

## Our Passover

Leaven is an agent that causes a fermentation. In baking, it causes the bubbles to create air pockets in breads or cakes that make the end product lighter and airy. We typically think of yeast and that is a leavening agent. It does not take a large amount of leavening agent to produce the fermenting process. This is something that non-bakers need to understand when reading in the Bible about leaven and its affect on the product.

The first mention of leaven found in the Bible is in Exodus the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter. It is mentioned at a specific event that became a festival to commemorate the event and is carried over into our worship even today.

By way of history, we know that after God called Moses to go to Pharaoh to seek a release of the Hebrews there was a series of ten plagues that demonstrated God's power to Pharaoh.

These were not random plagues. Each plague was specifically aimed at one of the Egyptian gods. As each plague became more severe, Pharaoh was more determined not to free the Hebrews.

The first two plagues were copied by Pharaoh's magicians. However, starting with the third plague, they were not able to replicate the plagues. In Exodus 8:19, we see they went to Pharaoh and confessed: **"This is the finger of God."**

At the conclusion of the 9<sup>th</sup> plague, Pharaoh offered to let the Hebrews go and sacrifice but they could not take their animals. We are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart and he sends Moses away.

**Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!" Moses said, "You are right; I shall never see your face again!" (Exodus 10:28-29 NASB)**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, Moses tells the Hebrews what the 10<sup>th</sup> plague will involve. It will be the death of the first born in every house (including Pharaoh's) of both human and animal.

The death of the first born and the release of the Hebrews from Egypt marks something so special that God establishes a time of remembrance. Let's open our Bibles to the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and read the first 14 verses of this chapter.

**Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. (Exodus 12:1-3 NASB)**

This event which will lead to their freedom from Egypt marks a new beginning. From this point on, their calendar will mark a new year. The beginning of a new time in their history.

Each family is to take a lamb. This lamb will serve two purposes. First, the blood from the lamb will mark their door post. Second, it will be their meal that night.

**Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons *in them*; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. (Exodus 12:4-7 NASB)**

Notice the lamb is to be without blemish. In every area of our giving to God, we are to give the best and not the lame nor the leftovers. After all, God gives us the best and not the left overs.

They are to roast the lamb and not eat it raw. Nor are they to boil the meat. As they prepare the meat, they are to take the blood and use it to mark the door post and lintel. Later we will see that this will serve a specific purpose.

Their evening meal is detailed and shows that they are to be prepared to leave quickly. They were to eat standing up with their sandals on and their staff in their hand.

**They shall eat the flesh that *same* night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs along with its entrails. And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD’S Passover. (Exodus 12:8-11 NASB)**

The significance of the unleavened bread may be that they would not have time for the fermenting process to occur. They would need to leave quickly. Later, we see that during their observance of the feast, all leaven had to be removed and stay out of the house for 7 days. The unleavened bread also may point toward bread without any other agent than the oil, water, and flour. There is no adulterating ingredient. Many times, in the Bible, we are warned about even a small amount of leavening will affect the entire loaf.

We are now ready for the passing over.

**For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:12-14 NASB)**

The sign of the blood will spare the children in that household. Salvation comes because of shed blood and the sprinkling of that blood. This is the same image that Peter uses when he begins his first letter to Christians.

He is addressing Christians in different areas and yet, through their obedience to Jesus they receive salvation through the sprinkled blood.

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. (1 Peter 1:1-2 NASB)**

That blood on the door post points toward the blood of Jesus the Christ. That blood on the door post was so significant to the first Passover and forever reminds us that the blood of Jesus is our salvation and Passover. Jesus is our lamb without blemish.

Peter continues his letter by using the same analogy about the lamb and blood as he writes:

**knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19 NASB)**

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he addressed many sins and errors. In some cases, the error was so deeply entrenched that the best recourse was to expel the offending parties. In the first letter to this church, Paul tells them that even a little evil will, like leavening, taint the church. He then reminds them that Jesus Christ is our Passover.

**Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:7-8 NASB)**

While the blood of that lamb on the night of the first Passover brought salvation, the blood of Jesus Christ pays the price once and for all. Jesus, in becoming our Passover, does what could never be done through animal sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews spells this out clearly.

**But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:11-14 NASB)**

Paul writes in Romans: **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (Romans 5:8-9 NASB)**

Just as surely as the blood sprinkled on the door post was a sign for the salvation of the Hebrews in Egypt, the blood of Jesus Christ is a sign of our Passover. Jesus allows us to pass from death to life through His blood.

John the baptizer was preaching to his disciples and told them that his ministry was limited.

When he saw Jesus, he told his disciples: **“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29 NASB)**

Jesus is our Passover. Have you been sprinkled by His blood?