

Ezra 6:19-22, "Passover-The Gospel"

1.20.21

I'm going to say something that you already know as a believer in Jesus Christ. He is everything! I can't say this enough. He is literally everything! Listen, to me... History is HIS STORY! Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Without Jesus there is nothing...because He is Creator God... He made you...He has a plan and purpose for your life... He came to this earth and died for you. You see...you and I have a sin debt that we couldn't pay and He paid it. He delivered you from the kingdom of darkness and an eternity in Hell...to the kingdom of light...and an eternity in heaven.

So, as we look to this OT book of Ezra, it's very easy to say, "How does this apply to me?" I'll tell you how...the OT points to Jesus and where we find ourselves tonight is at a feast called THE PASSOVER. Many of you (because it's a Wed. night, and the real Bible scholars are here), know about the Passover. As many of you know, Jesus changed the Passover to the Lord's Supper or what we call Communion and we're going to participate in that ordinance tonight.

We've been studying Ezra for several weeks now and we've seen how the people of God have returned from Exile to Jerusalem and have sought to rebuild the altar and the Temple and they have faced TREMENDOUS opposition! In fact, they've been up and down in their commitment like a yo-yo. They have been intimidated by their neighbors, (we'll call them the culture...the folks on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram) and they have been preoccupied with their own lives to the point that they have neglected the rebuilding of the Temple! But finally, it gets done and the Temple is rededicated and the people celebrated (we saw that last week).

So, now that this has been done, the next item of business is the Passover, which is like Christmas to the Jews...the biggest celebration of the year.

Ezra 6:19-22

¹⁹ On the fourteenth day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover. ²⁰ For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. ²¹ It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel. ²² And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

What a blessing! The people are back home...back from Exile in Babylon and they have rebuilt the Temple and now they're celebrating Passover! Woohoo! Yes, perhaps, this doesn't mean much to us, because we're not Jews...we don't keep the festivals, but listen all of those festivals were pictures foreshadowing Jesus, with the Passover being right at the top! And to see it in its fullness and understand the significance of it and what it means to us today, **turn in your Bibles to Exodus 12.**

What we're going to see is going to set a foundation for our understanding of why Jesus came and why, (even today), we celebrate Communion, (which we'll do in just a bit). Let me set the scene... At this point, there have been 9 plagues. Here they are...

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|---|---|---|----|--|---|
| 1 |  | BLOOD (7:14-24)
The Nile, along with all of the water in Egypt, turns into blood. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 6 |  | BOILS (9:8-12)
Festering boils break out on the Egyptians and their animals. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. |
| 2 |  | FROGS (7:25 - 8:15)
Frogs cover the land of Egypt. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. | 7 |  | HAIL (9:13-35)
Hail strikes down everything in the fields - humans, animals and trees. Pharaoh asks for forgiveness and promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. |
| 3 |  | GNATS (8:16-19)
The dust turns to gnats, which cover the people and animals of Egypt. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 8 |  | LOCUSTS (10:1-20)
Locusts devour every tree and plant in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh asks for forgiveness, but does not let the Israelites go. |
| 4 |  | FLIES (8:20-32)
Flies fill the houses and land of Egypt. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. | 9 |  | DARKNESS (10:21-29)
Darkness covers the land of Egypt for three days. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. |
| 5 |  | LIVESTOCK (9:1-7)
All of the livestock of the Egyptians die. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 10 |  | FIRSTBORN (11:1-10; 12:29-32)
Every firstborn son and firstborn of the cattle in Egypt dies. Pharaoh finally lets the Israelites leave Egypt, only to change his mind and pursue them to the Red Sea. |

Listen carefully, all of these plagues were designed to attack the theology and worldview of Egypt. Why? Because God was not just trying to get Israel out of Egypt, He was trying to get Egypt out of Israel! In other words, they had been there for 400 years and that was certainly long enough for their worldview to have been corrupted (and it was). Remember, no sooner than they are delivered out of Egypt that they make a Golden Calf...one of the gods of Egypt. They continued to believe that the gods of Egypt were superior and no sooner had Moses gone up on Mount Sinai to get the 10 Commandments, they are going back to the gods of Egypt and trusting in them!

God didn't have to give 10 plagues...God could have done it in one plague...but, He did it in a specific and methodical way...to NOT ONLY deliver them physically, but spiritually...theologically. In fact, I would say that was the greatest deliverance of all. They were delivered from the Egyptians and their pagan way of thinking! Oh, that we would be too, in our day! But, we come to this last plague and this is the plague of plagues. Plague 10...DEATH of the FIRSTBORN:

Exodus 12:21-23

²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb."²² Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the 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 will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

There you have it! Very detailed instructions! Never forget that God is a God of precise order and specific details. He's not sloppy or loose. God's people know exactly what to do! He leaves nothing to chance! And as we look at what Israel was supposed to do...it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see how the Passover is the foreshadowing of what Jesus would do on the cross!

There are three very specific instructions in this passage:

#1 Kill the Lamb

#2 Apply the Blood

#3 Stay Inside

There is no salvation unless **you kill the lamb!** No...God didn't say, "Go into your house and pray hard enough. Go into your house and hope you've done enough good." No, He says, "Kill the Lamb." You see, there is a substitute that must be offered. There is a death that will take place in Egypt...but it won't take place in Goshen... Let me show you the land of Goshen.



This is where the "slaves" were allowed to live. They lived along the Nile River and in close proximity to help the Pharaoh's build their pyramids and empire with bricks made of mud and straw. So, they were told to kill a lamb...because it's now time for plague 10...and it's time to get out...but, you MUST first:

KILL THE LAMB!

There is no way out of this mess unless you KILL THE LAMB! Watch this. (We saw this in our study in 1 Corinthians):

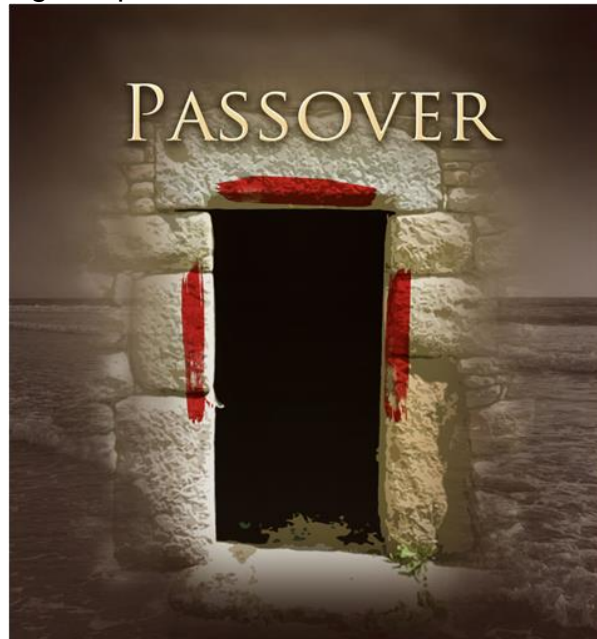
1 Corinthians 5:7-8

⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

So, as we gather before the Lord's table in a few minutes...we will come before the table, realizing that Jesus is the Lamb that had to be killed! He was our substitute! Not a one-year-old animal. No! We are redeemed and delivered...because God killed the Lamb... God sacrificed His own Son...for YOU and for ME! But, for the Israelites, once the lamb was killed, you had to do something with the blood. What?

A/V Team: Please Show
Apply the Blood

They were told to apply the blood to the doorposts and the lintel. The blood has to be seen on the door in order for the Death Angel to pass over the home! APPLY THE BLOOD!



Listen...today we apply the blood to our hearts...and when we do, this is what will happen to you.

1 Peter 1:14-19

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." ¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

We have salvation because of the blood of Jesus. Do you remember this old song?

**What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

How about this one?

**There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,**

**Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.**

And so, the night of the 10th plague, the lamb was sacrificed and the blood was applied to the doorposts and lintel! Kill the Lamb and Apply the Blood...

But there's a final instruction: **STAY INSIDE**.
STAY INSIDE

Don't leave the house...stay inside! There would be no safety anywhere that night except behind the blood-stained door. You see to say that you were going to leave the house would be to say, as the Death Angel is passing by, "I believe that I can find salvation somewhere out there, in the world, I want to go out there...to the place that brings me security...the place that I'm used to...the place that I remember." But listen, the moment you open the door and leave the safety of the blood-stained home, you acknowledge the fact that you aren't trusting the Lord God by faith and you're going to die, because the blood of the lamb is our only hope. There is no salvation anywhere else. Where else can you go...where else can you hide, but stay inside, behind the blood?

Do you remember when Jesus started clamping down on His teaching and many "so-called" disciples starting walking away from Him in John 6:66...

John 6:66-69

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

There is no other place we can go, but to Jesus! You must stay inside the house...stay inside Jesus! Church family, why is it so easy for us to forget all that God has done for us...so that we want to go out there to find life. Why do we so quickly want to return to Egypt? When things are a struggle in our lives, why do we so quickly want to go OUTSIDE? Oh, Satan draws us to the things of this world and we don't trust Jesus. We get impatient. But, Jesus says, "Come unto me, follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross;" yet, we're more like Lot's wife and we look back to Sodom! Oh...our lack of trust is like a pillar of salt, just like the one that commemorated Lot's wife's and her lack of faith. Who are you looking to tonight? Are you showing faith in Egypt or Jesus? Do you believe Jesus can take care of you or are you looking to the world? STAY INSIDE! That means stay pure...

Look back at Ezra 6...

²⁰ For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean.

Ezra 6:21b

²¹ and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

Listen carefully, you're not staying inside if you're not pure...do you understand that? Are you? That means you have to stay out of Egypt! Are you? How about your kids? How about the people you influence? Think about that for a minute. **Just think about it.....are you pure?**

Church family, there is no way Moses and the Israelites could have grasped what they were foreshadowing in leaving Egypt... All they could see was getting out of Egypt. Oh, if they could have seen what we see in Jesus! Watch the reminder in verse 24...the foreshadowing of Jesus...

Exodus 12:24-27

²⁴You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever.²⁵ And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. ²⁶ And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷ you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

We're at plague 10. Obviously, there had already been 9 plagues. And to the Israelites...any ONE of those first 9 plagues should have gotten them out of Egypt. There was blood in the Nile...they must have thought, "We're out of here..." Pharaoh said, "No you're not!" Look at this chart again... Blood in the Nile...frogs, gnats, flies... See it the TEN again...

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|--|--|
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Don't you know the people thought: "Oh, Pharaoh said we could go..." Nope...wait...oh no...he changed his mind! Over and over again this happened! But, on this night...the night of the 10th plague...NO...on this night, God said, "Make plans to leave because you are not going to live a life outside of Egypt. You're not going to be here any longer. God said, "Enough." You're going to be delivered and this ritual of the Passover meal is to be performed over and over again going forward...because there is something even better coming! Because the Passover represents Jesus!" So, let me ask you: Are you living for the here now, this is considered Egypt, or for the Promised Land, heaven? Church, never forget, this is not the Promised Land...we're not home yet! We're literally looking to that better country as pilgrims passing through...

But in order to get to that Promised Land...we have to...

#1 Kill the Lamb

#2 Apply the Blood

#3 Stay Inside

You see...this is why year after year after year...there was a commemoration of the Passover... And when the Passover came, there was the initial choosing of the scapegoat. What is that? The scapegoat was the goat that the priest would place his hands on...making that goat the sin offering...and they would run that goat out of the camp and they'd run it until it died...sometimes running it off a cliff to its death...symbolizing that the sins of the people had been covered again for another year.

Next a lamb was selected to be the sacrificial lamb that had to be perfect...no spot, wrinkle or blemish and its blood was then shed! So, you'd have a goat and a lamb...



That's sad to see that little lamb isn't it... But, one day... John the Baptist showed up on the banks of the Jordan River and he saw his cousin, Jesus, coming and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And you see, Jesus would be the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. Because with His death on the cross, as the Lamb of God...because His blood was spilled...we can be saved. But, to be saved, you and I must surrender to Him...and apply the blood...see Him as our sacrifice. But, as sad as it was to know that millions of innocent lambs were killed for centuries...

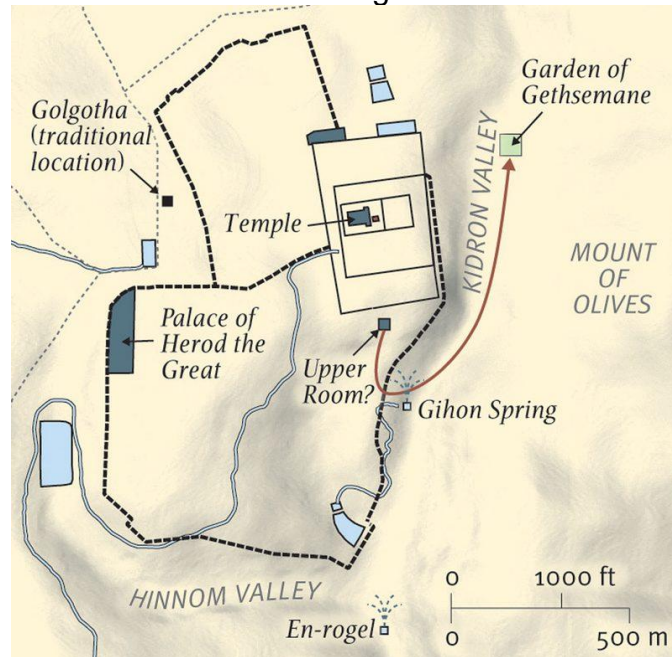


the saddest thing is to know that the innocent Son of God, Jesus Christ was killed for you and for me.

You see, the ultimate Passover would come and Jesus would hang on a cross on a hill called Calvary, and that day, at precisely the time that the High Priest was preparing to shed the blood of the Lamb in the Temple courtyard:



Jesus would die on the cross. Scholars tell us: as Jesus died on the cross just outside the walls of Jerusalem on Calvary, the sacrificial lamb was being sacrificed at the Temple. See this chart...



See the upper left...that's where Golgotha was located and look to the right at the Temple compound. That's only 1800 feet apart. Can you fathom how close this is! Amazing isn't it! The Passover lamb was being sacrificed in the Temple Compound at exactly the same time Jesus was being sacrificed on the cross on Golgotha/Calvary. So, close and yet so far for the priests and the Levites and Elders of Israel... Don't let that be you tonight!

Well, for the Israelites in Egypt, what did they do? They obeyed!

Exodus 12:28

²⁸ Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

Oh, what a sad night! All afternoon, all those lambs that were being killed. Oh yes, that's sad...but, it got so MUCH worse, because human death was coming. Yes, death of thousands and thousands of Egyptians. We shouldn't think that all Egyptians were like Pharaoh...obstinate, pagan and evil. The reality was there would be people dying that the Israelites knew and perhaps cared about deeply! Watch verse 29...

Exodus 12:29-30

²⁹ At midnight the Lord struck down 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 the livestock.³⁰ And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead.

No! The Israelites weren't celebrating that night. They heard cries and wails and shrieking! It was AWFUL! Hearing the groan of mothers they knew...because of all the children dying, whom they likely knew as well. It was awful! You couldn't escape it...

Imagine that...you are part of the nation of Israel and you want to be free, but no one wants that! No one wants anyone to experience that! All the confusion and terror that ensued at midnight had to be unreal. Think of it...if you were an Egyptian...(with no blood on the doors)...no one could assist their neighbor because it was happening to you too. But, it's not only the children...it's the firstborn cows, dogs, cats, goats, lambs, you name it... It was horrendous... But, listen...it was judgment falling on a people who had bad leaders...and because of that, they had no protection...they had no houses of safety...no sacrifice and no blood!

And church...don't forget this, do you remember when decree came from Pharaoh to kill the firstborn sons of the Israelites because he was afraid the nation of Israel was growing too large and they could rise up and overtake his empire? Remember, this was how Moses was to be killed...right...but, Moses' mom and his sister, Miriam...



placed him in a little basket and put him in the Nile and he floated to Pharaoh's daughter and was saved. Think of it...that little basket saved Moses like the Ark saved Noah's family, and like the

blood on the doors saved the Israelites who stayed inside! Church, it's terrible...but, because of bad leaders, the Egyptians were now feeling what God's people had felt with the death of their firstborn sons. It was justice!

The Passover, Plague #10. It finally brought deliverance for God's people! After 400 years of captivity and slavery and misery! Pharaoh called for Moses, one last time!

Exodus 12:31-32

³¹ Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. ³² Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!"

Pharaoh said: "Up! Go! Get out!" There was no time to waste! They had to get out! And that's why God's people had to be girded up. "Don't wait for the bread to rise! No leaven!" And yet, we know, unfortunately, ultimately, they did NOT get to the promised land, did they? They ended up wandering in the desert wilderness for 40 years.

And church, isn't that like us? We have the promise of heaven...we've been delivered from our slavery of sin, our Egypt...but, we're still in the wilderness... This isn't heaven. Because we still get sick...family members and friends still die! People get Covid, we have financial hardships, emotional struggles...pain with children...pain with our health...and, if we're not careful...we'll forget the promise that's been made...we're apt to forget the promise because of the pain between now and the time we receive the fullness of the promise, which is heaven! So, we have to be like those described in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:16

¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

You see, all of this was a foreshadowing Jesus...and now we have a meal...no, not the Passover. Jesus turned the Passover into Communion! Jesus says, "Take...eat...this is my body, which is for you... Take and drink for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, shed for you... And as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, remember...no matter what you're going through, REMEMBER, it's not bigger than a dead Jesus who came back to life!

Are you saved tonight? Oh, you must be to survive the oncoming DEATH. Oh...

#1 Kill the Lamb

#2 Apply the Blood

#3 Stay Inside
