

STORY

The Tenth Plague: The First Passover - Exodus 12

TEACHER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank You that while You have hidden the mystery of Your salvation from the wise and prudent, You have revealed it to children. Impress upon me the seriousness of my high calling as a teacher and enable the love of Christ to shine forth through my teaching. I pray that You would help me see Jesus in this story of Your great Old Testament salvation act of deliverance. Amen

VOCABULARY

Passover - the Jewish festival commemorating God's deliverance of His people from Egypt

leaven - yeast, that which makes bread rise

firstborn - the oldest child in a family

OUTER AIM

God saved his people from death and delivered them from Egypt.

INNER AIM

Jesus, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us.

BACKGROUND

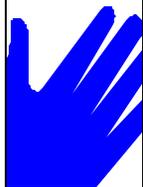
God told Moses to prepare the people for their Exodus from Egypt. The difference between Israel and Egypt and between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt was about to be revealed in a final cataclysmic stroke from God. The judgment would be the death of the firstborn (11:4-7).

The Passover celebrates the most important salvation act of the Old Testament. The date the Passover took place would become the first month of the Jewish new year emphasizing the importance of the Passover.

This month had been named Abib meaning "ears" because the "ears" of grain appeared in this month (March-April depending on the new moon). This is why the date of Easter corresponding to the Passover is always in March or April. This month of Abib is now called Nisan because of the "Passover" sacrifice chosen by each household.

Four days before the Passover took place, a male lamb or kid not yet one year old and without a blemish, was prepared to be sacrificed. The meat of the lamb would have to be totally eaten by a family or group of families. The blood was to be caught in a basin and then "struck" with a branch of hyssop on the two side posts and the upper doorpost of the house. Hyssop in ancient times was often considered to have cleansing properties.

The blood of a lamb or goat was to be applied directly to the house to make atonement for its inhabitants and convert it to an altar. Seeing the blood, Jehovah would pass over the door and spare the inhabitants of the house. The name "passover" or "pascha" literally expressed the meaning of this observance. The sacrificial meal consisted of the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of the afflictions in Egypt. The unleavened bread symbolized the removal of the old corruption and the need to leave in a hurry. Finally, the Passover lamb symbolized God's great Old Testament act of act of salvation and the deliverance of His people from Egypt.



At midnight, God's judgment came upon Egypt. About midnight Jehovah passed through the land of Egypt and a great cry went up. Pharaoh begged the children of Israel to leave. He even gave them the wealth of Egypt to leave Egypt immediately lest "we all be dead men." God's salvation was to be a perpetual memory, as each year the Jews were to celebrate the Passover and explain the deliverance of God. Every year at this time, God's people were to reenact the Passover meal that would bring to remembrance God's great salvation act. When the children would ask, "Why are we eating this lamb and unleavened bread, and bitter herbs?" the parents would then tell them how God had delivered His people from Egypt. The observance of the Passover was to be followed by a "feast of unleavened bread," lasting for seven days in which all leaven or yeast was to be purged or removed from the households.

Israel left Egypt with 600,000 men of military age. The total number of the Children of Israel was probably about two million.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, You are the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. We pray that you would help us see how You delivered Your people out of Egypt protecting them from death through the blood of the Passover Lamb. Help us to believe that the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, protects us from death. Amen.

PRESENTATION

It is important that the teacher review the previous story of the first nine plagues or strokes. Stress the stubborn opposition of Pharaoh to the Jehovah and how senseless it was for Pharaoh to oppose God.

Some have actually reenacted a Jewish Passover meal. It might be interesting to have at least a sample of lamb, unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. As you tell the story, you can emphasize the "shadow" pictures of these elements in the Passover meal.

Discuss the story in the context of the feeling of horror Pharaoh and the Egyptians felt when they discovered what had happened that night. Now they couldn't wait to get rid of God's people. This will lead into the next story as you reveal the depth of Pharaoh's opposition to God.

It is also important to connect this story with Jesus. The Bible reveals that the lamb which was killed was a shadow picture of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Christ is called "our Passover Who was sacrificed for us." Jesus is the Passover Lamb, Whose blood protects and delivers us from eternal death. In 1 Peter 1:17-18 in a reference to the Passover lamb, Jesus is referred to as the "lamb without blemish or spot." It is the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God that redeems us from sin and death.

Before Jesus died on the cross, He celebrated the last Passover with His disciples. It is called the last Passover because Jesus was establishing the "new covenant" or "new testament" through His death on the cross. Jesus' blood would deliver His people from death by giving them the forgiveness of their sins. In keeping with the Old Testament meal of remembrance, Jesus gave His believers a New Testament meal of remembrance. Jesus took the unleavened bread and the wine from the Old Testament Passover and gave them to His disciples saying, "This is my body. This is my blood shed for you." We are to partake of this meal in remembrance of Him, that is remembering what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross.

APPLICATIONS

1. What was the meaning of the Passover for Old Testament Israel?
2. What is the deeper meaning as seen in the cross of Jesus, cf. I Peter 1: 18-20? Why do you think that Jesus' death occurred at the time of the Passover?
3. What was the Old Testament significance of the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs? What were the people to remember?
4. What is the shadow picture of the Old Testament Passover as it relates to Jesus?
 - a. What does the Passover lamb picture for us? (1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - b. What does the unleavened bread picture? 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
5. When we celebrate communion, what are we to remember?
6. It is important to stress that this Old Testament salvation act of God pointed to a greater salvation act in the death of Jesus. We understand the Sacrament of the Altar better against the backdrop of the Passover Meal.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

John 1:29 - *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

Middle any of the above and...

1 Peter 1:19 - *You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

1 Corinthians 5:7 - *Christ our Passover Lamb is sacrificed for us.*

Upper any of the above and...

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

1 Corinthians 11:24-25 - *Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.*

HYMN CHOICES

"O Christ, Thou Lamb Of God" (TLH #147)

"Lamb Of God, Pure And Holy" (TLH #146)

"The Day Of Resurrection" (TLH #205:1)