



The Passover Experience

Rabbi Eckstein's Biblical Teachings on the Jewish Roots of Christianity



Something to Think About

Freedom is a key underlying theme in the Passover celebration. In *Ask the Rabbi*, Rabbi Eckstein says "Passover reminds us that true freedom involves an inner, spiritual realm, as well as physical liberty." In what ways did the Israelites find this inner freedom through the events of Passover? In what ways has God provided true freedom for you?

Remember This Day!

Lesson Three

Lesson Objectives

Through these lessons, students of the Bible will understand the underlying principles of the Jewish celebration of Passover which are:

- That God hears the cries of His people;
- That God is present in human life; and
- That God intervenes in history to deliver man from affliction and to redeem him from oppression.

Key Bible Verses

"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:14)

"Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" (Exodus 12:24–27)

Scripture to Read: Exodus 11:1–10; 12:1–30; 13:1–16

Before You Begin

In the past two studies, we have reviewed how God responded to the cries of His people by sending deliverers, Moses and his brother Aaron, and how God intervened in human history to deliver his people from affliction and oppression by sending a series of plagues on Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. This study concludes with the tenth and final plague and the institution of the Passover.

The last plague, in which the firstborn males of every family in Egypt would die, and which would finally compel Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt, is announced in two phases. The first announcement is to Pharaoh from Moses, who warns Pharaoh of the plague that was about to come on all Egypt (Exodus 11:4–10). The second is for the Israelites, and includes God's instructions for them regarding the Passover, which outlines the means through which God will protect them from the devastation of this plague (Exodus 12:1–30).

These instructions—sacrificing a young lamb without blemish, smearing its blood on the lintels and doorposts of each Israelite household, baking bread without yeast so as to leave quickly, and eating this final meal while wearing traveling clothes—are the basis for the Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When the final plague struck, and the "angel of death" came upon Egypt, it would see the blood on the door frames and "pass over" those

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Remember This Day!—Continued

Lesson Three

homes. As God promised the people of Israel, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you. The plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt*” (Exodus 12:13).

In the Jewish tradition, Passover is the first of the Pilgrim holidays, known as *Pesach* in Hebrew. It commemorates the seminal event in Jewish history—the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It was at this juncture that the national identity of the Jewish people was born.

Today, Jews recall the Exodus daily in their morning and evening prayers and in the grace after meals, thereby fulfilling the biblical command to “*remember the day you went out of Egypt all the days of your life*” (Deuteronomy 16:3).

As you begin this session, watch Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein’s message on the Passover and its significance for the Jewish people, found at ifcj.org/pastors-passover

Pharaoh Is Warned (Exodus 11:1–10)

1. What was the tenth plague God said He would bring against Egypt? (11:5)
2. What was Pharaoh’s reaction to the announcement of the last and final plague? What was Moses’ reaction? (11:4–10)
3. Why do you think Pharaoh still refused to listen to Moses and Aaron even after all that his country had suffered through?
4. Why do you think God hardened Pharaoh’s heart? (5:2; 7:3–5; 11:9)
5. What was the lesson that the Egyptians were to learn from this final plague? (11:7)

The Passover (Exodus 12:1–30)

6. When does God say the New Year begins? (12:2)
7. Why do you think each family had to follow the instructions to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on their doorposts? What does this tell you about God and our relationship with Him?
8. What did the blood of the lamb represent? (Leviticus 17:11)
9. What do you think was the significance of the Israelites eating their meal with their traveling clothes on? What did this show about the people’s faith in God? (12:11)

A Day to Remember (Exodus 13:11–16)

10. Why did God tell the Israelites to dedicate their firstborn sons and every firstborn animal to Him? (13:1; 14–15)
11. Why did God say to keep the Passover as a memorial? What were the people supposed to remember? (12:26–27; 13:3, 8–9)
12. What impact do you think looking back and reliving these events each year through the Passover celebration has had on the Jewish people’s faith?
13. What do you need to remember about God through the events of Passover and the Exodus?

Sources

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The Israelites applied the blood of the lamb to their doorposts and frames.

Extra Credit

Psalms of praise are traditionally read during the Passover meal and throughout the celebration. Read Psalms 105, 135, and 136; each recounts God’s many acts of compassion, deliverance, and protection for the people of Israel. Take time this week to create your own psalm of thanksgiving for how God has protected and delivered you throughout this week, this month, and this year.



Unleavened bread, or *matzah*, is an essential element of the *Seder* meal.