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Dedicate All the Firstborn Animals
15: 19-23

Dedicate all the firstborn animals DIG: Why are only the firstborn males set apart to be sacrificed if they are spotless according to Exodus 13:2 and Numbers 3:12-13? How are verses 19-23 linked with 12:4-14? What do both passages affirm about God? About Isra'el's giving?

REFLECT: What have you dedicated to ADONAI? What have you set apart as holy to the LORD? How do you teach your children, or grandchildren, about YHVH? What great personal stories of victories in the LORD do you pass down to be followed?

All firstborn male animals without blemish are holy, and set apart for ADONAI.

This section links two ideas: it looks backward to the last of several provisions to protect the poor in **Chapter 15**; and it also looks forward as an introduction to **the mitzvot** regulating the three pilgrimage festivals (**to see link click Db – The Three Pilgrimage Festivals**).[364] Sacrificing **firstborn animals** reminded **the Israelites** of **their** redemption from Egypt and when all **the firstborn** Egyptian sons died. It was thus an opportunity for **the Israelites** to teach **their** children about **God's** redemption of **their** nation.[365]

*Dear Heavenly **Father, You** are awesome! Each time we see a **firstborn** animal or **firstborn** child, may we remember **Your** marvelous redemption from Egypt of **Your people Isra'el**. We will praise **You** for **Your** great and mighty power that you showed in the ten plagues **(Exodus 7-11) You** sent upon the Egyptians and their gods**. Therefore, say to Bnei-Yisrael: I am ADONAI, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (Exodus 6:6).***

*Also, **Your** power over life and death when **You** safely lead your people through the*

crossing of the Sea of Reeds, but all the Egyptians were drowned. ***Then Bnei-Yisrael went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, while the waters were like walls to them on their right and on their left. But the Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen. Now it came about during the morning watch that ADONAI looked at the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and caused the army of the Egyptians to panic. He took off their chariot wheels and caused them to drive heavily, so that the Egyptians said, "Get away from the presence of Israel! For Adonai fights for them against the Egyptians!" Then Adonai said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the waters come back upon the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen." So, Moses stretched his hand out over the waters, and the sea returned to its strength at the break of dawn. The Egyptians were fleeing from it, but Adonai overthrew them in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen and the entire army of Pharaoh that went after them into the sea. Not one of them remained (Exodus 14:22-28).*** *Sometimes we get so caught up with the wonderful idea of heaven that we don't think about the fact that many will not be allowed into heaven. Just as the only ones saved in Egypt were those who had the blood applied to the doorposts of their home, so only those who love* ***Yeshua*** *as their* ***Messiah*** *– have* ***His*** *blood applied to the door of their heart.*

We lift up each of our relatives and beg you to move in their lives, doing anything that will help them to see with open eyes how wonderful you are. May they grasp that it is not good enough to just know about ***You*** *– each one must make a choice to love and follow* ***You*** *with all their heart. Please work in their minds while they sleep to reveal the truth of* ***Your*** *love and holiness to them. Please also give them friends and situations that nourish them to grow stronger in you and to love* ***You*** *more and more. We would hate to get to heaven and find that family or friends did not love* ***You*** *– and so will spend eternity in hell.* ***At the revelation of the Lord Yeshua from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, He will command judgment on those who do not know God and do not heed the Good News of our Lord Yeshua. They will pay the price of eternal ruin, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (Second Thessalonians 1:7b-9).*** *In* ***Yeshua's*** *holy name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

The same literary form is followed here as in the two preceding files (see **Cy – The Year of Release**) and (see **Cz – The Hebrew Slave**). **The mitzvah** is first **stated** in its simplest form, and then illustrated upon and **explained**.

The mitzvah stated: The question of **the firstborn** mentioned in **12:6-7** and **14:23** is now resumed. **The firstborn** was the first calf, lamb, and so on, to be produced during the bearing-life of an **animal**.[366] **All the firstborn males that are born in your herd and your flock you are to dedicate to ADONAI your God.** This practice was a great opportunity to teach their children as **the Israelites** recalled the tenth plague **Ha'Shem** sent against the Egyptians, in which most of the Egyptian **firstborn male** children died, but **YHVH** spared **the Israelite firstborn** (see the commentary on **Exodus At – At Midnight the LORD Struck Down all the Firstborn in Egypt**), and **ADONAI's** later demand that **the Israelites dedicate all firstborn sons to Him** (see the commentary on **Exodus Cd – Consecrate to Me Every Firstborn**).[367] **You are to do no** secular **work with the firstborn of your herd or shear the firstborn of your flock (15:19).** Its owner received no economic benefit from **the animal**.

The mitzvah explained: You are to eat it before ADONAI your God year after year during one of the annual feasts **in the place ADONAI chooses – His** sanctuary **– you and your household (15:20). They** were to be sacrificed as **a fellowship offering** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fg – The Peace Offering: the fellowship offering**). Just as offering **the firstfruits** demonstrated **YHVH's** ownership of and blessing on **the Land (Leviticus 25:2; Deuteronomy 8:10-18),** the sacrifice of **the firstborn male animals** represents the recognition of **God's** ownership of and blessing on the herdsmen.[368]

But blemished animals were not acceptable as sacrifices. **If it has any blemish – if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish – you are not to sacrifice it to ADONAI your God. You are to eat it within your gates, the unclean and the clean together, just as they eat the gazelle or deer.** An imperfect **firstborn** male **animal** was not acceptable as **a sacrifice**, so it was to be treated like a game **animal (12:15 and 14:4-5)** and eaten at home **(12:15** and **22)**. As stated earlier **(12:16, 23-24)**, **its blood you are not to eat – you must pour it out on the ground like water (15:21-23).**