

Christ Our Passover Lamb (Exodus 11-13)



Jewish families celebrated the Passover for 3,000 years. This year 2020 is most unusual in that all Jews in Israel are observing the Passover, housebound under lockdown. This was true of the first Passover that took place in the ancient Egypt. They could not go outside their house that night. (C.f. Ex 12:22) It so happened that 'super blood moon' appeared on the first Passover night, Wed 8 April.

The mainstream media is asking, "*Are we living in the Last Days?*"

The Passover event was a double-edged sword of God's Judgement and His Redemption. Exodus 11-12 begins with Pharaoh's rejection of God's final warning. God spoke to Pharaoh through Moses time and time again. Now God's tenth and final warning to Pharaoh would unleash the final plague on Egypt and deliver Israel out of slavery.

A. Judgement

Why did Pharaoh reject God's warning *for the tenth time* after seeing nine plagues devastate Egypt?

1. Pharaoh had no faith in God's word, and no fear of God's works.

Even though he saw the demonstration of God's power again and again, he assumed it would not touch him personally or his own family. His highly privileged position accompanied comfort and safety. Egypt was getting devastated, but largely it did not touch Pharaoh's household, and his heart was getting harder.

This is the condition of human heart today. Many today have forgotten God's word in ease and comfort, and do not take His word seriously. God's word says every sin will ultimately be judged. Who believes this today? God's word says that the soul that sins will die (Ezek 18:20). Who believes that unrepented sins will send a sinner to hell? Our society no longer believes that breaking God's law will result in God's judgment.

But where are Sodom and Gomorrah today? There is no trace of them except the graveyard under the salt pit. Where is Babylon now? It was the peak of ancient civilisation, but today it is just a heap of ruin. We live in euphoria, thinking it will never happen to me. Our hearts are getting hardened.

2. God is long suffering, but when men persist in rejecting God's warning, judgment always follows.

Hardening of Pharaoh's heart First six times Pharaoh hardened his heart when God's warning came to him through Moses. The last four times God hardened Pharaoh's heart. What is the worst judgement? 'He granted their request and sent leanness into their soul.' (Ps 106:15) God let Israel have what they wanted, and it withered their soul. This is God's judgement upon men who persist in hardening their heart and resist His voice. He lets them have their way. '...because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie...' (2 Thess 2:11) Therefore we are warned, 'today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' (Heb 3:15)

Destruction of Egypt's First born Can you imagine what it was like when God's final judgment came upon Egypt with the tenth plague? There is deep grief over just one death. That night every household in Egypt was wailing. Pharaoh killed Jewish baby boys for many years by throwing them into River Nile that was infested with crocodiles. Pharaoh would now have to taste his own medicine.

If we don't cooperate with God voluntarily, we do not hinder God - we only hurt ourselves.

B. Redemption

Judgment on Egypt led to redemption for Israel. It is recorded simply, 'that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' (11:7) Israel wasn't saved because they were better than the Egyptians. Israel wasn't delivered because they were more deserving. God saved Israel because He loved them and provided a way out for them. By faith and obedience Israel acted upon God's word and escaped His judgment.

At the Passover every household of Israel had to take a male lamb that was a year old. They were to bring the lamb into their house and live with that lamb for three days. So the lamb became part of the family, playing with the children etc. Then on the fourth day, each family had to kill the lamb, take its blood and sprinkle it on the door post; then they had to eat its flesh roasted over fire.

1. The BLOOD was a SIGN to God. Dark red colour of blood is hardest to see in the dark, but God can see it. What did the sign mean? That death has already taken place in that household, so the angel of death could pass over that house and move on. The blood on the door posts signified that life has already been taken and blood has been shed. The Passover lamb was the 'substitute' for the firstborn son in that household. It meant God's judgment has already been exercised in that household, so He could simply pass over the house while in the Egyptian houses there was wailing throughout the night.

What stood between life and death? It was the blood on the door post. Someone has already taken God's judgement in our place. There is nothing else we can plead before God's judgment on sin, except that Jesus died in my place and His blood covers my sin.

2. They had to apply the BLOOD, each to their own house. If they neglected to do this, the angel of death would not pass over but enter the house. How do we apply the blood of Jesus? By 'confession of faith.' *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made until salvation."* (Rom 10:9-10)
3. They had to EAT the LAMB and nourish themselves for the journey ahead. After we apply the blood of Jesus on our hearts, we need to feed on Jesus for the journey ahead of us. Israel had to eat the whole lamb and nothing was to remain until morning. We too must feed on every part of God's word. We cannot just eat just the sweet bits and leave the rest. We need to feed on the whole counsel of God, all sixty-six books, every chapter, every verse. Chew on them and meditate on them continually.
4. They had to eat UNLEAVENED BREAD along with the lamb for seven days with bitter herbs.

Beginning from that day for seven days, Israel had to remove all leaven, i.e. yeast, from their household and eat 'unleavened bread' made without yeast. *How does the yeast work in the bread?* Dough was allowed to rot, i.e. ferment, then it was mixed in the new dough to inflate the bread in the baking process. God was instructing Israel to make an absolutely clean break from the past life of slavery under Egypt. We too must make a clean break from the old life of sin, and cut out the leaven of 'hypocrisy', 'malice', and 'wickedness', and eat the unleavened bread of 'sincerity' and 'truth'.

They also had to eat bitter herbs with the unleavened bread. Bitter herbs represented: (a) the bitterness of their life of slavery while they lived in Egypt. We are never to forget the bitter old life of sin; (b) the arduous journey ahead of them to the promise land. It wasn't going to be a stroll in a garden, but a journey of faith. Christian life is an onward and upward journey. We never stand still. We are pilgrims on this earth.

5. They had to eat in HASTE with belt on their waist, sandals on their feet and staff in their hand (12:11) because on that very night they were going leave Egypt. There was urgency to begin the journey of faith immediately. Watch out for procrastination. It is easy to think there is a plenty of time. The Passover lamb was killed at 3pm. They had to put the blood on their door posts by midnight. They had nine hours to get all of this done. Jesus died on the cross at 3pm, and we are drawing closer and closer to the midnight hour. There is no time to drift through life. Midnight hour will surely come when there is no more chance to repent and to turn to the Lord.
6. The Passover night marked the NEW BEGINNING in Israel's journey with God. The seventh month of the Passover now became the first month in the civil and religious calendar. Israel was to celebrate the Passover Feast every year from then on, and remember and relive the Exodus - God's mighty act of redemption of Israel through the blood of the Passover Lamb. At the communion table, we are remembering Christ our Passover Lamb, and we do this regularly and repeatedly until He returns.
7. The wealth of Egyptian was transferred to Israel as they left Egypt. God was giving Israel their just wage for the 430 years of free slave labour. Israel collected their full wage with interest that night, 'thus they plundered Egyptians.' (12:36) Riches of the wicked are laid up for the righteous. Egypt had accumulated their wealth through the unjust slave-driven economy. At the Passover, it was redistributed to the Jews in the form of articles of gold and silver. What was the purpose of these riches? To build the Tabernacle of the Lord, the centre of Israel's worship the wilderness. One day God will take all the real estate of the earth from the greed-driven people and give it to the meek of the earth.