



A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS (12:1-13:22)

Introduction

God ultimately brings the final plague against Egypt by killing every firstborn male, but spares the Israelites who are covered by the blood of the Passover lamb. These chapters record the climactic finale of God's plagues against the Egyptians, in which the death of every firstborn in Egypt moves Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage.

As God brings judgment against Egypt, He gives Moses instructions for the Passover sacrifice so that the plague of death "passes over" the Israelite households. To commemorate this saving event, God instructs the Israelites to keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread annually, and to set apart for the Lord every firstborn male. By doing so, Israel was to keep the memory of God's gracious salvation alive throughout their generations.

Gospel Glimpses

THE PASSOVER LAMB. The sacrifice of the Passover is one of the clearest pictures of the gospel in the Old Testament. The Israelites were to sacrifice a spotless lamb and smear its blood on their doorframes. When God brought his judgment of death against the land of Egypt, he would see the blood of the lamb and "pass over" the Israelites houses (Exodus 12:13). Building off this image, the New Testament presents Jesus as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Just as the shed blood of the Passover lamb covered the people of Israel so that God's judgment passed over them, so does Jesus' shed blood bring forgiveness to those who put their faith in him (Ephesians 1:7). Therefore it is very fitting that the Gospels record Jesus' sacrificial death as occurring during the Passover festival (Matthew 26:2; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:15), making him the fulfillment of this Old Testament ritual. In fact, this association is so strong that Paul actually identifies Jesus as "our Passover lamb" (I Corinthians 5:7).

A MIXED MULTITUDE. Exodus 12:38 notes that when the Israelites left Egypt, "a mixed multitude also went up with them." This indicates that people of other nationalities accompanied the Hebrews as they departed their land of slavery. This short note reflects the fact that God's plan of salvation has always been international in nature. When God called Abram, Israel's ancestor, he told him, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Later, when Israel first enters Canaan in their conquest of the Promised Land, Rahab defects from the Canaanites and aligns herself with the Israelites (Joshua 2). This theme reappears with people such as Ruth the Moabite and Uriah the Hittite showing faith in God, but it is most evident in the New Testament mandate for the gospel to go out to all the nations. Not only does Jesus commission his followers to go out and "make disciples

of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), but Paul explains that this good news for the nations was actually contained in God’s original promise to Abram back in Genesis 12:3 (Galatians 3:8).

Whole-Bible Connections

SALVATION THROUGH JUDGMENT. A pattern that reappears throughout Scripture is God saving his people through judgment. While the flood brought judgment upon the whole human race during Noah’s day, it simultaneously lifted up the ark, saving Noah and his family (Genesis 6-9). Here in the exodus, God’s tenth plague of judgment against Egypt also served as the catalyst for Pharaoh to release Israel (Exodus 12:29-32). Later, the prophets will often speak of Israel’s salvation from exile by proclaiming judgment against their enemies.

The cross of Christ is the most significant example of salvation through judgment: because Jesus was wounded in our place for our transgressions, we are healed (Isaiah 53:5; I Peter 2:24). Similarly, at the end of time, God will finalize our salvation by remaking all creation into “new heavens and a new earth” (II Peter 3:13), yet He will do so by bringing fiery judgment upon the current creation (II Peter 3:7).

GRACE-DRIVEN OBEDIENCE. Three different times in these chapters the Israelites are instructed how to communicate to their children the significance of the rituals described here. In each case, obedience in carrying out the ritual is grounded in the grace of God’s salvation. The Passover was to be “observed” as a “statute” (Exodus 12:24) because the Lord “passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt” (12:27). Concerning the “statute” of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:10), an Israelite was to say, “It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt” (13:8). Similarly, the practice of devoting the firstborn reflected God’s deliverance of Israel: “By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery” (13:14). This pattern parallels the relationship of grace and good works in the New Testament. As Paul says, it is by grace we have been saved through faith, and through this gracious salvation we have been “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:8-10). Therefore, in both the Old and New Testaments, God’s grace is the fuel that drives the believer’s obedient response.

SUBSTITUTION. Central to the gospel message is the glorious truth that Jesus suffered and died on the cross in our place as our substitute. As John says, Jesus “laid down his life for us” (I John 3:16). This doctrine of substitution is reflected at various points throughout the Old Testament, from the ram that God provided Abraham to sacrifice instead of his son Isaac (Genesis 22:13) to the servant who suffers on Israel’s behalf in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4-6). This concept of substitutionary sacrifice is also seen here in the exodus account as the Passover lamb is killed instead of Israel’s firstborn males. By providing substitutes, God graciously spares his people from experiencing his judgment.

SACRAMENT. Sacraments are signs established by God that represent his saving work and encourage the faith of believers. Traditionally, Protestants have observed two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These New Testament sacraments provide tangible pictures of the salvation that Jesus has achieved for us. As Paul says concerning the Lord's Supper, "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). As the precursor to the Lord's Supper, the Passover was an Old Testament sacrament that also signified God's saving work. In this passage, God repeatedly instructs the Israelites to observe the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for generations to come in order to commemorate his saving grace through the exodus (Exodus 12:14,17, 24-25, 42).

Glossary of Terms

The Lord's Supper: A meal of remembrance instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper on the night of his betrayal. Christians are to observe this meal, also called Communion, in remembrance of Jesus' death.

Please answer the following questions:
Exodus Chapter 12

1. How did this event start the Hebrews time measurement? (Exodus 12:2)
2. When was a lamb to be selected? (Exodus 12:3)
3. Verses 3-13 contain a series of instructions for Israel to follow in preparing the Passover lamb. Why do you think God didn't simply pass over the Israelite houses automatically? What do these instructions reveal about the way God extends salvation to his people?
4. How were they to decide how many lambs to kill and what qualification must the animal meet? (Exodus 12:3-5)
5. When were the animals to be slaughtered and where was the blood to be put? (Exodus 12:6-7)
6. What was to be eaten that night and how? (Exodus 12:5-9)
7. What parts were to be roasted? (Exodus 12:9)
8. What was to be done to any leftovers and how were they to eat it? (Exodus 12:10)
9. What was the name of this meal? (Exodus 12:11)
10. What would happen that night? (Exodus 12:12)
11. Why was the blood on the houses necessary? (Exodus 12:13)

12. Verses 3–13 contain a series of instructions for Israel to follow in preparing the Passover lamb. Why do you think God didn't simply pass over the Israelite houses automatically? What do these instructions reveal about the way God extends salvation to his people?
13. How was this day to be celebrated? How long? (Exodus 12:14)
14. What was done on the first day? For seven days? (Exodus 12:15-16)
15. What could be done on the assembly days and what is this feast called? (Exodus 12:16-17)
16. What would happen if someone ate leavened bread? (Exodus 12:15-19)
17. The seven days of unleavened bread was during what part of the month? (Exodus 12:18)
18. What was to be used to put the blood on the door frame? (Exodus 12:22)
19. When could anyone leave the house? (Exodus 12:22)
20. What part of the door frame was to have blood on it? (Exodus 12:23)
21. How were the Israelites to pass this ordinance on to their children? (Exodus 12:24-27)
22. Who was killed in Egypt? (Exodus 12:29-30)
23. When was Moses and Aaron summoned? (Exodus 12:31)
24. What did Pharaoh ask for himself? (Exodus 12:32)

25. What did the Israelites ask of the Egyptians? (Exodus 12:35)
26. How far did the Israelites move and how many men were there? (Exodus 12:37)
27. Besides the Israelites, who and what left Egypt? (Exodus 12:33)
28. How long were the Israelites in Egypt? (Exodus 12:40)
29. Why are the Israelites to keep vigil to honor the Lord? (Exodus 12:42)
30. What were the Passover regulations (Exodus 12:43-49)

Exodus Chapter 13

1. What did consecration of the firstborn mean? (Exodus 13:1)
2. What month did they leave Egypt in? (Exodus 13:4)
3. Into what land was the Lord taking them? (Exodus 13:5)
4. Where was yeast not to be seen? (Exodus 13:7)
5. Exodus 13:11-13 says that all firstborn males in Israel were to be set apart for God. This meant that either they were to be sacrificed (certain animals) or they were to receive a sacrificial substitution (all male children, certain other animals). What would such a substitution remind an Israelite of? What does this substitution point forward to?
6. Where did God not lead the Israelites on their exodus? (Exodus 13:17)

7. How did the Israelites leave (go up) from Egypt? (Exodus 13:13)
8. What did Moses taken from Egypt and why? (Exodus 13:19)
9. Where did they camp after Succoth? (Exodus 13:20)
10. How were they guided and when could they travel? (Exodus 13:21)