



The Passover Exodus 12

Introduction

Before our study of the tenth plague, there are some interesting things to note about the nine plagues from the preceding chapters. The nine plagues are, as you will see, divided into threes:

1. In the first, fourth and seventh plagues (the first of each set of three plagues), the warning was given to Pharaoh in the morning (Exodus 7:15; 8:20; 9:13).
2. In the first and second of each set of three, the plague was announced beforehand (Exodus 7:15 and 8:1; 8:20 and 9:1; 9:13 and 10:1).
3. In the third of each set of three plagues, there was no announcement beforehand (Exodus 8:16; 9:8; 10:21).
4. At the third plague, the magicians of Pharaoh acknowledged the finger of God (Exodus 8:19).
5. At the sixth plague, the magicians could not stand before Moses (Exodus 9:11).
6. At the ninth plague, Pharaoh refused to see the face of Moses anymore (Exodus 10:28).
7. In the first three plagues Aaron used his rod; in the second three it is not mentioned; in the third three Moses used the rod or his hand.

The increase in the severity of the strokes is also interesting. In the first three, no distinction was made among the inhabitants of the land. In seven plagues, a distinction was made between the Israelites and the Egyptians. In the seven which have to do with the Egyptians, three referred to the animal creation and three to the vegetable world, the support of animal life. Three affected the health and comfort of man,

three took away the staff of life, then death came. The whole period covered by the plagues was about ten months.

The Passover Instituted (Exodus 12:1-20)

We would only weaken the impression of scripture to attempt here a description of the attitude of the Israelites or of the scene witnessed when the Lord passed through the land “about midnight” and smote the first-born throughout the land of Egypt. It meant deliverance and the beginning of a new life for some; to others it was a night of death and sorrow.

Order of Year Changed (Exodus 12:1-2)

Because this is the birth chapter of Israel as a nation, the first thing announced is the change of the year. The month of the Passover was to be the first month in the new year for this people whom God was about to deliver from the bondage of Egypt. Later the Jews had a two-fold computation of the year—the ecclesiastical year and the civil year. Abib or Nisan was the month in which they observed all the festivals in honor of God. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, for the civil year they preserved the original order of the months for buying, selling and other ordinary affairs.

Instructions to Moses for the Passover (Exodus 12:3-14)

Most outstanding in the instructions given to Moses for the Passover was the explicitness in which they were given. There is no question about what God required and no question about what God expected. By being obedient to these directions given by God, the children of Israel would be saved. However,

should they fail to follow these specific instructions, death would enter their homes just as it would enter into the homes of the Egyptians. This involved a decision on the part of the people to be obedient to all that God had instructed. To kill the lamb and then say, “Well, it won’t make any difference whether I put the blood on the door post and above the door — God will understand,” would have been partial obedience, unacceptable to God. A lesson to be learned from this account is that we should examine our hearts for full obedience to the word of God concerning salvation. The analogy with Christian redemption is obvious. The medium of the salvation of the Israelites and the ground on which it was given was the blood atonement.

The Passover Lamb - A Picture of Christ and His Salvation

In I Corinthians 5:7, Paul refers to Christ, as our passover, being sacrificed for us. How important it is to know what God’s word is saying to us about redemption from sin through believing in the atoning work of Christ on the cross and applying it personally. It is not enough to merely assent to words. It is not enough to have a mere intellectual conviction to the truth of Christianity or an apprehension of the plan of salvation. We must make it part of us. We must say by faith, “Christ died for me.” This is salvation.

“*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*” (Exodus 12:13). The very central truth of the gospel is here foreshadowed in that blood of the spotless lamb shed and sprinkled on the door posts. The law from Mount Sinai cried out, “*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.*” (Exodus 32:33) and it is from this impending doom that we, through the atoning work of Christ on the cross, are spared from this judgment of death. We can only be made alive to God through the shed blood of the Lamb and its application, as required by God through His word, to our hearts by faith. This is the central idea of all God’s revelations to us. In it we find hope of divine favor, all strength to resist and conquer sin and all power to live a holy life. If you are redeemed, it is because “*we have redemption through His blood*” (Colossians 1:14). If you are ransomed from sin, it is not that you are ransomed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, “*but with the precious*

blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:18-19). If you are justified, it is “*Being justified by His blood*” (Romans 5:9). If you are cleansed and made holy, it is because “*the blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin*” (I John 1:7). If you wander from God and need restoration, His word tells us that “. . .*you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*” (Ephesians 2:13). You have access to the Father through prayer because Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Arrayed in spotless robes to appear before the Great King, are those who “*washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” (Revelation 7:14). If sinners are cast out to eternal death, it is because they chose to trample “*the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace.*” (Hebrews 10:29).

All mercy, compassion and grace of God has its foundation in the blood: “*Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*” (Exodus 12:13).

In Remembrance of Deliverance (Exodus 12:14-20)

The Passover was ordained by God to be kept yearly in remembrance of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. As Christians, we observe the Lords’ Supper in memory of our deliverance from the bondage of sin. We remember Christ and what He did to make possible our salvation (Matthew 26:28).

The Command Given to the People and Obeyed (Exodus 12:21-30)

Instructions Given to Elders of the People (Exodus 12:21-25)

Moses, having received his instructions from the Lord as to the observance of the Passover feast, called for the elders of Israel and communicated to them the divine directions. Probably due to the hatred and jealousy of Pharaoh, a general assembly of the people could not be called. The elders would communicate to the heads of the families and the whole congregation would know what God required to bring about their deliverance.

Parents' Responsibility to their Children (Exodus 12:26-27)

Religious instruction is a very vital part of a child's life. It is more important today than ever as we see the truth of God's word distorted and denied. Parents must know the meaning and significance of this important teaching of the Passover to be able to present it to their children. Do we set such an example before our children that they ask us to explain to them the meaning of following Christ?

The First Passover Observed and the Tenth Plague (Exodus 12:27-30)

"So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did." Then the fatal blow, the tenth plague fell upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The story is told briefly. It was not called forth by either the rod or hand of Moses. It did not come from the water, the earth or the air; the hand of Jehovah Himself was stretched forth, as He said. We may suppose that the Israelites had finished the Passover Feast and were waiting in suspense for the next great event when the midnight cry of anguish arose through all the land of Egypt.

The Departure of the Children of Israel (Exodus 12:31-51)

Israel Dismissed from Egypt by Pharaoh (Exodus 12:31-36)

At last the heart of Pharaoh was broken. He was touched by the terrible calamity to the point of not

only granting the Israelites all their demands, but even desiring a favor of blessing from those whom he despised. He yielded because he could oppose no longer. The Egyptians shared the consternation of their king. They gave the Israelites all they asked for in jewels of silver and gold and of raiment. They were glad to get rid of these neighbors at any price.

Israel had long been oppressed by the Egyptians; now they left the land with the well-earned reward of their labors of many years and of much sorrow. It is important for us to know this part of Israel's history and the circumstances, because the silver and the gold were later required for their religious worship. Without the knowledge of this history, it would make requirements of silver and gold needed for the tabernacle incredible and inconceivable.

The Exodus (Exodus 12:37-51)

The story of the actual exodus of the children of Israel is told briefly. The number of people involved in this exodus alone is a miracle that could be effected only by the hand of God. Perhaps as many as two million people moved out of the land in one day with the flocks and herds. The number of Israelites as given is *"six hundred thousand....men."* When you add to this number the number of women and children as well as the *"mixed multitude,"* you have a great host of people. It was indeed a great night, a great deliverance. It was a prophecy and a symbol of the redemption brought to us by Christ.

Daily Bible Study Questions for Group Discussion

Note: Read notes and Scripture references before answering the questions. Some questions are for those more advanced in Bible study. Try to answer all questions, but don't be discouraged if some seem a little hard. Unless otherwise instructed, use Bible only in answering questions.

FIRST DAY: Read notes from Lesson 5.

1. If you were giving the lesson on the Passover to your children or adults, what would you want to emphasize and why? (**Exodus 12**)
2. Was there something in **Exodus 12** that you really hadn't thought much about before, but which, as a result of your study, became meaningful?
3. Do you think last week's lesson will help you to understand the faithfulness of Jewish people today and their observance of their New Year?

SECOND DAY: Read Exodus 13.

4. (a) Consider moving a company of people (perhaps as many as two million) such as Moses did. What might the concerns be today if faced with this task? (**See map in the Appendix for Israel's Exodus Route**)
 - (b) How could Moses do this?

FOURTH DAY: Continue reading Chapter 14.

10. With Pharaoh in pursuit, mountains on one side and the sea on the other, how would you have felt had you been an Israelite and in these circumstances?

11. (a) To whom were the children of Israel forced to turn? (Give verse.)

(b) Whom did they turn against?

(c) What do you think they referred to when they said there were no graves in Egypt? (**Exodus 14:11**)

12. What can we learn from the attitude of Moses at this time of peril and crisis?

13. Compare the change in Moses' attitude in **chapter 3** with his attitude at this time.

14. In **Exodus 14, verses 13 and 15**, we have two commands. What is interesting about them?

FIFTH DAY AND SIXTH DAYS: (Continue reading Chapter 14 and 15; Psalm 103.)

15. Put into your own words what you think God was saying to Moses and the people in **Exodus 14:13-15**.

16. (**Thought Question**) What is your behavior under pressure? Do you first of all pray, then step out in courage and faith to do what God wants you to do?

Notes