

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

Leviticus 23:5; Exodus 12:1-51

INTRODUCTION

- Every day we hear of homes being broken into where property is stolen, residents assaulted and sometimes killed
- Home owners spend thousands of dollars to secure their home from intruders, but even the best security systems can be overcome
- Around 3500 years ago, in the land of Egypt, on one particular night, a deadly intruder came and was able to enter the most secure houses in the kingdom, even the king's house, and kill the firstborns of the land
- But there was one form of security, and only one, that could stop the destroyer from entering a home – it was the blood of a lamb without blemish, applied to the door posts of the house
- This is the “Passover”, the first of the seven feasts of the LORD
- These feasts were object lessons to Israel
- For us they present to us the whole work of salvation by grace, from justification all the way through to glorification
- The name of the Passover, in Hebrew *Pesach*, and Greek *Pascha*, is derived from a root which means to 'step over,' or to 'overleap,' and thus points back to the historical origin of the festival

- It was held on the 14th day of the first month, Abib / Nisan
- The Passover stands at the head of the feasts, and is unique among them
 - ✓ It was instituted before the law was given at Sinai
 - ✓ It contains animal sacrifice, before the sacrificial order was established
 - ✓ It was redemption by blood, before the Covenant was ratified by blood
- The Scriptures refer to the Passover in a number of different ways:
 - ✓ The LORD's passover (Exodus 12:11; Leviticus 23:5)
 - ✓ The offering of the LORD (Numbers 9:7,13)
 - ✓ The sacrifice of the feast of the Passover (Exodus 34:25)
 - ✓ The passover of the Jews (John 2:13)
- The Passover lamb is one of the clearest and fullest types of the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death for sinners
- One could look at the Passover from 360 different angles, and every one of them presents some aspect of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7)

I. THE PASSOVER MEAL OF COMMEMORATION

A. A memorial of their bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12:14)

1. The final plague, the death of the firstborn, saw Israel finally released from bondage

2. Egypt is a type of the world; Pharaoh a type of the devil
 - a. In our lost state we are in bondage to the world (Ephesians 2:1-2; Galatians 4:3)
 - b. In bondage to sin (Romans 6:16)
 - c. Captive to the devil (2 Timothy 2:26)
3. The bitter herbs expressed the bitter afflictions of Egypt
 - a. To be lost in sin is a thoroughly bitter and miserable existence, both in this world and the world to come
 - b. Bitterness speaks of repentance, mourning and humiliation for our sins
 - c. Bitterness also pictures the trials of the Christian life
4. The Passover service was intended to be an occasion of teaching, where children would question their parents, and parents would instruct their children (Exodus 12:26-27)

B. A memorial of their protection from judgment

1. All those in Egypt were under the sentence of death (Exodus 11:4-6)

2. The firstborn indicates pre-eminence, strength, and the head of their generation (Genesis 49:3); and as such, represents the whole of the nation of Egypt
3. The Power that could kill all the firstborn, could kill every one of them, and in the death of the firstborn, they all died *ideally*
4. All those in the world are condemned (John 3:18; 1 Corinthians 11:32)
5. Through the Lord's provision, God's people are freed from bondage and condemnation (Hebrews 2:14-15)

C. A memorial of their deliverance from Egypt

II. THE PASSOVER LAMB OF PROPITIATION

A. A selected lamb

1. On the tenth day of the first month, the lamb was chosen for each house (Exodus 12:3)
2. It was on that day that the Lord Jesus made his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, as the people acknowledged him as the Son of David (Matthew 21:15)

B. A spotless lamb (Exodus 12:5)

1. We are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19)

2. Pilate was forced to confess: "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4)
3. God the Father was well-pleased with the Son (Matthew 17:5)

B. A sacrificial lamb (Exodus 12:27)

1. From the beginning, God showed that sin can only be atoned for by death
2. It is Christ's "stripes" that heal our sins, not his example (Isaiah 53:5)
3. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24)

C. A substitutionary lamb

1. The whole congregation killed the lamb, showing their participation in its death (Exodus 12:6)
2. All of us through our sins are responsible for the death of the Son of God
3. Christ came "to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28)

D. A scorched lamb

1. The lamb was skewered with two lengths of pomegranate wood, one passing lengthways from head to tail, the other across the shoulder, to form a cross

2. The fire of God's wrath against sin fell upon Jesus Christ on the cross (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:8-9)

E. A singular lamb

1. "Lamb" in reference to the Passover is always singular, never plural
2. There is only one Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 14:6; Acts 4:12)

III. THE PASSOVER BLOOD OF SALVATION

A. The necessity of the shedding of blood

1. From the first sacrifice performed by God (Genesis 3:21), continuing with Abel (Genesis 4:4), and all throughout history, God has shown that blood must be shed for atonement to be made
2. It is the blood that contains the "life of the flesh", and the life of the innocent is shed and offered to atone for the guilty (Leviticus 17:11)
3. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Hebrews 9:22)
4. A bloodless death by strangling or beating would not satisfy God's righteous demands
5. Christ did not die at the hands of the Jews (stoning), but by the Romans (crucifixion), in order that he would die a bloody death

B. The blood had to be applied (Exodus 12:7,22-23)

1. It was not enough that the blood be shed, or collected in a bowl – it had to be applied to the door posts and lintel of the house for it to be effective
2. It is not enough to acknowledge the blood of Christ has saving power – a sinner must personally and experimentally receive it by faith (Romans 3:25)
3. Hyssop denotes humility (Psalm 51:7) – it is a humble, childlike trust in Christ's blood that saves
4. Hyssop is a frail plant – it is not so much the strength of our faith, but the power of the blood our faith looks to that matters
5. The blood was to be applied to the sides and top of the doorway, but never to the floor (Hebrews 10:29)
6. The children of Israel needed not fear evil from beneath, but judgment from above

CONCLUSION

1. As the Egyptians viewed every shepherd as an abomination (Genesis 46:34), so the world views with contempt the blood atonement of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18)
2. There is something about that blood that is offensive to the world, but is precious to the believer
3. To some Christ is “a lamb” (Exodus 12:3)

4. To others Christ is “the lamb” (Exodus 20:4)
5. But until he becomes “your lamb” (Exodus 20:5) you are not covered by his blood, and are not safe from the destroyer
6. The moment you receive Christ as your Lord and Saviour, it becomes “the beginning of months”, the beginning of a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21)
7. Those who would find refuge under the blood of Christ have their loins girded, shoes on, and staff in hand (Exodus 12:11), prepared to leave this world and its lusts behind, to live a pilgrim life journeying to the heavenly Zion, and with feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace