

The Passover

(Exodus 11 - 12)

Introduction

Suppose you were told that a terrible storm was coming — one that could destroy everything in its path — but you were given some simple instructions that were guaranteed to protect you if you would follow them exactly. Would you follow those instructions? Sure, you would! You would be foolish not to accept the one way that would protect you from destruction by the storm.

The Bible tells us that the Hebrews faced one terrible night of suffering and destruction far worse than any storm. If they would follow certain instructions they would be delivered from that which was going to happen and be set free from a cruel king who wanted them for his slaves. It began in Egypt with a message from God to Pharaoh.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, open the eyes of our hearts this morning so that we might see You for Who You really are and so that we might fall madly in love with You this morning. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

... John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

Lesson

We have been studying about how Moses was used by God to lead the children of Israel out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt. The Israelites were slaves suffering under the cruel Pharaoh.

You and I have never been slaves to a wicked king, but we are slaves in another way. Each of us is born with a 'want to' to sin that keeps us

under Satan's power. Sin is anything you think, say, or do that does not please God. When you continue to lie to your parents or cheat on tests or say dirty words, you are showing that you are a slave to sin.

God hates your sin because it keeps you apart from Him. The punishment for sin is death — the kind of death that means you will be separated from God forever. But God wants to free you from the bondage of your sin, just as He wanted to free the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt.

God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians. He used the plagues to teach both the Egyptians and the children of Israel that He is our Almighty God, ruler of the universe. So far we have learned about nine plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians. Today we will learn about the final plague.

Tenth plague: the death of the firstborn

Exodus 11:1

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will strike Pharaoh and the land of Egypt with one more blow. After that, Pharaoh will let you leave this country. In fact, he will be so eager to get rid of you that he will force you all to leave."

So far none of the previous nine plagues convinced Pharaoh to listen and obey God's command to let the children of Israel go. God is saying here that the next one will finally cause Pharaoh to drive the people out.

Exodus 11:4-5

Moses had announced to Pharaoh, "This is what the LORD says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die."

Can you imagine such a scary night? God gave Moses and Aaron instructions for the children of Israel to follow so they would be safe from the coming plague.

[Teacher, go over the five instructions twice: first just explain what God told Moses to do, then go over them again explaining the significance these instructions have for the Christian.]

1st Instruction: Perfect Male Lamb

Exodus 12:5

The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

Each family must choose a perfect male lamb.

For the Christian, the lamb is a type (picture) of Christ, who was sinless (without blemish.)

John 1:29

John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

2nd Instruction: Blood on the doorframe

Exodus 12:7

They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal.

They were to kill the lamb, placing its blood on the door posts and across the top frame.

The lamb had to be killed in order to get the blood that would protect them. In killing the lamb, the Israelites shed innocent blood. The lamb was a sacrifice, a substitute for the person who would have died in the plague. From this point on the Hebrew people would clearly understand that for them to be spared from death, an innocent life had to be sacrificed in their place.

For the Christian, this is a picture of the cross, as the blood was sprinkled onto the top frame of the door, then onto both side frames of

the door. Jesus' death on the cross, the spilling of His blood, is what paid the penalty of our sins and satisfies the Father's need to punish all sin.

1 John 1:7b

...the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Hebrews 9:22

In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

3rd Instruction: Bitter Herbs and Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12:8

That same night they must roast the meat over a fire and eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast.

The family was to bar-b-queue the lamb whole and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

They ate unleavened bread because they didn't have time to let their bread rise. They needed to be ready to leave on a moment's notice.

They ate bitter herbs such as horseradish and parsley to remind them of the bitterness of slavery. [Teacher, bring some bitter herbs to class for the children to taste.]

For the Christian, leaven (yeast) represents sin in our lives. Eating unleavened bread is a picture of how we need to remove the sin from our lives.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.

Bitter Herbs reminds the Christian of the bitterness of our sins, the penalty for which is death.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

4th Instruction: Be Ready

Exodus 12:11

“These are your instructions for eating this meal: Be fully dressed, wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD’s Passover.

They were to eat fully dressed with their shoes on ready to leave at any moment.

The Christian needs to be ready and waiting for the Lord’s return. He could return at any moment.

Luke 12:40

You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

5th Instruction: No Broken Bones

Exodus 12:46

Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones.

The family must stay within the house through the night. They were to eat the whole lamb and not break any of its bones.

For the Christian, this is a picture of Christ’s death when He died without breaking a bone.

John 19:31-36

It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn’t want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn’t break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of his bones will be broken,”

God loved the Israelites and provided a way for them to escape the death penalty by applying the blood to the door frames. Not only would the blood of the lamb free them from death that night, but it would result in their freedom from slavery.

God loves you, too. He created you and wants you to live with Him in heaven someday. But, God is holy, 100% perfect, and He cannot have sin in heaven. That is why He has made a way for you and me to escape the penalty of eternal death and be set free from the bondage of sin. His way is through the perfect Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

God has provided a way for you to be protected from sin’s punishment. The Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, died on the cross to take that punishment for you. He died and gave His life’s blood for your sin. You must be willing to admit to God that you are a sinner. You must believe that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to take your punishment. If you believe with all your heart that the Lord Jesus died, giving His life’s blood for you, you can be saved from the punishment of your sin.

Every year the Jews celebrate the Passover. They never want to forget how they had been protected from death by the blood and set

free from their slavery. Every firstborn child of the Egyptians died, but the Israelite children were spared because the blood of the lamb had been placed on their door frames. Each year the people pause to give thanks to God for saving them from death and bringing them out of a land of slavery.

As Christians, we should often look back on our salvation experience and say a “thank-You” prayer to God for setting us free from the bondage of sin. The Lord’s Supper is our Passover remembrance of our new life and freedom from sin.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, I believe that You died and were buried and placed in a sealed tomb. Three days later, Your tomb was found empty! You had risen from the dead, just as You said You would. That proved that the Father had accepted your payment for my sin.

You are alive today in heaven making a place ready for me! Thank You for dying on the cross and taking the punishment that I deserve. Thank You for making it possible for me to come and live with you in heaven. I wait anxiously for that day when I will be with You for ever more.

Learning Activities

Activity

Have Communion with the children.

Game Center

Put the slips of paper in a container. Let each child draw a riddle. Read it aloud and let the child try to answer it. If he cannot, let the other children respond.

Riddles

My blood was put on the door posts of all Israelite houses. What am I?

I caused much sadness for the Egyptians when I came to their houses one night. What am I?

I asked Pharaoh many times to let the Israelites go. Who am I?

I was Moses’ brother. Who am I?

I’m the place where the Israelites wanted to be. What am I?

Moses used me to show Pharaoh how powerful God is. What am I?

We were brutal and whipped the Israeli workers to get them to work faster and wouldn’t bring them any straw to make the bricks. Who are we?

I’m the thing that helps develop your patience and character and teaches you to trust God. What am I?

I promised the people they would get out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Who am I?

I demanded that Moses and Aaron show me a miracle to prove that God was mighty in power. Who am I?

Pharaoh called us in to do miracles like Moses. Who are we?

I’m the thing the rod turned into. What am I?

I’m the reason that the magicians could do miracles. Who am I?

Answers to the Riddles

1. My blood was put on the door posts of all Israelite houses. What am I? (A lamb.)

2. I caused much sadness for the Egyptians when I came to their houses one night. What am I? (Death.)
3. I asked Pharaoh many times to let the Israelites go. Who am I? (Moses.)
4. I was Moses' brother. Who am I? (Aaron.)
5. I'm the place where the Israelites wanted to be. What am I? (The Promised Land.)
6. Moses used me to show Pharaoh how powerful God is. What am I? (Moses' rod.)
7. We were brutal and whipped the Israeli workers to get them to work faster and wouldn't bring them any straw to make the bricks. Who are we? (The taskmasters.)
8. I'm the thing that helps develop your patience and character and teaches you to trust God. What am I? (Problems in life.)
9. I promised the people they would get out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Who am I? (God.)
10. I demanded that Moses and Aaron show me a miracle to prove that God was mighty in power. Who am I? (Pharaoh.)
11. Pharaoh called us in to do miracles like Moses. Who are we? (The magicians.)
12. I'm the thing the rod turned into. What am I? (A serpent.)
13. I'm the reason that the magicians could do miracles. Who am I? (Satan.)

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