

# Passover

Read Exodus 12

Moses' life and ministry is a tightly woven story within the salvation narrative of the entire Bible. Judaism identifies Moses as the primary source of rabbinic authority. Jesus' followers identified Him as the prophet like Moses, spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:18-20. Even Islam claims Moses as one of its prophets. There is no possibility that Moses could have been anything other than an actual historical figure.

## Talking Points

- In his eyes, Pharaoh believed himself to be the most powerful man on earth. The Egyptians revered him as the god over all other gods.
- Through Moses, the Lord commanded Pharaoh, "Let My people go!" and release them from slavery. Pharaoh responded, "Who is God that I should obey Him?"
- God answered by sending ten catastrophes, called plagues, on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Each plague mocked one of the gods in the Egyptian pantheon of deities. After each plague, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The tenth plague was the most devastating. It proved Pharaoh was no god at all!
- Every Hebrew home was to kill an unblemished lamb, paint its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their home, roast the lamb, eat it along with unleavened bread, and remain indoors all night long.
- During the first Passover night, the Lord passed through the land of Egypt. The first-born sons of the Hebrews were safe in every home with the lamb's blood painted on its doorway.
- In Egyptian homes that did not have blood on the doorway, all of the first-born sons were killed. Every Egyptian home experienced the death of a son, father, grandfather, or uncle. Can you imagine the crying in those homes on that night?
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, instructing Israel to leave Egypt that night, the night the Lord passed over the Hebrew households and struck the Egyptian homes.

## Background

On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the task of convincing Pharaoh to let His people go. Making the Lord's demand of him, Pharaoh scoffed and ridiculed Moses. "Who is God that I should obey him?" As a sign that the Lord had sent them, Moses had Aaron throw his shepherd's staff to the ground, where it turned into a serpent. Pharaoh was not impressed. Two of his magicians were able to do the same thing. However, Aaron's staff swallowed the staff of the magicians.

It would take an escalating series of national calamities called plagues before Pharaoh finally relented to God's demand. The 10th plague was the most devastating, the death of Egyptian first-born sons. God did not automatically exclude the Hebrews from the consequences of the tenth plague. Every household was required to kill an unblemished

lamb, paint its blood on the doorposts and lintel, roast the lamb, and eat it while remaining inside the home throughout the night.

## **First Passover**

During the night of the first Passover, the Lord passed over all of the homes of Egypt. Everyone remained safe inside the Hebrew houses with blood applied to the entryways. The first-born son died in Egyptian households that did not have blood on the entrance. Can you imagine mothers in Egypt as they crept into their children's rooms only to find their sons dead? What must it have been like in the Hebrews' homes listening to what was happening throughout the land?

Pharaoh commanded Moses and Aaron to appear before him immediately. His message? "Leave Egypt tonight!" Upon departure, as an incentive to leave them, the Egyptian people gave the Israelites food, clothing, silver, gold, expensive jewels, cloth, and skins. On one night, the Hebrew slaves received 400 years of wages.

## **Remember!**

To this day, Jewish people commemorate the first Passover each year. Around the family table, the story of the exodus from Egypt is recounted. It is an evening filled with laughter, merriment, tears, and longing. If you ever have the opportunity to attend a Passover Seder, don't hesitate to accept the invitation. You won't forget it!

The first Passover is to the Hebrew Bible what the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus are to the New Testament. The fact that Israelite households painted the lamb's blood on their entryways was evidence of their belief in what God would do. The death of the Passover lamb delivered Hebrew freedom from slavery under Pharaoh's rule in Egypt. In the New Testament, belief in the Lamb of God's death, burial, and resurrection frees believers from slavery to sin. It promises a departure from this broken world and entrance into a perfect one.

## **Bible Conversations**

Comparing Bible passages from the Old and New Testaments demonstrates God's eternal redemptive plan. Take a look at the following passages and see for yourself.

**Instruction to Sacrifice:** Exodus 12:3,6 & John 1:29

**Condition of Sacrifice:** Exodus 12:5 & 1 Peter 1:19

**Reason for Sacrifice:** Exodus 12:12 & Hebrews 9:27

**Application of Sacrifice:** Exodus 12:3 & Acts 4:12

**Result of Sacrifice:** Exodus 12:23 & Romans 8:1