

# Freedom is Knowing Security (Exodus 12:1-13, 29-34)

## Video 1

This is a story about how a meal was essential to God's freedom project.

The meal was so important to Jewish people that it still marks the beginning of their year. And this meal is vital for us to understand if we're to be truly free.

But to understand it, we must grasp the context in which it was first eaten.

Despite Moses' requests, Pharaoh has refused to let his Israelite slaves go. Pharaoh sees himself as their owner. And so God inflicts a series of plagues on Egypt. These plagues were designed to shake Egypt's physical foundations and to show Pharaoh the truth. There is only one true God and one true owner: the God of Israel.

Now the battle between God and Pharaoh reaches a horrible conclusion.

Just after midnight, a lone cry is heard. Wailing for the death of a beloved child. Soon it is joined by another. Then another. More people wake to find their firstborn is dead too. "There was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead."

Finally, enough is enough. Pharaoh summons Moses. He lets the people go, dismissing them with these words:

Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested.

The Israelites leave quickly. There isn't even time for their dough to rise. They make a quick exit, just as God had planned.

It's tempting to see their exit as the climax of God's freedom project. But we'd be wrong to think so. Which takes us back to the special meal.

The people had eaten the meal earlier that evening. God had given very specific instructions about it. All of it was symbolic, helping the people to understand what was about to happen.

Firstly, the meal must be eaten in family groups. This isn't a meal that you can eat alone.

Secondly, everyone must eat the same thing: roast lamb. It must be served with bread made without yeast. With all that's about to happen, their bread won't have time to rise.

Thirdly, the people must eat the meal with their cloaks tucked into their belts, and sandals on their feet. They must dress ready to leave – in outside clothes. God will free them before the night is out.

But here's the most important detail. They must take the lamb's blood and paint it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

Why? Because God is about to pass through Egypt. He will bring death to every firstborn creature. But death will not come to houses where the blood can be seen.

God says:

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

The meal became known as Passover. God's judgement would *pass over* his people. Why? Because they were sheltering in houses marked by the blood of the lamb.

Next morning, there was a corpse in every household. The question was: did the corpse belong to a person – or to the lamb?

So imagine yourself as a firstborn Israelite son. Leaving Egypt, you would have known that you were only free because the lamb had died in your place.

And, as we'll see, to be truly free, we too need to shelter under the blood of the lamb.