

Session 6

PASSOVER

Exodus 12:1-39

Memory Verse

The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

– EXODUS 12:13, CSB




Passover

THEOLOGICAL THEME: God rescued His people from bondage through the miracle of the Passover. Passover pointed to the coming deliverance of God's people through the Lamb of God, Jesus.

CALL TO ACTION: Give thanks to the Lord for how He has forgiven you and given you new life in Christ.

The word sacrifice can stir up various thoughts and ideas. Many consider it noble to sacrifice. Others avoid sacrifice of any kind. Some are willing to sacrifice to a certain degree if it is not too painful. Some studies show that around twenty-three percent of people would not be willing to make any sacrifices, even for love.¹

When we think of sacrifice, we may consider things like being willing to move out of state or change jobs or giving up a routing convenience for the sake of another. These kinds of sacrifices might be inconvenient or even hard, but the ultimate sacrifice in the Bible is giving up a life for the sake of another.

 What is one of the biggest sacrifices you've made for someone or that someone has made for you? How did this impact you?



Why do you think sacrifice is uncomfortable for many of us?
Where are you likely to avoid sacrifice if possible?

Session Summary

Scripture tells us that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) and that for sins to be forgiven, blood must be shed (Hebrews 9:22). This concept was established in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:21); God continued to teach it through the Passover and delivering the Israelites from bondage in Egypt as well as the sacrificial system that followed. Ultimately, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world.

The Passover was a significant moment for the children of Israel that is celebrated and observed to this day. Understanding all that happened when the Israelites were released from slavery and sent off to the promised land is important to understanding God’s story of redemption throughout the Bible. His timing is perfect, and there is purpose to all He does. When we trust God and obey Him, then we position ourselves to join in His redemptive story that has been revealed throughout history.

1. Instructions for the Passover (Exodus 12:1-11)

After four hundred years of slavery, God was preparing the children of Israel for the deliverance that was coming their way. It was to be a new start for them and even their calendar would change to reflect it. Everything was about to change, and these events would be a reminder for the future of God’s faithfulness to His people.

The Lord had specific instructions about this protection for His people. Through their obedience, God’s wrath would pass over them, pointing to His ultimate redemptive work that would come through the Messiah. Though they did not understand all the history and significance, the Israelites were aware that these instructions were important, and it was important that they follow them to the letter.

? Why is it important to obey the Lord even when you don't know or understand all the details and significance of what He is doing?

The lamb was to be in the best condition possible and brought into the home for four days prior to the feast. Because sin had entered the world, sacrifice was necessary for atonement of sins. Compare these instructions with the sacrifice God initiated in the garden to clothe Adam and Eve following their disobedience to God. Ultimately, this moment pointed to the coming sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, for the sins of the world.

? How do the events of the Passover point to the sacrifice Jesus would make for the sins of the world?

Before the Passover lamb could be eaten, the blood needed to be spread on the top and sides of the home's doorposts. Each time a person went in or out, they would remember the sacrifice necessary to rescue them from their bondage and protect them from the final plague.

? Application: What in your life acts a daily reminder of your need for a Savior?

2. The Point of the Passover (Exodus 12:12-20)

God made it clear that the exact placement of the blood on the doorposts was essential for the Israelites to be spared the judgment on the firstborn that was coming. The blood of the lamb was crucial to the plans of the Lord for rescuing His people.

How do we see God's grace revealed in this portion of His instructions to the Israelites?

Think about how God regards the children of Israel. They are His firstborn, favored people. When Egypt refused to release the firstborn of the Lord, then He required the firstborn of Egypt as punishment, penalty, and judgment. God takes the treatment of His people seriously and we can trust that He will deal with those who come against His people with justice and righteousness.

The Lord stressed that these instructions about Passover were to be followed and kept as a feast throughout generations. This was not a one-time dinner. It was a new celebratory feast that the people should make a yearly priority and everlasting ordinance. God knew that looking back on this occasion would be a powerful reminder of His power and might exercised on behalf of His people.

What are some ways you have seen God's power and might exercised on your behalf? How does this encourage you?

For this first Passover, unleavened bread was a practical necessity due to the expediency with which the people would need to exit Egypt. In all the following Passover feasts and celebrations, unleavened bread would serve as a testimony of the Lord's protection and provision.

Leaven is also symbolic of sin and corruption in the Bible. In Galatians 5:9, Paul compared the way a little leaven influences an entire batch of dough to the way any amount of corruption infiltrates the Christian life. Just as leaven causes dough to puff up, sin causes a person to be puffed up. Just as the Passover required unleavened bread, we must guard against allowing sin into our lives in even the smallest amount because it can affect every part negatively. The Lord calls us to moral purity. Any time we think sin doesn't really matter or make a difference, we can remember how leaven affects all the dough and make the choice to live an "unleavened" or godly life.

? Application: Where is God calling you to avoid even a little bit of “leaven” in your life right now? How can you do that?

3. The Result of the Passover (Exodus 12:27-39)

The people’s first response to God’s instruction was worship. They honored the Lord and were grateful for all He said He would do. This is one of the most important parts of the Passover story because it reminds us of the truth that to receive the good things God had for them, the people had to choose obedience. Their deliverance hinged on their response to the truth God revealed to them.

? How does God call all His people to respond in obedience in order to receive His promised blessings?

God warned Moses that Pharaoh wasn’t going to let them go until he was forced to by mighty acts of the Lord. Everything that the Lord said transpired exactly as He predicted. At midnight, the plague struck all the firstborn of Egypt. Pharaoh, his servants, and all of Egypt experienced great loss in one fell swoop. Pharaoh finally realized that the Lord God was greater than any of the gods they worshiped, including Pharaoh himself.

? How does it encourage you to remember God is greater than any other force in the universe?

Amid vast destruction, the tide turned completely. Pharaoh didn’t just allow the Israelites to leave, he commanded them to go. The Egyptian people agreed with Pharaoh and let their own houses be plundered by Israelites as they gathered supplies quickly for their upcoming journey.

Finally, the Israelites were free of the Egyptians, and they took off in a hurry. Verse 34 reminds us they did not have time for the bread to rise, pointing back to God's previous instruction regarding the exclusion of leaven. We are told the men numbered about six hundred thousand, indicating an estimated population of Israelites around two million left Egypt for the promised land.

The timing of the Lord was perfect, and He fulfilled everything He instructed and promised about the exodus from Egypt. That first Passover set the precedent that Jews have followed for generations since. The moment reminds us of the wages of sin, the providence and deliverance of God, and a foreshadowing of the coming Savior.



Application: How does the Passover point you to the truth about Jesus?

Conclusion

The Passover is more than just a celebration or an ordinance. It was a literal moment where the angel of the Lord passed over the Israelite homes that were obedient to the instructions of the Lord. This was all part of His plan to rescue His children and deliver them from their bondage in Egypt. The blood of an innocent lamb was spread on the doorposts of each home as a signal for the angel to spare that house from the plague of the firstborn.

God takes the treatment of His people very seriously and Pharaoh endured nine other plagues without releasing the Israelites. So, God finally brought the death of the firstborn to every part of Egypt that was missing blood on the doorposts. The blood was significant represented the sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of sin and restoration of people into right relationship with God. Jesus would be the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of all people who placed their trust in Him as foreshadowed by the blood of the Passover lamb.

❓ Where is God calling you to respond in obedience today?
How will you act?

❓ The Passover was to serve as a reminder. How can we as a group regularly remind one another of the work of God in our midst?

❓ How can you share the gospel with another using the story of the Passover?

Memorize

The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

- Exodus 12:13, CSB

References

“What Sacrifices Would You Be Willing to Make for Your Love?” Life, Love, & Sex, December 12, 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/243659/sacrifices-americans-would-make-for-their-love/>.