



YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 3—Exodus

Lesson 5: The Story of Passover—Exodus 12

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)

GOD'S STORY

God was essentially “done” with Egypt and Pharaoh’s treatment of His people. The Lord was coming upon Egypt to bring one final plague that would spur on the exodus and the foretold plundering of Egypt. God’s promises were about to come true, but before that all took place He gave Moses and the Israelites some very specific instruction concerning the plague that was about to befall Egypt.

The instructions for Passover consisted of taking a perfect one-year old male lamb, without flaw or blemish, into your house and caring for it for four days. On the fourteenth day of the month, it was to be slaughtered at twilight and roasted and eaten—the head, innards and everything. The Israelites were instructed to take the blood of the lamb and mark their doors with it as a sign of protection from God’s judgment.

It’s not that God didn’t have an address book of all the houses of the Israelites and needed to know where they lived so He didn’t “accidentally” slay a Hebrew firstborn. A quick study will show you that He didn’t inflict the Israelites as He did the Egyptians, such as when He sent darkness over the land except over the Israelites (Exodus 10:23). In that instance, no one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days, yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

God is looking for an act of faith and obedience that gives us a chance to take part in the relationship He gives us. He wants His people to be a part of His process and show anyone from the outside looking in that these people have been set apart to tell the whole world about Him. In this context, He gave very specific instructions for doing so.

Perhaps the most important theme to the story of the Passover is the messianic overtone and foreshadowing of the cross that take place. A perfect, spotless, innocent lamb had to die in order that we may be saved. The gospel of John recounts John the Baptist’s first encounter with Jesus when Christ was even called the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Again we see the theme of God passing over our sin because of Jesus’ blood.

OUR STORY

Our part in this story goes back all the way to the original sin. Death entered the world because of humanity’s rebellion, and God’s biggest picture of all was framed in that moment. We need a savior, for humanity left to its own devices is lost. God knows this and nothing that takes place is a surprise to Him, nor are His plans being shot from the hip.

The Lord gave His people a picture of the cross long before crucifixions were even around. In this moment, He would deliver them from the worst oppression that has been seen by a nation up to this point in history. Later in history, He would use the sacrifice of Christ to open the door to eternity.

God is in control, and has always been in control. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as well as the God of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, John the Baptist, the disciples and Paul. His promises are fulfilled, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He hears our groaning, knows our plight, and has given us the Passover Lamb to cover us, protect us, and deliver us. Our part is simple—to step out in faith and mark our doors, receiving His salvation.

OTHERS' STORY

The story of the last Passover the disciples had with Jesus is a dramatic scene in the history of Christianity. It was full of betrayal, friendship, teaching, cries of outrage, and a new covenant. Christ formed something new that fulfilled what the original Passover began.

This shift is available to all people. While the first Passover was only for the Jews, what Jesus offers is for everyone. Now in Christ there is “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28, NIV 1984). The story for non-believers is the same for believers the world over. We all need Jesus.

Others will learn about this from our ceremonies and traditions. Not everyone will crack open a Bible, but they will watch with keen interest as people take part in everything from Communion to Passover. In many ways, it can even be as instructive for they are seeing it lived out in front of them from people who are in relationship with God.

THE WORLD'S STORY

While the world may be aware of Passover as a cultural tradition among the Jews, not everyone understands its implications world-wide. God set aside this time as a celebration and feast and the Jewish culture still observes it closely today. Even the Christian calendar and celebration of Easter is set in relation to it.

Some Jews would go so far as to say that there is no more meaningful celebration for them other than Passover. It is deeply rooted in helping them remember their history and identity, celebrated around the world with varying traditions. The world's reaction to this is often tame respect, but it obviously should run much deeper.

Pharaoh tolerated the Hebrews and their practices. Underneath it all, though, he despised their distinctiveness and belief that there was a power greater than him. If he had his way (which he obviously tried to), he would have eliminated their identity altogether.

While Pharaoh was a problem and posed a significant threat to the Jews, he represents a deeper issue at work in the world. As individuals, we can become the greatest cause of all our misfortunes. When we allow the world to deteriorate morally, physically and socially we can't plead ignorance as to why it feels plagued with horrors. It isn't that we cannot be content with what we have, but sometimes find something so appealing that we just want more and more of it and obliterate anyone or anything that gets in our way of having it.