

Celebrating God

(Exodus: Lessons about Worship from the O.T. Passover)



"12 On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the Lord! 13 But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:12-13 NLT

Exodus 12 introduces us to the Jewish holiday called "Passover." It was the beginning of the Jewish religious calendar and a celebration of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery. Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, explains: "Passover marked a new beginning for the Jews and bound them together as a nation.... The Jewish nation in the Old Testament had two calendars, a civil calendar that began in our September – October, and the religious calendar that began in our March – April.... Passover marked the beginning of the religious year...." (*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, p.163).

Central Lesson

The key to worship is to REMEMBER and CELEBRATE God's goodness, grace, and gift of salvation.

Lessons about Worship from the O.T. Passover

1. Passover is a **CELEBRATION** of God's goodness, grace, and gift of salvation (12:14, 17).

*"14 ...Each year, from generation to generation, you must **celebrate** it as a special **festival** to the Lord. This is a law for all time."*

*"17 **Celebrate** this **Festival** of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This **festival** will be a permanent law for you; **celebrate** this day from generation to generation."*

Also Exodus 12:24-27.

2. Passover is **SYMBOLIC** - it pictures God's salvation of Israel from slavery.

Warren Wiersbe, writes: "The meal consisted of the roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, each of which symbolized an important spiritual truth...." (p.163).

- **The Roasted Lamb** - The Life Application Study Bible adds:

"For the Israelites to be spared from the plague of death, a lamb with no defects had to be killed and its blood placed on the doorframes of each home.... 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." (Exodus 12:3ff).

- **Unleavened Bread** - Warren Wiersbe, adds:

"Their bread was unleavened (without yeast) for two reasons: there wasn't time the bread to rise (Ex. 12:39), and leaven was a symbol of impurity to the Jews.

For a week after Passover, they were required to eat unleavened bread and to remove every trace of leaven from their dwellings. Yeast is an image of sin: it's hidden; it works silently and secretly; it spreads...; and it causes dough to rise ("puffed up" - 1 Cor. 4:18-5:2). Both Jesus and Paul compared false teaching to yeast (Matt. 16:6-12; Mark 8:15; Gal. 5:1-9), but it's also compared to hypocrisy (Luke 12:1) and sinful living (1 Cor. 5:6-8)." (p.163)

- **Bitter Herbs** - Wiersbe, writes:

"Tasting the bitter herbs would remind the Jews of their years of bitter bondage in the land of Egypt." (p.163).

3. Passover has a double symbolism - it also pictures **CHRIST'S** salvation of people from sin.

Jesus pointed out this symbolism at what we call the "last supper." Jesus and his disciples were actually celebrating **Passover** and Jesus took them to a next level of symbolism picturing his substitutionary atoning death. (see **Luke 22:14-20**).

4. Passover and the Lord's supper are **RESTRICTED** for only God's redeemed people (12:43-45, 48).

*"43 Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'These are the instructions for the festival of Passover. **No outsiders are allowed to eat the Passover meal...***

*45 Temporary residents and hired servants **may not eat it.**"*

*"48 If there are foreigners living among you who **want to celebrate the Lord's Passover, let all their males be circumcised. Only then may they celebrate the Passover with you like any native-born Israelite. But no uncircumcised male may ever eat the Passover meal.**"*

Passover was permitted for only those who were under the covenant between God and Israel. In a similar way, in the New Testament, the Lord's Supper was only for believers - those who are under "the new covenant" through faith in Christ (see 1 Corinthians 11:25-32).

5. Passover and the Lord's supper are to help God's people **"REMEMBER"** His favor and the good things He has done (12:14).

*"14 This is a day to **remember**. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord. This is a law for all time."*

1 Corinthians 11:24-25 NLT *"24 ... Then he broke it in pieces and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in **remembrance** of me.' 25 In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, 'This cup is **the new covenant** between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in **remembrance** of me as often as you drink it."*

The Life Application Study Bible explains: "Passover became an annual remembrance of how God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt. Each year the people would pause to remember the day when the destroyer (God's angel of death) passed over their homes. They gave thanks to God for saving them from death and bringing them out of the land of slavery and sin. Believers today have experienced a day of deliverance as well – the day we were delivered from spiritual death and slavery to sin. The Lord's Supper is our Passover remembrance of our new life and freedom from sin." (Exodus 12:17, 23).

Central Lesson: The key to worship is to REMEMBER and CELEBRATE God's goodness, grace, and gift of salvation.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.