

Adult Bible Class Easter Sunday Lesson

The first Passover took place while the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. They were in bondage under Pharaoh, and they cried out to the Lord to deliver them. The Lord heard their cry and sent Moses to them to bring them out of Egypt.

Exodus 3:7 (NLT) Then the Lord told him [Moses], "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. **8** So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey... **9** Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. **10** Now go, for I am sending you [Moses] to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt."

Moses confronted Pharaoh and God sent nine plagues, one at a time, to get the attention of Pharaoh and to show His mighty power in all of Egypt. After each plague, Pharaoh was stubborn and would not let God's people leave Egypt. Now God was ready to send the tenth plague.

Exodus 11:1 (NLT) Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will strike Pharaoh and the land of Egypt with one more blow. After that, Pharaoh will let you leave this country... **4** Moses had announced to Pharaoh, "This is what the Lord says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. **5** All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die... **7** But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Finally, after the tenth plague, Pharaoh let the children of Israel go. This tenth plague was the death of the firstborn of people and animals. On the night of this tenth plague, God made a way for the children of Israel to escape the death of the firstborn. This night was called "the Passover."

Exodus 12:1 (NKJV) Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** "This month *shall be*...the first month of the year to you. **3** ...'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb,...a lamb for a household... **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year... **6** Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. **7** And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. **8** Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it... **12** 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord. **13** Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you... **14** So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations... **15** Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread... **17** So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. **18** In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening..."

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and *kill the Passover lamb*. **22** And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood...and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood... And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. **23** For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. **24** And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. **25** It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. **26** And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' **27** that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " ...

It happened exactly as God said - those who obeyed and put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of their homes were spared - the death angel passed over their houses.

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

29 And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. **30** So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

Finally, Pharaoh was convinced to let the children of Israel go. The Israelites were in such a hurry to leave Egypt that they took unleavened bread with them (they didn't have time to allow the bread to rise). They left Egypt the morning after the Passover.

The Exodus

31 Then he [Pharaoh] called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said...

34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders...

50 Thus all the children of Israel did; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. **51** And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri	Sat	Sun
Nisan	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	<i>(lamb inspected for four days)</i>				death	burial	resurrection
					<i>Passover -</i>	<i>Feast of</i>	<i>Feast of</i>
					<i>firstborn saved</i>	<i>Unleavened</i>	<i>First Fruits</i>
					<i>from death</i>	<i>Bread</i>	

The Passover Story Is A Picture of New Testament Salvation

The stories of the Old Testament show us the tender concern of God for His people as well as the power of His might to save and deliver. In addition, many of the Old Testament stories are a picture of Jesus Christ and New Testament salvation. The story of the Passover and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt is just such a story.

Egypt figures prominently in the Bible. It is first mentioned in Genesis 12 when Abraham went to Egypt during a time of famine. In Genesis chapters 45 through 47 we read that Jacob and his extended family moved to Egypt at the invitation of Joseph during a time of worldwide famine. While at first seen as a place of refuge during famine, Egypt becomes a place of oppression and slavery (after Joseph died, a new Pharaoh who didn't know Joseph made slaves of the Israelites). This is a picture of the world of sin - welcoming at first, but eventually oppressive and even deadly. Finally, the judgment of God came upon the people in Egypt. But God made a way of escape - the Passover lamb. The blood of the lamb, when applied to the door frame of the house, would save the firstborn from the judgment of death.

Likewise, Jesus is our Passover Lamb.

1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV) ...For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Jesus - Our Sacrifice

There were many different types of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, and they all pointed to the future to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Really, the entire Old Testament points toward the great sacrifice that would come - that of Jesus Christ giving his blood and his life for every person. In Old Testament times, God told His people:

Leviticus 17:11 (NLT) for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the Lord. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.

When we think of the word *sacrifice*, we think of something given up that is precious or valuable. Jesus Christ - God in human flesh - was the most valuable sacrifice ever given. Jesus gave His life and His blood as an atonement for sin. An *atonement* is the appeasing of or satisfying someone for offenses that were committed. Jesus is both the sacrifice and the God who was appeased or satisfied.

The people of the Old Testament did not know all the details about Jesus Christ and His future death on the cross, but they did know that God would someday send a Savior - a Messiah - who would deliver them. Every sacrifice that was laid on the altar in Old Testament times foreshadowed Jesus Christ at Calvary.

The New Testament book of Hebrews shows us how the Old Testament Tabernacle with its sacrifices and sprinkling of blood points us to Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:11 (NLT) So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. **12** With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

13 Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. **14** Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. **15** That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the

eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

16 Now when someone leaves a will, it is necessary to prove that the person who made it is dead.

17 The will goes into effect only after the person's death. While the person who made it is still alive, the will cannot be put into effect.

18 That is why even the first covenant was put into effect with the blood of an animal. **19** For after Moses had read each of God's commandments to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's law and all the people, using hyssop branches and scarlet wool. **20** Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." **21** And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. **22** In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

23 That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf. **25** And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. **26** If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

27 And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, **28** so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

In the Old Testament, sacrifices had to be made over and over - they were only temporary and pushed the sins of the people ahead for a limited time period. But when Jesus gave His perfect life as a sacrifice, his one sacrifice was enough for everyone who had ever lived or who would ever live in the future. The last words of Jesus on the cross were, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30).

Resurrection Power

Jesus died on the cross for you and me - but that's not where the story ends. In three days, Jesus rose from the grave, triumphing over sin, death, hell, and the grave. The story of the cross is powerful because of the resurrection that followed.

Jesus rose from the dead *with a glorified body*, never to die again. Though there were others in both the Old and New Testament who were raised from the dead (Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, Tabitha, the Shunammite woman's son, etc.) they were all raised in their mortal bodies and each one of them died again, and their bodies lay in the grave, waiting for the trumpet to sound at the rapture. Jesus, however, was the only one to have truly conquered death *permanently*. Jesus never died again, and His resurrected body was immortal.

Romans 6:9 . . . Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. **10** When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God.

Revelation 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. **18** I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

Paul speaks of the gospel and the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1 Corinthians 15:1 (NKJV) Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, **5 (NLT)** He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. **6** After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. **7** Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. **9** For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church...

The Resurrection of the Dead

12 But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead?

In Jesus' day, there were several groups of people that challenged and even opposed Him. These groups are mentioned in the four gospels and we read about them especially during the four days before Jesus died on the cross - those days when Jesus taught the people in Jerusalem after His triumphal entry into the city.

The Sadducees and the Pharisees together were the ruling classes in Judea during the time of Jesus Christ (remember - Rome controlled Judea during this time, so their power was limited by Rome). They were both religious and political groups, but there were some important differences between them. Both groups honored the Law of Moses. Both groups were members of the Sanhedrin (the court of ancient Israel), but the Sadducees were the dominant members of that court.

The Sadducees did not believe in a bodily resurrection (this is the teaching that Paul is referring to in the passage above). The teaching of the Sadducees that there is no resurrection must have been present in the church, and Paul was addressing this. Although they were powerful, wealthy, and held powerful positions in Judea including that of high priest, the Sadducees did not relate well to the common people (like the Pharisees did). They were to be commended in that they upheld the authority of the written Word of God and did not approve of the Pharisees who gave equal authority to Jewish oral tradition (which Jesus condemned). However, they had some beliefs which are not scriptural including denying God's involvement in everyday life, denying any resurrection of the dead, denying any afterlife (they held that the soul perished at death), and denying the existence of angels and demons.

The Pharisees did believe in a bodily resurrection of the dead. On one occasion, the apostle Paul used the differences between the Sadducees and the Pharisees to help his own cause (when he was arrested in Jerusalem and testified before the council):

Acts 23:6 (NLT) Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!"

7 This divided the council—the Pharisees against the Sadducees— **8** for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, but the Pharisees believe in all of these. **9** So there was a great uproar. Some of the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees jumped up and began to argue forcefully. "We see nothing wrong with him," they shouted. "Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to

him." **10** As the conflict grew more violent, the commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress.

11 That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, "Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well."

In the above passage, we see the differences between the Sadducees and the Pharisees - especially that the Pharisees believed in both the resurrection from the dead and in angels and spirits. Paul used this to get their attention off of himself and to argue with one another - how ingenious of Paul!

The Sadducees were more elite and aristocratic than the Pharisees - more wealthy, and they held powerful positions like that of chief priest or high priest. They held most of the power in the temple in Jerusalem. The Pharisees had the respect of the common working man, and they controlled the synagogues. The Sadducees were friendly with Rome, trying to keep peace - and the Pharisees resented the changes that Rome tried to bring to Judea.

Another group of people mentioned in the gospels are the scribes. Scribes in ancient Israel were learned men who studied the Law of Moses, copied it (made copies for use in the synagogues), and wrote commentaries on the Law. They might also be hired as lawyers when an interpretation of the law was needed. Scribes were often Pharisees, and they were associated together. When Jesus taught the people, His teaching was compared to the teaching of the scribes:

Mark 1:21 (NKJV) Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. **22** And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Matthew 5:20 For I [Jesus] say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus often had harsh words for the scribes and the Pharisees (because the Pharisees added to God's Law with their traditions - "*For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition,*" Mark 7:8). In Matthew 23, nearly the entire chapter is a denouncement of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus pronounced "woes" on them. Jesus told the people to respect the scribes and Pharisees because of their position, but "*don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach*" (Matthew 23:3, NLT). Jesus went on to call them "blind guides" and "hypocrites." He said that they were clean on the outside but filthy on the inside.

Though the Sadducees and the Pharisees (scribes) did not agree nor get along with each other most of the time, it is interesting to note that they did agree at one point:

Mark 15:53 (NKJV) And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes...

55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. **56** For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

Mark 15:1 (NKJV) Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate.

Let's continue in Corinthians:

The Resurrection of the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:12 But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? **13** For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. **15** And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. **16** And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. **18** In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! **19** And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. **20** But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

The KJV puts the above verse like this: *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”*

21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. **22** Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. **23** But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

Paul used the term “first fruits” which reminds us of the Old Testament command to bring the first sheaf of the harvest of barley or wheat to the tabernacle or temple and dedicate it to God.

Leviticus 23:9 (NKJV) And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **10** “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. **11** He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Just as the term “firstfruits” indicated that the first sheaf of the forthcoming grain harvest would be followed by the rest of the sheaves, Christ, the firstfruits raised from the dead, is the guarantee for all those who belong to Him that they also will share in His resurrection. And, just as the Old Testament Israelites gathered the rest of their harvest, God will gather the rest of His harvest at the final resurrection (at the rapture). Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that Christ's resurrection is a pledge and a promise of *our* resurrection - a full harvest guaranteed by God Himself.

Let's skip to verse 35:

The Resurrection Body

1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” **36** . . .When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first. **37** And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. **38** Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. . .

42 It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. **43** Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. **44** They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. . .

45 The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. **46** What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. **47** Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. **48** Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. **49** Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.

50 What I am saying. . . is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! **52** It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. **53** For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

"Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?"

56 For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. **57** But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 So. . . be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have confidence that death is not the end, but we will rise on that great resurrection day when the trumpet sounds. Because Jesus Christ died for us, we are changed and have new life in Him. We live for Jesus in this present world.

2 Corinthians 5:14 (NLT) ...Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. **15** He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.