

The Feast of Passover

Leviticus 23:5-6

Passover had three particular parts to it:

1. The Feast of Passover
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread
3. The Feast Day of the Sheaf of Firstfruits

The scriptures in the Old Testament where this Feast is dealt with are **Exodus 12:1-14, 21-29; Leviticus 23:4-5; Numbers 33:3; Deuteronomy 16:1-8**. The scriptures in the New Testament where this Feast finds fulfillment are Matthew 26:1-2; 17-75; 27:1-66; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-23; John 18-19; Hebrews 11:28.

The Apostle Paul, in one summarized and interpretative verse says: ***“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,”*** I Corinthians 5:7.

When the time came for the deliverance of the nation of Israel out of Egypt, *“the house of bondage”* (Exodus 13:3, 14; Joshua 24:17), God gave Moses specific instructions concerning the means of deliverance.

The heads of each household were to take a lamb of the first year on the ***tenth day*** of the first month and set it aside until the ***fourteenth day***. In the evening of the fourteenth day the lamb was to be killed, and its blood sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts of the household door. The household itself was to feast upon the body of the lamb roasted with fire, and with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. They were to eat it in haste, and be ready to leave Egypt at the midnight hour.

At midnight the death angel would pass through the land and every house that did not have the token of blood on the door would suffer judgment. *“When I see the blood, I will **pass over** you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt”* (Exodus 12:12).

The very title “Passover” means “a passing over.” The Greek title “Pascha” is derived from the Hebrew title. The Lord told them that they were to celebrate this Feast yearly and explain to their children what the whole service meant in its original setting.

I. A CHOSEN LAMB

God commanded Israel to take a lamb on the tenth day and set it aside until the fourteenth day of the first month. That is to say, the lamb was taken and kept aside for death for four days. It was ordained to die in the due time.

Historically: In the events of the week of crucifixion, Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day and was slain on the fourteenth day, four days later (Luke 19:37; Matthew 21:1-11).

Prophetically: The scripture shows that “a day unto the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day” (Psalm 90:4; Genesis 2:17; II Peter 3:8). When Adam sinned, God set his Lamb, Jesus Christ, aside for death.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (I Peter 1:18-20).

A. LAMB OF THE FIRST YEAR – Exodus 12:5; 11:4-7; 12:29-30

This signified that it was a firstborn lamb. The firstborn were especially to be set aside and given to God. The Lord gave specific instructions concerning the firstborn of man and beast (Exodus 13:11-13). The theme of the “firstborn” runs throughout the whole of Scripture. Cain is set aside for Abel; Ishmael is set aside for Isaac; Esau is set aside for Jacob; and here Egypt is set aside for Israel. God said that Israel was His firstborn (Exodus 4:22-23). This setting aside of the firstborn after the flesh (after that which is natural), and the bringing in of God’s firstborn (after that which is spiritual), points to the distinctions in the first or natural birth, and the second or spiritual birth.

B. A MALE LAMB – Exodus 12:5

The lamb must be a male; not, in this case, as sometimes in other sacrifices, a female. The scriptures declare, “**By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,**” (Romans 5:12). Adam, as the first male, sinned, and so a male must die for sin.

C. A LAMB WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH – Exodus 12:5

The Israelites were to inspect the lamb that was to die for them, and see that it came up to God’s standard: that it was perfect, and without spot or blemish (I Peter 1:18-20). In wonderful fulfillment we see how all who inspected Jesus Christ – God’s Lamb – found Him to be perfect, without fault, without spot or blemish.

1. Pilate – John 18:28; 19:4-6; Matthew 27: 1-25
2. Herod – Luke 23:8-12
3. Annas – Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 24
4. Caiaphas – John 11:49-53; 18:13-14, 10-24, 28
5. Judas – Matthew 27:54
6. The Centurion – Matthew 27:54
7. The repentant thief – Luke 23:39-43

D. A LAMB FOR AN HOUSE – Exodus 12:3-5

Note also the progressive revelation of “the lamb” in Scripture

1. A lamb for an house – Exodus 12:3,4
2. A lamb for a nation – Exodus 29:38-42
3. A Lamb for the world – John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:12

E. KILL THE LAMB IN THE EVENING – Exodus 12:6, literally “between the two evenings.”

The lamb must be killed in the evening of the fourteenth day. Jesus was slain “between the two evenings” in the week of the crucifixion. He was slain the fourteenth day at evening. The hours of crucifixion, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. were the hours which fulfilled “between the two evenings.”

F. THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB MUST BE APPLIED TO THE LINTEL AND DOOR POSTS –
Exodus 12:7, 13, 22

The blood was the evidence that death had taken place. Then the blood had to be sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts of the door. In fulfillment, we see that when Jesus died on the cross, He was both the Lamb and the blood-sprinkled door. In His death He is the Lamb, but in His resurrection He is the **door** – the only entrance to the household of God, the Household of faith (John 10:9).

G. THE BODY OF THE LAMB MUST BE EATEN – Exodus 12:8-10

The Lord God was also particular about the body of the lamb, even as of the blood. Both the body and blood pointed to the body and blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God (Matthew 26:26-28). It was to be eaten in the one and the same night. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread. No sin was in Jesus. It was to be eaten with bitter herbs. Calvary was a bitter experience. Sin is a bitter bondage to Satan also. It was not to be eaten raw. It was to be roasted with fire. So Jesus must experience the sufferings of the fire of God's holiness at Calvary. Not His perfect life, but His sacrificial death saves. The Passover lamb was not to be eaten in any casual manner. It was to be eaten in haste, ready for departure from the House of Bondage.

1. Loins were to be girded – Ephesians 6:14
2. Shoes must be on their feet – Ephesians 6:15; Isaiah 52:7
3. Staff must be in their hand – **Hebrews 11:13**
4. The lamb must be eaten in haste – Hebrews 11:13; Exodus 12:11

Thus all was to be done as ready for departure, in a state of readiness. So the believer has his loins girt about with truth, his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and the sword of the Spirit in his hand, as he partakes of Christ (Ephesians 6:13-17).

H. JUDGMENT AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR – Exodus 11: 4-6; 12:29-30

The “Midnight Hour” is always significant of the end of the age. It is the darkest hour before the dawn of a new day. At midnight there would be a great cry made as the death angel struck in every house which had rejected the Passover Lamb. Note in these Scriptures what happened at the “midnight Hour” and see how God works in connection with such (Matthew 25:6; Job 34:20; Judges 16:3; Mark 13:35; Luke 11:5; Exodus 11: 4-6). All point to the end of the age.

I. ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN –

Deuteronomy 16:2, 6

When the Lord gave further instructions concerning the Passover Feast He stressed that it was to be at the going down of the sun. The prophet Amos foretold a day when God would cause the sun to go down at noon, and thus turn their Feasts into mourning (**Amos 8:9-10**). How remarkably both these scriptures were fulfilled is evidenced at the crucifixion. When Jesus died on the cross, the sun was darkened at midday for three hours; thus from noon to the evening. This turned the Jews' Feast of the Passover into mourning for “the only Son” (**Mark 14:33-34**); **Matthew 27: 45-46**). The sun, the natural light of the world, was darkened in connection with the **Son**, the spiritual light of the world.

J. NOT A BONE OF THE LAMB WAS TO BE BROKEN – Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20

K. UNLEAVENED BREAD TO BE EATEN SEVEN DAYS – Exodus 12:15-20, 34, 39

The full significance of this is dealt with fully under the next part of this Feast.

L. SPOILING THE EGYPTIANS AT PASSOVER – Exodus 12:31-26, 40-42

With the death of the firstborn of man and beast, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and told them to get quickly out of Egypt. In their haste to get rid of the Israelites, they were spoiled. The Israelites took from the Egyptians jewels, gold and silver, and raiment, and anything else they required. *“And they spoiled the Egyptians.”* So it is that Christ spoiled principalities and powers in His triumph on the cross, and at His “exodus,” and the believing church partakes of these spoils won through His death (Colossians 2:10; Isaiah 53:12; Judges 5:12; Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:8-10).

M. A HOLY CONVOCATION – **Exodus 12:18**

The Passover, like the Feast of Unleavened Bread and all other Feast days, was a holy convocation, or an extra Sabbath. No manner of work was to be done. All were to rest in the finished work of the lamb. The believer finds true rest and spiritual Sabbath in ceasing from his own works and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, God’s Lamb (Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 17:1-4; 19:30).

N. HEALING POWER IN THE LAMB – II Chronicles 30:13-20; Psalm 105:37

As the children of Israel feasted on the body of the slain and roasted Passover lamb, it seems as if there was a great manifestation of the healing power of the Lord. The Psalmist tells us that there was not one feeble person among them when He brought them forth. It is wonderful to note also that when Hezekiah restored the Feast of Passover back to the nation (having it in the second month, as permitted by the Law on special occasions), that the Lord healed the people. If healing took place under the typical lamb, how much more shall the people of the Lord find healing in the true Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, as they feast upon Him (**Exodus 15:26**).

Read also **Mark 16:15-20**.

NISAN 14, Luke 22:7, Mark 14:12, Matthew 26:17 & John 13:1, "Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover [lamb] must be killed...His disciples said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover’...Now when evening had come, He was reclining [at the meal] with the twelve disciples...Now before the Feast of Passover Jesus knowing that His hour had come..."

In addition, we shall see that all four Gospel accounts agree that Christ was crucified on “the preparation day”—Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54 & John 19:42. We shall see that the “preparation day” was clearly the 14th day of Nisan, in preparation for Passover. If Christ was crucified on “Preparation day” then the “last supper” had to have been the supper that took place on the beginning of the 14th day.