

Lesson 20 THE PASSOVER

READING: Exodus 12: Luke 22:13-20

AIM: To show the importance of the Passover in God's plan of redemption of His people

BACKGROUND

The ninth plague was a warning that was not heeded. God determined that the last plague would make Pharaoh obey Him. It was so dreadful and so effective that it became a memorial to future generations.

1 "A NIGHT TO BE MUCH OBSERVED UNTO THE LORD"

As usual, God warned the Israelites of what He intended to do. He provided a way of escape for Israel, "**My son, even my firstborn**". The Israelites, greatly impressed by God's display of power, obeyed His explicit instructions.

2 PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER – Exodus 12:1-28

On the tenth day of the month Abib (hereafter regarded as the first month of the Jewish religious year, for Israel was about to make a new beginning) a lamb (sheep or goat) was to be selected. This was to be a male of the first year and must be without blemish.

It was to be slain on the fourteenth day at evening (between 3 pm and 6 pm).

A bunch of hyssop (a plant with "hairy" leaves) must be dipped in the blood of the lamb and the blood smeared on the lintel (top of the door frame) and the two sides of the door. The sign of the blood would be protection. The members of each family must keep within doors. They were to be fully dressed, staff in hand, ready to go on the journey when God called them. No bone of the lamb was to be broken.

During the night, the lamb, roasted with fire, was to be eaten in haste with unleavened bread (bread made without yeast) and bitter herbs. Any leftover must be burnt before morning. Two small families could combine and have one lamb between them. No stranger was allowed to eat of it unless he had joined himself completely with the Israelites.

"Leaven" symbolises corruption or hypocrisy, malice, wickedness (Luke 12:1; I Cor. 5:7-8) and "Bitter herbs" symbolises suffering.

Moses explained what was meant by all this. God was about to smite the Egyptians but when the Destroying Angel saw the blood upon the doorposts of the Israelites' houses he would "pass over" and would not smite them. This was the first Passover Feast, kept through faith (Heb. 11:28). So that they might never forget its lessons, the Jews were commanded to keep it every year and to teach its significance to their children.

3 MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH - Exodus 11:4-7

Meanwhile Moses again entered Pharaoh's palace to put before the king and his ministers the final decree from God. He then returned to the land of Goshen to prepare the people for their imminent departure. His words must have brought fear to many of the princes of Egypt, who had now learned to respect Moses and his warnings from God. They must have wondered at this terrible threat from the God of the Israelites. Thus, as night came on a sense of foreboding would have settled on the land.

But in Goshen, all was in a state of excitement and expectancy. Preparations had been made; the Passover lambs had been roasted; and as evening came on they gathered around their tables to partake of the feast. Midnight came. Families clustered around with shoes on, clothes tucked up and rods in hand ready to move away. Then suddenly, a terrible cry arose from all over the land (Exod. 12:29).

In the houses of the Egyptians the Angel of Death performed his fearful work. The first-born in every house was smitten, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the lowest in the land. Even the first-born of the beasts did not escape.

For Israel, their time of deliverance had come. They gathered up their possessions, took flocks and herds. They asked the Egyptians for jewels, gold and silver. They took dough in their kneading troughs bound to their shoulders. They were hurried off by the Egyptians who feared to let them remain any longer (Exod. 12:31-36). The eating of the Passover lamb prepared Israel to go out from Egypt to a new life of freedom and holiness.

4 **IMPORTANCE OF THE PASSOVER**

For Natural Israel – The Passover was of special importance to Israel because of :

God's separation of His people from the Gentiles (Ex. 11:7).

God's protection of His people (Ex 12:13).

God's deliverance of His people (Ex 12:41-42).

God's requirements of His people – dedication unto Him (Ex. 12:43-48).

Go's commandment to Israel to keep the feast annually to remind them of all God had done for them. (Ex. 12:24-27).

For Spiritual Israel – The Passover is of special importance because it foreshadowed the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in which :

Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7-8).

Christ was the Lamb of God (I John 1:29).

He was without blemish of character and therefore a perfect sacrifice (I Pet. 1:18-20).

His blood was shed on Calvary for our sins (I Cor. 15:3).

Not a bone was broken (John 19:36).

He instituted the feast of remembrance (Luke 22:13-20).

5 **WHAT IS REQUIRED OF US**

Believers today do not observe the Jewish Passover ritual, for the Law of Moses has been replaced with the Law of Christ. Christ's law requires His people to keep His Memorial "feast" regularly. His institution, like the Passover, is of value only to those who believe in truth (Heb. 13:10) knowing that Jesus' shed blood provides the only way for forgiveness of sins and ultimate escape from death.

Jesus calls us to:

Separate ourselves from the world (I John 2:15).

Permit no evil (leaven) in ourselves.

Realise that through bitterness and suffering (typified by bitter herbs)

God will purify us.

6 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God plagued Egypt because the people refused to listen to Him and ill-treated His people. Today, in a world (for which Egypt is a symbol) which rejects the Lord God, as the time of the end approaches there is a great fear as to what the future will bring (Luke 21:26). However **in Christ there is peace**, and the realisation of impending deliverance (Luke 21:28). Thus, as in Egypt, the people were fearful and worried, whilst in Goshen there was knowledge of coming deliverance, so it is today between those who know not the will of God, and those who do. How much better to be among the latter, and look forward in confidence to what the future will bring forth!

REFERENCE LIBRARY

“The Visible Hand of God”, chapter 13.
“Elpis Israel”, part 2, chapter 4.
“The Law of Moses”, chapter 21
“Moses My Servant”, chapter 2
“Law and Grace”.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Outline the story of the Passover in Egypt.
- 2 Relate the Passover lamb to the sacrifice of Jesus.
- 3 The judgement on Egypt has a meaning for us today: what is it?
- 4 Illustrate from the Passover in Egypt what is required of us to be separate from the world?