they shall be afraid of thee."
3. They used them as amulets or charms, to drive away evil spirits. This appears from the Targum on Sol 8:3 : His left hand is under my head, etc. "The congregation of Israel hath said, I am elect above all people, because I bind my phylacteries on my left hand and on my head, and the scroll is fixed to the right side of my gate, the third part of which looks to my bed-chamber, that demons may not be permitted to injure me.

One of the original phylacteries or תפלין tephillin now lies before me; it is a piece of fine vellum, about eighteen inches long, and an inch and quarter broad. It is divided into four unequal compartments; the letters are very well formed, but written with many apices, after the manner of the German Jews. In the first compartment is written the portion taken from Exo 13:2-10; in the second, Exo 13:11-16; in the third, Deu 6:4-9; in the fourth, Deu 11:13-21, as before related. This had originally served for the hand or arm.

These passages seem to be chosen in vindication of the use of the phylactery itself, as the reader may see on consulting them at large. Bind them for a Sign upon thy Hand; and for Frontlets between thy Eyes; write them upon the Posts of thy House and upon thy Gates; all which commands the Jews take in the most literal sense. To acquire the reputation of extraordinary sanctity they wore the

fringes of their garments of an uncommon length. Moses had commanded them, Num 15:38, Num 15:39, to put fringes to the borders of their garments, that when they looked upon even these distinct threads they might remember, not only the law in general but also the very minutiae or smaller parts of all the precepts, rites, and ceremonies belonging to it. As those hypocrites (for such our Lord proves them to be) were destitute of all the life and power of religion within, they endeavored to supply its place with phylacteries and fringes without. The same principles distinguish hypocrites every where, and multitudes of them may be found among those termed Christians as well as among the Jews. It is probably to this institution relative to the phylactery that the words, Rev 14:1, allude: And I looked, and, lo, a hundred and forty-four thousand having his Father's name written on their foreheads. "That is," says Mr. Ainsworth, "as a sign of the profession of God's law; for That which in the Gospel is called his Name, (Mat 12:21), in the prophets is called his Law, (Isa 42:4)." So again antichrist exacts the obedience to his precepts by a mark on men's right hands or on their foreheads, Rev 13:16.

EXODUS 13:10 You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

EXODUS 13:11 "It shall be, when the LORD shall bring you into the land of the Canaanite, as he swore to you and to your fathers, and shall give it you,

EXODUS 13:12 that you shall set apart to the LORD all that opens the womb, and every firstborn which you have that comes from an animal. The males shall be the LORD's.

EXODUS 13:13 Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and you shall redeem all the firstborn of man among your sons.

Verse 13

Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb - Or a kid, as in the margin. In Num 18:15, it is said: "The first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem; and the firstling of an unclean beast shalt thou redeem." Hence we may infer that ass is put here for any unclean beast, or for unclean beasts in general. The lamb was to be given to the Lord, that is, to his priest, Num 18:8, Num 18:15. And then the owner of the ass might use it for his own service, which without this redemption he could not do; see Deu 15:19.

The first-born of man - shalt thou redeem - This was done by giving to the priests five standard shekels, or shekels of the sanctuary, every shekel weighing twenty gerahs. What the gerah was, see Clarke on Gen 20:16 (note). And for the shekel, see Clarke on Gen 20:16 (note).

It may be necessary to observe here that the Hebrew doctors teach, that if a father had neglected or refused thus to redeem his first-born, the son himself was obliged to do it when he came of age. As this redeeming of the first-born was instituted in consequence of sparing the first-born of the Israelites, when the first-born both of man and beast among the Egyptians was destroyed, on this ground all the first-born were the Lord's, and should have been employed in his service; but he permitted the first-born of a useful unclean animal to be redeemed by a clean animal of much less value. And he chose the tribe of Levi in place of all the first-born of the tribes in general; and the five shekels were ordered to be paid in lieu of such first-born sons as were liable to serve in the sanctuary, and the money was applied to the support of the priests and Levites. See this subject at large in Num 3:12, Num 3:13, Num 3:41, Num 3:43, Num 3:45, Num 3:47-51.

EXODUS 13:14 It shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall tell him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage.'

EXODUS 13:15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of animal. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that opens the womb, being males; but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'

EXODUS 13:16 It shall be for a sign on your hand, and for symbols between your eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

Verse 16

It shall be for a token, etc. - See Clarke's note on Exo 13:9.

EXODUS 13:17 When Pharaoh had let the people go, God didn't lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt";

Verse 17

God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, etc. - Had the Israelites been obliged to commence their journey to the promised land by a military campaign, there is little room to doubt that they would have been discouraged, have rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and have returned back to Egypt. Their long slavery had so degraded their minds that they were incapable of any great or noble exertions; and it is only on the ground of this mental degradation, the infallible consequence of slavery, that we can account for their many dastardly acts, murmurings, and repinings after their escape from Egypt. The reader is requested to bear this in mind, as it will serve to elucidate several circumstances in the ensuing history. Besides, the Israelites were in all probability unarmed, and totally unequipped for battle, encumbered with their flocks, and certain culinary utensils. which they were obliged to carry with them in the wilderness to provide them with bread, etc.

EXODUS 13:18 but God led the people around by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea; and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt.

Verse 18

But God led the people about - Dr. Shaw has shown that there were two roads from Egypt to Canaan, one through the valleys of Jendilly, Rumeleah, and Baideah, bounded on each side by the mountains of the lower Thebais; the other lies higher, having the northern range of the mountains of Mocatee running parallel with it on the right hand, and the desert of the Egyptian Arabia, which lies all the way open to the land of the Philistines, to the left. See his account of these encampments at the end of Exodus. See Clarke's note on Exo 40:38.

Went up harnessed - **חַמֻּשִׁים** chamushim. It is truly astonishing what a great variety of opinions are entertained relative to the meaning of this word. After having maturely considered all that I have met with on the subject, I think it probable that the word refers simply to that orderly or well arranged manner in which the Israelites commenced their journey from Egypt. For to arrange, array, or set in order, seems to be the ideal meaning of the word **חַמַּשׁ** chamash. As it was natural to expect that in such circumstances there must have been much hurry and confusion, the inspired writer particularly marks the contrary, to show that God had so disposed matters that the utmost regularity and order prevailed; and had it been otherwise, thousands of men, women, and children must have been trodden to death. Our margin has it by five in a rank; but had they marched only five abreast, supposing only one yard for each rank to move in, it would have required not less than sixty-eight miles for even the 600,000 to proceed on regularly in this way; for 600,000 divided by five gives 120,000 ranks of five each; and there being only 1,760 yards in a mile, the dividing 120,000 by 1,760 will give the number of miles such a column of people would take up, which by such an operation will be found to be something more than sixty-eight miles. But this the circumstances of the history will by no means admit - Harmer. The simple meaning therefore appears to be that given above; and if the note on the concluding verse of the preceding chapter be considered, it may serve to place this explanation in a still clearer point of view.

EXODUS 13:19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the children of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away from here with you."

Verse 19

Moses took the bones of Joseph - See Clarke's note on Gen 50:25. It is supposed that the Israelites carried with them the bones or remains of all the twelve sons of Jacob, each tribe taking care of the bones of its own patriarch, while Moses took care of the bones of Joseph. St. Stephen expressly says, Act 7:15, Act 7:16, that not only Jacob, but the fathers were carried from Egypt into Sychem; and this, as Calmet remarks, was the only opportunity that seems to have presented itself for doing this: and certainly the reason that rendered it proper to remove the bones of Joseph to the promised land, had equal weight in reference to those of the other patriarchs. See Clarke's note on Gen 49:29.

EXODUS 13:20 They took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

Verse 20

Encamped in Etham - As for the reasons assigned on Exo 13:17, God would not lead the Israelites by the way of the Philistines' country, he directed them towards the wilderness of Shur, Exo 15:22, upon the edge or extremity of which, next to Egypt, at the bottom of the Arabian Gulf, lay Etham, which is the second place of encampment mentioned. See the extracts from Dr. Shaw at the end of Exodus. See Clarke's note on Exo 40:38.

EXODUS 13:21 The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them on their way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night:

Verse 21

The Lord went before them - That by the Lord here is meant the Lord Jesus, we have the authority of St. Paul to believe, 1Cor 10:9 : it was he whose Spirit they tempted in the wilderness, for it was he who led them through the desert to the promised rest.

Pillar of a cloud - This pillar or column, which appeared as a cloud by day, and a fire by night, was the symbol of the Divine presence. This was the Shechinah or Divine dwelling place, and was the continual proof of the presence and protection of God. It was necessary that they should have a guide to direct them through the wilderness, even had they taken the most direct road; and how much more so when they took a circuitous route not usually traveled, and of which they knew nothing but just as the luminous pillar pointed out the way! Besides, it is very likely that even Moses himself did not know the route which God had determined on, nor the places of encampment, till the pillar that went before them became stationary, and thus pointed out, not only the road, but the different places of rest. Whether there was more than one pillar is not clearly determined by the text. If there was but one it certainly assumed three different appearances, for the performance of Three very important offices. 1. In the day-time, for the purpose of pointing out the way, a column or pillar of a cloud was all that was requisite. 2. At night, to prevent that confusion which must otherwise have taken place, the pillar of cloud became a pillar of fire, not to direct their journeyings, for they seldom traveled by night, but to give light to every part of the Israelitish camp. 3. In such a scorching, barren, thirsty desert, something farther was necessary than a light and a guide. Women, children, and comparatively infirm persons, exposed to the rays of such a burning sun, must have been destroyed if without a covering; hence we find that a cloud overshadowed them: and from what St. Paul observes, 1Cor 10:1, 1Cor 10:2, we are led to conclude that this covering cloud was composed of aqueous particles for the cooling of the atmosphere and refreshment of themselves and their cattle; for he represents the whole camp as being sprinkled or immersed in the humidity of its vapours, and expressly calls it a being under the cloud and being baptized in the cloud. To the circumstance of the cloud covering them, there are several references in Scripture. Thus: He spread a Cloud for their Covering; Psa 105:39. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, A Cloud and Smoke By Day, and the shining of a Flaming Fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a Defence, (or Covering), Isa 4:5; which words contain the most manifest allusion to the threefold office of the cloud in the wilderness. See Num 9:16-18, etc.

EXODUS 13:22 the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, didn't depart from before the people.

Verse 22

He took not away the pillar of the cloud - Neither Jews nor Gentiles are agreed how long the cloud continued with the Israelites. It is very probable that it first visited them at Succoth, if it did not accompany them from Rameses; and that it continued with them till they came to the river Jordan, to pass over opposite to Jericho, for after that it appears that the ark alone was their guide, as it always marched at their head. See Jos 3:10-11, etc. But others think that it went no farther with

them than Mount Hor, and never appeared after the death of Aaron. We may safely assert that while it was indispensably necessary it continued with them, when it was not so it was removed. But it is worthy of remark that the ark of the covenant became its substitute. While a miracle was necessary, a miracle was granted; when that was no longer necessary, then the testimony of the Lord deposited in the ark was deemed sufficient by Him who cannot err. So, under the Gospel dispensation, miracles were necessary at its first promulgation; but after that the canon of Scripture was completed, the new covenant having been made, ratified by the blood of the Lamb, and published by the Holy Spirit, then God withdrew generally those outward signs, leaving his word for a continual testimony, and sealing it on the souls of believers by the Spirit of truth.

It is also worthy of remark that the ancient heathen writers represent their gods, in their pretended manifestations to men, as always encompassed with a cloud; Homer and Virgil abound with examples of this kind: and is it not very probable that they borrowed this, as they did many other things in their mythologic theology, from the tradition of Jehovah guiding his people through the desert by means of the cloud, in and by which he repeatedly manifested himself?

1. Extraordinary manifestations and interpositions of providence and grace should be held in continual remembrance. We are liable to forget the hole of the pit whence we were dug, and the rock whence we were hewn. Prudence and piety will institute their anniversaries, that the merciful dealings of the Lord may never be forgotten. The passover and the feast of unleavened bread, by an annual commemoration, became standing proofs to the children of Israel of the Divine origin of their religion; and are supporting pillars of it to the present day. For when a fact is reported to have taken place, and certain rites or ceremonies have been instituted in order to commemorate it, which rites or ceremonies continue to be observed through succeeding ages, then the fact itself, no matter how remote the period of its occurrence may have been, has the utmost proofs of authenticity that it is possible for any fact to have; and such as every person pretending to reason and judgment is obliged to receive. On this ground the Mosaic religion, and the facts recorded in it, are indubitably proved; and the Christian religion and its facts, being commemorated in the same way, particularly by baptism and the Lord's Supper, stand on such a foundation of moral certainty as no other records in the universe can possibly boast. Reader, praise God for his ordinances; they are not only means of grace to thy soul, but standing irrefragable proofs of the truth of that religion which thou hast received as from Him.

2. A serious public profession of the religion of Christ has in all ages of the Church been considered not only highly becoming, but indispensably necessary to salvation. He who consistently confesses Christ before men shall be confessed by him before God and his angels. A Jew wore his phylacteries on his forehead, on his hands, and round his garments, that he might have reverence in the sight of the heathen; he gloried in his law, and he exulted that Abraham was his father. Christian! with a zeal not less becoming, and more consistently supported, let the words of thy mouth, the acts of thy hands, and all thy goings, show that thou belongest unto God; that thou hast taken his Spirit for the guide of thy heart, his word for the rule of thy life, his people for thy companions, his heaven for thy inheritance, and himself for the portion of thy soul. And see that thou hold fast the truth, and that thou hold it in righteousness.

3. How merciful is God in the dispensations of his providence! He permits none to be tried above what he is able to bear, and he proportions the burden to the back that is to bear it. He led not the Israelites by the way of the Philistines, lest, seeing war, they should repent and be discouraged. Young converts are generally saved from severe spiritual conflicts and heavy temptations till they have acquired a habit of believing, are disciplined in the school of Christ, and instructed in the nature of the path in which they go, and the difficulties they may expect to find in it. They are informed that

such things may take place, they are thus armed for the battle, and when trials do come they are not taken by surprise. God, the most merciful and kind God, "tempers even the blast to the shorn lamb." Trust in him therefore with all thy heart, and never lean to thy own understanding.

4. The providence and goodness of God are equally observable in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. The former was the proof of his providential kindness by day; the latter, by night. Thus he adjusts the assistance of his grace and Spirit to the exigencies of his creatures, giving at some times, when peculiar trials require it, more particular manifestations of his mercy and goodness; but at all times, such evidences of his approbation as are sufficient to satisfy a pious faithful heart. It is true the pillar of fire was more observable in the night, because of the general darkness, than the pillar of cloud was by day; yet the latter was as convincing and as evident a proof of his presence, approbation, and protection as the former. It is the duty and interest of every sound believer in Christ to have the witness of God's Spirit in his soul at all times, that his spirit and ways please his Maker; but in seasons of peculiar difficulty he may expect the more sensible manifestations of God's goodness. A good man is a temple of the Holy Spirit; but he who has an unholy heart, and who lives an unrighteous life, though he may have an orthodox creed, is a hold of unclean spirits, and an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Reader, let not these observations be fruitless to thee. God gives thee his word and his Spirit, obey this word that thou grieve not this Spirit. The following figurative saying of a Jewish rabbin is worthy of regard: "God addresses Israel and says, My son, I give thee my lamp, give me thy lamp. If thou keep my lamp, I will keep thy lamp; but if thou quench my lamp, I will extinguish thy lamp:" i.e., I give thee my word and Spirit, give me thy heart and soul. If thou carefully attend to my word, and grieve not my Spirit. I will preserve thy soul alive; but if thou rebel against my word, and quench my Spirit, then thy light shall be put out, and thy soul's blessedness extinguished in everlasting darkness.