

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Last week, we looked at the word "better." It is a very important word in distinguishing the law of God to us today, from that given to the Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai, namely, the descendants of Jacob. It is from Jacob's sons that the 12 tribes of Israel were named, except the two one-half tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph. No tribe was named for Joseph.

Exodus 12 gives the instructions to Israel regarding the Passover lamb. Notice verse 5: *"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats..."* What can we conclude from this one verse? Some might say, "Not much"! Here are some things we learn from these 24 words: 1-The lamb was to be a male; 2-it was to be without blemish; 3-it was to be less than a year old; 4-it could be either a sheep or a goat. It took us 30 words to describe the Passover lamb! Which of these four commands could Israel ignore? Could the animal have been blemished? Or, female? Or, two years old? Or, a horse? We can all understand alike what the Passover lamb could - and could not - be, can't we? Today, are we commanded to prepare the Passover meal, as Israel was? No. In addition to the instructions for the Passover lamb, other commands were given to assure that, when the Lord passed over Egypt, no Israelite firstborn would be smitten with death. Moses must have been a very persuasive man! Some might ask, "What evidence shows this?" Notice Exodus 12:28: *"And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they."* If any of the Israelites had not obeyed the commands given and had not sprinkled the blood on the door posts of the house, would God have been so severe as to put to death the firstborn of that family? From the reading of God's Word, we know the firstborn of the disobedient Israelite family would have been just as dead as the firstborn of each Egyptian family was! Can we not all understand this alike? We can!

Today, a "better" sacrifice has been offered. Hebrews 9:12 tells us, *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* What spared the firstborn of the Israelites from dying? The blood of a male lamb, in its first year, without blemish, either a sheep or a goat, sprinkled on the door posts of the house. Today, how are we spared from being lost eternally? The sacrifice has been made for us by One Who, as a lamb without spot or blemish, shed His precious blood to redeem those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). Which commands of Christ can we refuse to obey, and still escape eternal destruction? *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* That is a tragic thing to do! To refuse to obey just one command of Jesus makes one guilty of all of God's law, and subject to all the punishment prescribed therein. A better sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice, has been offered for us. To receive the atonement that comes through His perfect sacrifice, we must obey Him, in all of His commands!