

## JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

### Week 3 – The Significance of Passover

Lev. 23:5; Ex. 12:1-13

We are here today – worshipping the Lord – because of Passover. When we meet at church, it's because of Passover. We have a personal relationship with God, because of Passover. We have been offered eternal life with God through Jesus' shed blood on the cross – because of Passover. What is the fulfillment of that first Passover in Egypt? Jesus' sacrifice! His crucifixion! What is the application of the Passover to believers? Redemption; justification: declared righteous. Is Passover significant?

Dt. 16:16 – God required Jewish males to appear in the place He chose (II Chron. 6:6 – Jerusalem) 3 times each year: Feast of Passover, Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot), and Feast of Tabernacles. Passover – Jesus was crucified ON Passover. Jewish people (2+ million) were in Jerusalem to witness God's greatest gift to the world! Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were celebrated together over a week's time. The vast crowd would remain in Jerusalem. And then three days following Passover, on the Jewish feast of First Fruits, the TOMB WAS EMPTY! Pentecost – the Holy Spirit descended and indwelt about 3,000 primarily Jewish people who placed their trust in the Messiah Jesus! Tabernacles – looking into the future - when Jesus will establish His kingdom in Jerusalem – for 1,000 years.

Jerusalem was bulging with Jews at those three feasts. Acts 2:5-12, in speaking of the Feast of Pentecost, tells us that there were Jews from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5). If all Jewish males had to appear before God in Jerusalem, you can well imagine that many of them brought their families along (Luke 2:41).

The pilgrims traveled UP to Jerusalem singing the songs of Ascent – Psa. 120 through Psa. 134. Jewish people who had seen many wonders of the world made their way to Jerusalem which God calls the “joy of the whole earth” in Psa. 48:2. And, upon seeing Jerusalem, they realized that no city compared. God had placed His name in Jerusalem (II Chron. 6:6).

Jesus went up to Jerusalem and when He entered the Temple, what He saw sickened Him. Worship was NOT what was occurring in the Court of the Gentiles. The Court of the Gentiles had been turned into the Bazaar of the Sons of Annas (the High Priest) with the moneychangers, etc. Every Jewish male had to pay a temple tax at the Temple. At Passover every Jewish male was required to pay a half-shekel tax – two days' wage (Ex. 30:13) but in a special Temple coin – not in Roman or Greek coinage. Thus the moneychangers were set-up within the Temple courts to exchange the foreign coins into the appropriate coinage. There was, however, an exorbitant price levied for this exchange of the foreign coins. Furthermore, a sacrifice offered had to be without blemish. Worshipers could purchase an animal within the Temple court. However, if animals were brought from “home,” they were subject to examination by the priests.

Animals brought from “home” were often found to be blemished. Therefore, the worshipper was forced to purchase an animal from the “Temple herd” at an inflated price.

God’s intent was that the Temple serve as a house of prayer for all people. The Temple had become a den of robbers/thieves (Jer. 7:11). The money changing had been taking place in the Court of the Gentiles! God had called the Jewish people to serve as witnesses to the nations of the one true God (Isa. 43:10). What kind of witness was this?

Jesus entered the outer court of the Temple, the Court of the Gentiles, and fashioning a whip, He drove them ALL out of the Temple area: animals (including the lambs for Passover) and people. Prophetic? There would soon be no need for sacrificing animal Passover lambs following Jesus’ crucifixion.

Let’s focus on worship. Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4:24, “God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Our worship must be with the proper heart attitude and must be according to the truth revealed about God in His word. Are we defending God’s honor, His holiness? Are we resting in Him? Are you continuing to ponder re: God’s Sabbath rest? Lev. 10:3 – “*By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people, I must be glorified.*”

The two cleansings of the Temple occurred at Passover. What does Passover commemorate? Passover was a physical demonstration of a spiritual truth – being cleansed from sin. At Passover God commanded that leaven be removed from homes – that sin be purged! Jesus purged the Temple at Passover!

God chose the Jewish people to share the truth about the one true God to the nations/the Gentiles surrounding them. God chose the Jewish people to be the channel through whom the Messiah would come. They were God’s witnesses (Isa. 43:10). The Temple was called – “. . . a house of prayer for all nations” – Mark 11:17 (Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11). By God’s mighty acts on behalf of Israel – the world would know about the one true God (I Sam 17:46). And here we find the Jewish people setting up a marketplace – exacting huge amounts of money from people – in the Court of the Gentiles within the Temple that was intended to be a place of prayer for all nations. God’s plan of redemption is that all the families of the earth would be blessed through the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Gen. 18:18 – God chose Israel to be an instrument of blessing to the world!

At Passover every Jewish household spent time meticulously going through their house, seeking out leaven (yeast). God told them to get rid of the leaven. Leaven is a symbol of sin (I Cor. 5:6-8). In John 11:55 we read that many went up (to Jerusalem) prior to the Passover to purify themselves. This was an absolute necessity in order to properly celebrate the Passover. Yet, in a city that was given over to cleansing, when Jesus came into the temple, the house of God, He found it filled with clutter and noise, dirty-smelling animals, money-changers and merchandise, and no one seemed concerned about it. But our Lord was.

In this cleansing of the Temple are we seeing that when we trust in Jesus for our salvation, He is not going to leave us the way we are? He is not going to settle for clutter, compromise, whatever may be defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit. Cleansing the temple speaks to the holiness of God. God's plan of redemption begins with the holiness of God. The celebration of Passover begins with the holiness of God.

Jesus was crucified on Passover. Matt. 26:2 – the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified on Passover- *You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.* I Cor. 5:7 – the Apostle Paul tells us that Christ (Messiah/Anointed) is our Passover. The Hebrew word for Passover is PESACH which means to pass over, to leap over. Pesach has a deeper meaning than “to pass over.” It means to spread the wings over. It means to protect. God's Passover means such sheltering and protection as is found under the outstretched wings of the Almighty. Jesus cried out, *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing* (Matt. 23:37). It was not merely that the Lord passed by the houses of the Israelites, but that He stood on guard, protecting each blood sprinkled door! There was a personal covering for each who obeyed God's instructions.

Why did God continually tell the children of Israel to remember Passover? Passover is key to understanding redemption – to understanding God's plan of redemption laid out in the Bible – laid out in the feasts. Passover is God's object lesson best remembered through an annual re-enactment - through a ceremony that would touch/appeal to the senses of each participant/spectator.

What did God tell the children of Israel to do four days before the feast? On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan they were to bring a lamb into the household to live w/ them for four days. Ex. 12:3-5 - *On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup>And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup>Your lamb shall be without blemish, . . .* We see in Ex. 12 a progression: “a” lamb (Ex. 12:3), “the” lamb (Ex. 12:4), “your” lamb (Ex. 12:5). This lamb became their “friend” – a part of their family. During that time it was scrutinized – to determine that it was without blemish. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, IF the lamb was spotless/without blemish, this lamb who had become their friend – to whom they had grown attached - the unblemished lamb was slaughtered.

Ex. 12:6 - tells us that the entire assembly of Israel would kill “it” (the lamb) for the whole assembly. This is prophetic. Ex. 12:6 looks ahead to Isa. 53:5-8 – *He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid up Him the iniquity of us all.* And then they had to eat its flesh. The lesson was painful: God's

holiness demands that He judge sin. The price is costly. But He is also merciful and provides a way of escape (redemption).

Passover is clearly a picture of redemption/deliverance. Bondage was immediately changed into liberty. This was the beginning of a new life. This new life affected others; it immediately impacted Gentiles. As the children of Israel were led out of Egypt, strangers accompanied them. Ex. 12:38 - a mixed multitude came out with them. Egypt was a conquering country. Egypt conquered other lands and took captives as slaves. This mixed multitude most likely was comprised of Gentiles from many nations. They were delivered with the Jewish people. The Jewish people didn't leave Egypt alone; they took with them people from other nations. What a graphic picture of deliverance for both Jew and Gentile through the blood of the Passover Lamb!

From the foundation of the world God intended that the salvation of the world would be tied to the children of Israel. That's why Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4:22, "Salvation is of the Jews." The Messiah came through the Jews.

Jesus is our Passover (I Cor. 5:7). He is the Passover Lamb who came unto His own. He was brought into the house of Israel – at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan. For four days He lived among His people – His family. During that time He was scrutinized and declared w/o blemish by the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:60), by Pilate (Matt. 27:24), by Herod (Luke 23:15) by the thief on the cross (Luke 23:41). . .

AND, because He was found spotless, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nisan, at 9 a.m. – as the Passover lamb was tied to the altar in the Temple – Jesus was nailed to the cross. At 3 p.m., as the high priest slit the throat of the Passover lamb in the Temple, Jesus cried at the same hour, "It is finished".

#### SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

- Reread the handout.
- Read Exodus 12.
- Journal your thoughts and questions about Passover.
- Share what you've learned with someone while verbalizing what you now believe.
- Make plans to attend our Messianic Passover Presentation on Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, in Grace Chapel at Scottsdale Bible from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (give or take!).
- Invite Jewish friends to the Messianic Passover Presentation.

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QUESTIONS:

- What had you known about the Passover prior to this study?
- Have your views regarding the Passover changed? If so, in what way?
- How does your view of Passover impact your life? OR, how will it impact your life?
- For you, what is the most crucial teaching of Passover?
- Has your understanding changed re: Jesus' cleansings of the Temple during Passover (John 2; Matt. 21)? Are Jesus' actions more clear to you after studying them in light of the Passover?
- How will this study impact your honoring of God and worshipping Him?
- How can you share this teaching with others?