

The Passover: God's Ultimate Display of Love and Salvation

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[0:00] Exodus 12. Talking on the theme of the Passover.!

Because the world makes much of Easter eggs and hot crust buns and Easter bunnies,! but I like to make much about the Passover, the Passover. What it means, what does the Bible say? It talks about the Passover.

It's a scriptural thing to talk about at this time. And of course it's something that's thousands of years old. What is the Passover and what does it say to us today? That's what we're talking about.

And Exodus 12 verse 3 is where we're going to kick things off there. Exodus 12 verse 3. It reads on verse 12.

Then the next verse, verse 13.

[1:12] What is the Passover and what does it mean for us today?

It's in the New Testament as well. As we read 1 Corinthians 5 verse 7 through 8. Paul writes, Passover has been celebrated for thousands of years.

And Paul says to us, keep the feast. Let us keep the feast. So there's an appropriate sense of what is the sense of the Passover?

How can we keep it as it were? Before the Passover, God calls for a searching and a casting out of leaven from the home. So leaven is a symbol of sin.

The Bible talks about leaven as being a symbol of sin or false teaching. And so in preparation for this feast of the Passover, which was a special commemoration as I'll unpack as well to you.

[2:55] They had to prepare. They had to get rid of the leaven. And so the Jews of today relive this cleansing ritual and they go through a traditional process, whether that's based on Scripture or understanding or just whether it came through tradition.

And nevertheless, they have this cleansing process that they do, which is, of course, with the Scripture to remove the leaven from the home. And what happens is they celebrate it family by family.

The wife thoroughly cleans the house to get rid of all the leaven. But she deliberately leaves ten small pieces in the house. And then the father and the children go through the house and they take a candle and they search through the house in every little nook and cranny to see if they can find those ten pieces of leaven.

They're careful to get rid of even the smallest breadcrumbs and all the specks of dirt from their homes. The night before Passover, they go through their home seeking out any bits of leftover leaven and the next morning they burn them.

Now, of course, spiritually speaking, we could think, well, God wants us to clean up our act to get rid of any leaven. God's church is called a spiritual house. We're like a spiritual family, a spiritual household, the household of God.

[4:13] 1 Peter 2 verse 5. So there's a sense we're family tonight. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. We're all brethren. And individually too, every believer is like a temple.

The Bible calls our body as a temple, a temple of God. And so in the Bible, leaven is symbolic of sin. And as Christians too, we want to address sin to God helping us to deal with it in our life.

That might be our heart of pride or vanity. It could be all kinds of sin. We think of yeast, that leaven, the yeast, it makes the bread puff up.

And rise up, doesn't it? Same can be with ourselves. We can get puffed up. We can get puffed up, prideful, vain and fleshly and filled with vanity.

And we need to cleanse our mind, our hearts. Where there's such an attitude that it's wrong, wrongful things of sin. And as they did clean it from their house, we should clean it from this house, our body, as it were.

[5:15] We can take the candle, as it were, which represents the word of God. As the Bible tells us in Psalm 119, verse 105, it tells us, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

And so the word of God is pictured as a light there in Psalm 119, verse 105. So as we trust Christ and obey the scriptures, God deals with the sin in our lives.

And that's a needful thing as we know, of course, when we're saved, God takes away all our sin and he pays for it all entirely. Yet there is that daily walk aspect where we ought to be examining ourselves and keeping that closer walk with him, asking him to daily help us with our daily cleansing and living.

And so we see what happened at the time of the Passover. Of course, it was a time where the children of Israel were in the bondage of Egypt.

They were enslaved in this captivity of Egypt. And at the Passover is when God's judgment came, but they were sheltered by the blood, safety of the blood.

[6:27] And then the judgment fell on the firstborn of Egypt. And there was great judgment. And then, of course, what happened next was God's people were then separated as they left Egypt and were parted from Egypt.

So in the Bible, another kind of symbol picture here is that Egypt represents the world. So it's a sense where we leave Egypt and we go into that heavenly direction, as it were.

We leave the world and the things of the world. We don't have the love of that anymore. But we leave Egypt, spiritually speaking, symbolically speaking, and we enter the promised land.

We walk after God and His will and we're saved and we have heaven as our home, our new direction for life. So there's a separation there. So at this time of year, it is the Passover time.

And at Passover, we remember God's deliverance of His people from that slavery of Egypt. Now, sometimes we don't really contemplate there was actually two million people.

[7:38] It's a colossal figure, isn't it? To think this was a huge, a huge in number, two million people. And we read how in the scriptures it tells us how God sent Moses to Pharaoh, demanding the release of the Israelites, but Pharaoh refused.

He was godless, stubbornly refused to let God's people go. And he held them there in Egypt as slaves. And then we see in the record of Exodus, it tells us about these ten plagues.

He turned the Nile into blood. The land was filled with frogs, gnats, flies, hail, locusts, and darkness. Then the ultimate plague was the judgment that brought the final devastation upon Egypt.

Every firstborn of every household would be destroyed. But God instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. And then the angel of death would then pass over. That's why it's called Passover, that the angel would pass over them and not give judgment to that household. The angel of death would pass over, sparing their firstborn sons.

[8:45] So the Passover feast is a memorial of all of that. So that's why it's a good time to reflect on God's deliverance power. But of course, as New Testament believers, there's a bigger picture for us, which we'll unpack too.

So for the Passover season, the Israelites would sacrifice a lamb. And then they would consume unleavened bread and they would drink of the fruit of the vine.

And the Passover was a reminder of God's power to deliver his people from bondage and of his faithfulness to his promises. So at the core of the Passover is the lamb. So the lamb is a sacrifice for sin.

It speaks to us, of course, now as the symbol of Christ, the lamb of God. And so, for example, as we know, when John the Baptist laid eyes on the Lord in John 1.29, it says the next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold, the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John the Baptist recognized Jesus was the lamb of God, that ultimate lamb. And just as the Israelites were saved from death by the blood of the lamb, so we can be saved by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ from eternal death.

[10:04] And note this, that it wasn't their righteousness that saved them. I just happened across this verse when I was doing some Bible devotions, and it tells us here, Deuteronomy 9 verse 6, really stood out to me.

It says, Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people. The people of God, they weren't blessed with the promised land because of their righteousness.

It wasn't that. It was because of the blood of the lamb. And it's the same for us. You know, there's some, I'm in correspondence with various people, and some of them seem to think that their righteousness is somehow keeping them saved, and that if they were to sin, that they would lose their salvation.

Because that's not true. It's not our righteousness that saves us in the first place, or through the course of our Christian walk. Of course, God helping us, we want to live righteous and do the righteous things, but the Lord is our righteousness.

It says, The Lord is the Lord our righteousness. In Jeremiah, it talks about the Lord our righteousness. And so, it's the Lord who is our righteousness. And so, it's interesting. We can't even claim any credit for our righteousness.

[11:20] It's actually not my righteousness. It's his righteousness that I need. And that's by virtue of the lamb. And so, And it's the same for you and me. We can't claim, It's my righteousness that gets me to heaven.

No, it's not. If it was my righteousness, it would fall short. It would fall short. So, those who believed were saved. They were saved by God. And they were saved by God. Those who trusted in the blood of the lamb.

And so, we see, as again, we talked about Egypt, that picture of the world system. The ruler of Egypt, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, it's kind of like a type of Satan. And sin is likened to slavery and bondage.

And the believers are the house of God. We think of the doorpost and the lintel. So, the doorpost and the lintel. You could consider the doorpost represents your heart.

And when you receive Christ into your heart by faith, you spiritually apply the blood to your doorpost, which is your heart. Because it's that sense of our trust is in the blood to save us.

[12:21] As it was for them physically, that they had to have the blood over the doorpost of their home. Our safety, our salvation, is in knowing that shed blood of Christ over our life, isn't it?

And the blood of Jesus redeems us. As it says in Leviticus 17, 11, talks about the blood of its saving power. And then when the Israelites commemorate, they have the lamb, they have the fruit of the vine, they have the unleavened bread.

And also they have bitter herbs. Bitter herbs. So, a sense of the bitterness, of the bondage that they had. The bitter herbs. Of, as it were, a picture of their sin, of that repentance, of that regret, and that distaste of sin, of the taste of sin.

It's a bitter thing, isn't it? To be reminded of our sin. And so we think of all those things. And, of course, the whole picture is God's faithfulness. That's his redemption power, isn't it? So this awful plague came.

The angel of death visited the land. This terrifying judgment fell. And God, in his grace, gave to Moses a way to everyone to be saved. If they would slaughter an unblemished one-year-old lamb, and God offered a shield to every household, the blood would protect, and the destruction would pass over.

[13:39] So the blood was a sign. And that blood-red mark signified that those within had availed themselves of the way that God had provided in order to escape his judgment.

They were safe if there was blood between them and the angel. It was the only way to be safe. And so souls in danger, if you've yet to trust Christ, I urge you to find that great safety that is in Christ, to find the safety under the shelter of his blood.

That lamb was killed between the evenings, it says in Exodus 12, verse 6. So this refers to the ninth hour of the day. So it happened at 3pm, which just happens to be exactly the moment that Christ died.

Interesting, isn't it? It was a perfect analogy that he fulfilled in the very timing of it. 3pm at the ninth hour of the day is the technical term they used for that time slot.

And so to be safe, the believers had to smear the blood on the two doorposts and on the lintel, the top part, so that their house would be passed over. The Israelites did as instructed and were safe.

[14:51] It's the same for you and me today. If we do as God instructs us, we can be safe through the sacrifice of Christ. Because today, for us that are in the New Testament, Jesus is the Passover lamb.

He shed his blood for our sin. And Deuteronomy 12.23, it says the blood is the life. That's a direct quote. The blood is the life. Deuteronomy 12.23.

It's life in Christ, isn't it? Through his very blood. And sin, as I mentioned, represents slavery. We see that in Deuteronomy 16.12. Think of sin.

Where the people of Israel were, it was in this captivity. It was bondage. It was enslavement. And we're reminded here, in the Passover commemoration, thou shalt remember, thou shalt remember, that thou wast a bondman in Egypt.

Remember that you were a slave in Egypt. Remember that. And so, thou shalt observe and do these statutes. So again tonight, this is a reminder of Jesus, the perfect spotless lamb, his death and resurrection, his deliverance from the bondage of sin for we that trust him.

[16:07] And because of the blood, the Israelites were spared from death. So, Passover tells of freedom, of redemption, of salvation. It's a powerful symbol and it still is a powerful symbol for you and me today.

We're not meaning to Judeoize the church or anything like that, as some might mistakenly put maybe undue emphasis there. Yet, there is the truth that this is the Passover time.

And it is a fitting thing for us to remember the Passover. It is the fitting thing for us to understand the meaning of the Passover for us today. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

So, that's the sense, that's the fulfilment for you and me today. Not that we're commemorating it as in going back to some Judaizing, but that we remember the Passover.

Who is Christ? He is the Passover for us. Passover declares Israel's passage from bondage to freedom. And for you and me today, tonight, it's very fitting for us to remember the bondage of Egypt.

[17:09] We used to be a bondman, we used to be a slave to sin. Now God has set us free. We're no longer slaves to sin. We're no longer a bondman in Egypt. We're a son, a child of God.

We're God's people, aren't we, tonight? And so that's the meaning today. So Passover celebrates your freedom. You've been set free. There's a wonderful truth where we can think, once I was a captive, once I was captivated, once I was enslaved, once I was in that domain of bondage under the servitude to Satan and sin, but now I've been set free.

I've been liberated. I've been redeemed. And even more so, we're not only redeemed, but we've become God's children. It talks about how we can become priests and kings before God.

There's a sense where we've been totally set free, that we've been invited into God's family, and we've become heirs of his promises. We've become the very children of God. It tells us in Galatians 5 verse 1, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. So there's a contrast there, liberty, bondage again. We've been set free, not yoked to where we were before.

[18:25] And another scripture talks about the bondage of corruption as again, that picture of slavery, of sin, of servitude, the slave master of sin, the devil himself, that horrible taskmaster, now we've brought into the glorious liberty.

There's a glorious liberty as children of God. It's interesting, at Passover, when the people of Israel commemorate it, they recline while eating.

So we're not going to do that tonight. We could all recline on the floor, so you wouldn't be sitting on chairs, but you'd kind of be lying on your side on some kind of cushions, and you'd be kind of having some central table where you'd kind of eat lying down on your side.

That was how they would recline. I suppose some customs and cultures still have such a thing where they don't sit while they're eating. And so, again, it's another picture here that what that indicated was a person of freedom, that we're no longer the slaves.

We're actually reclining. We're resting. There's a picture of royalty there. And so it's almost like we're rehearsing being a king. We're part of God's royal family, after all.

[19:34] As God's people, think of it, he's the king of kings, the lord of lords, and you're his children. You that trust him, you're part of God's royal family, so that's something really special.

Interesting to think of it, to contemplate this truth, there had to be a death in every home. A death in every home in Egypt that night. Either a dead lamb or a dead son.

It's quite a contrast, isn't it? Quite a graphic thought, really, isn't it? Because we all deserve destruction, darkness, and death. But God has provided for us himself a lamb, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So in every life there has to be a death too, either of the lamb or at the last of the individual, eternal death. If we don't know Christ, that lamb of God, then the judgment of death is upon us, the wages of sin, we must pay.

And that is a very serious thought, isn't it? A very solemn thought. But thank God, God promises and extends to us that offer of great deliverance and victory. So in closing, do you know that tonight?

[20:44] It's the big question, isn't it? Have you got that testimony that, yeah, once I was there, once I was in Egypt, under that bondage, that under, as a bondman, as a slave, as a servant of sin, under that taskmaster, the devil, but now he set me free through the virtue of his blood that I've taken shelter in, now I'm set free by the virtue of his saving grace and love.

And the shed blood was the passport to that eternal domain of being God's children. So it's likewise for us tonight.

We can think of God's great deliverance and victory power that we can each know. And like I touched on this morning in passing, one old-time preacher put it, they couldn't just paint anything on those doorposts.

You know, they didn't paint some gold paint or they didn't paint anything of their own liking. It had to be the blood that they painted. And we can't take shelter in anything other than the blood of Jesus. And no other religion can offer that salvation. There's no other way that you can be saved. There's no other salvation other than by the blood of Jesus. And so, if you've got some religious persuasion where you're thinking that you're going to make your own way, it's not going to cut it.

[22:04] It's got to be the blood of Jesus. It's got to be, yes, Jesus' blood was shed for me. Of course, today, the day of his resurrection, we think not only did he die on the cross, he freely shed his blood, he willingly went to the cross, and he deliberately went to the cross, intentionally went to the cross for you and me.

Not only that, but we know as he was buried and three days later he rose again from the dead. And the Bible talks about that being the gospel, that as it was written, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and then as it is written, according to the scriptures, he rose again from the dead. And there's many witnesses of that. Of course, today we know he's the living saviour for those that know him tonight. So, let's pray. Lord, we thank you that we can take the shelter under your blood. We know that there is that virtue of your blood that we need. It's not any working of our own, it's not any manufactured righteousness, it's not any painting of whatever we want to paint on the doorpost, as it were, but it has to be the blood.

And Lord, we pray that each one might know that assurance that comes to know that, yes, I do trust you, Lord Jesus, that you did die on the cross for my sin and I receive that great transaction that you've taken my debt, my penalty, you've paid in full by the virtue of your death, you've paid the wages of my sin in dying on the cross for my part and as my substitute in my place, bearing in your own body on the tree my very sin that it was nailed there and paid for there.

[23:41] Lord, we pray each one might have that heart's trust tonight or yet find it as they might seek counsel and ask someone to help guide them through to put that trust in you, Lord, that we can know that for time and for eternity.

We're saved, saved today and forever. Once we're saved, Lord, there's that assurance and comfort that comes from knowing that our guilt has been paid, our sin has been paid for. Lord, we thank you for every soul here gathered and those that might be joining from afar that we might have that trust tonight. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.