

THE CREATOR . . . who altered the calendar  
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(Exodus 12:2)

A new year is always a time of new beginnings. The trials and difficulties of the past are left behind, and the future seems bright with prospect and hope. Then, men go forth with new ambitions, determined to reach heights of success unattained in the previous year. Such an occasion is a time of joy among all people. Yet only once in history did a new year arrive unexpectedly. The Book of Exodus tells of a time when God gave His unprecedented command to begin a new year even before the old year had expired. If we may be permitted to use the names of our calendar months, then the time might have been the middle of August when the Lord said, "Let this day be January the first." Such a procedure had been unknown in the history of the human race, and the text invites investigation.

#### The New Year of Redemption

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year unto you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish . . . and the whole congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt . . . and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Ex. 12: 1-14).

This act of God in altering the calendar was truly prophetic. Here we find the veiled foreshadowings of that greater experience, when the old year of bondage to sin suddenly terminates. Here we see the type of that supreme moment when, through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, a new experience is made possible for sinners. The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again," and when the ruler of the synagogue replied by asking, "How can these things be?" Christ answered, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Redemption comes through the cross, and man's new beginning comes through redemption.

#### The New Year of Sanctification

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation . . . And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up . . . Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up . . . the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up,

THE CREATOR . . . who altered the calendar then they journeyed not until the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Ex. 40). It would seem, from the sacred account, that Israel's second new year was even greater than the first. In the former, God came down to redeem His people; in the latter, He came down to live among His people. He redeemed them in order to have fellowship with them, and His greatest desires were unfulfilled until the cloud of His presence rested upon the sanctuary. And here again we find the suggestions of New Testament truth. The story of the cross reveals God's redemption of man; the story of Pentecost tells how the Holy Spirit seeks to live in the hearts of all believers. Once again it is a new beginning. It is possible to be a Christian and not be filled with the Holy Spirit. Conversion depends upon my faith in the blood of the Lamb; holiness depends upon my determination to crucify all that pertains to the flesh. If the Lord is to set up His tabernacle in my territory, I must clear the building site of all rubbish.

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