

PASSOVER

AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIANS

Although the story of Passover happened thousands of years prior in the land of Egypt, Passover foreshadows the coming of Jesus. It points to our Deliverer and our Savior – the One who made eternal atonement for our sins.

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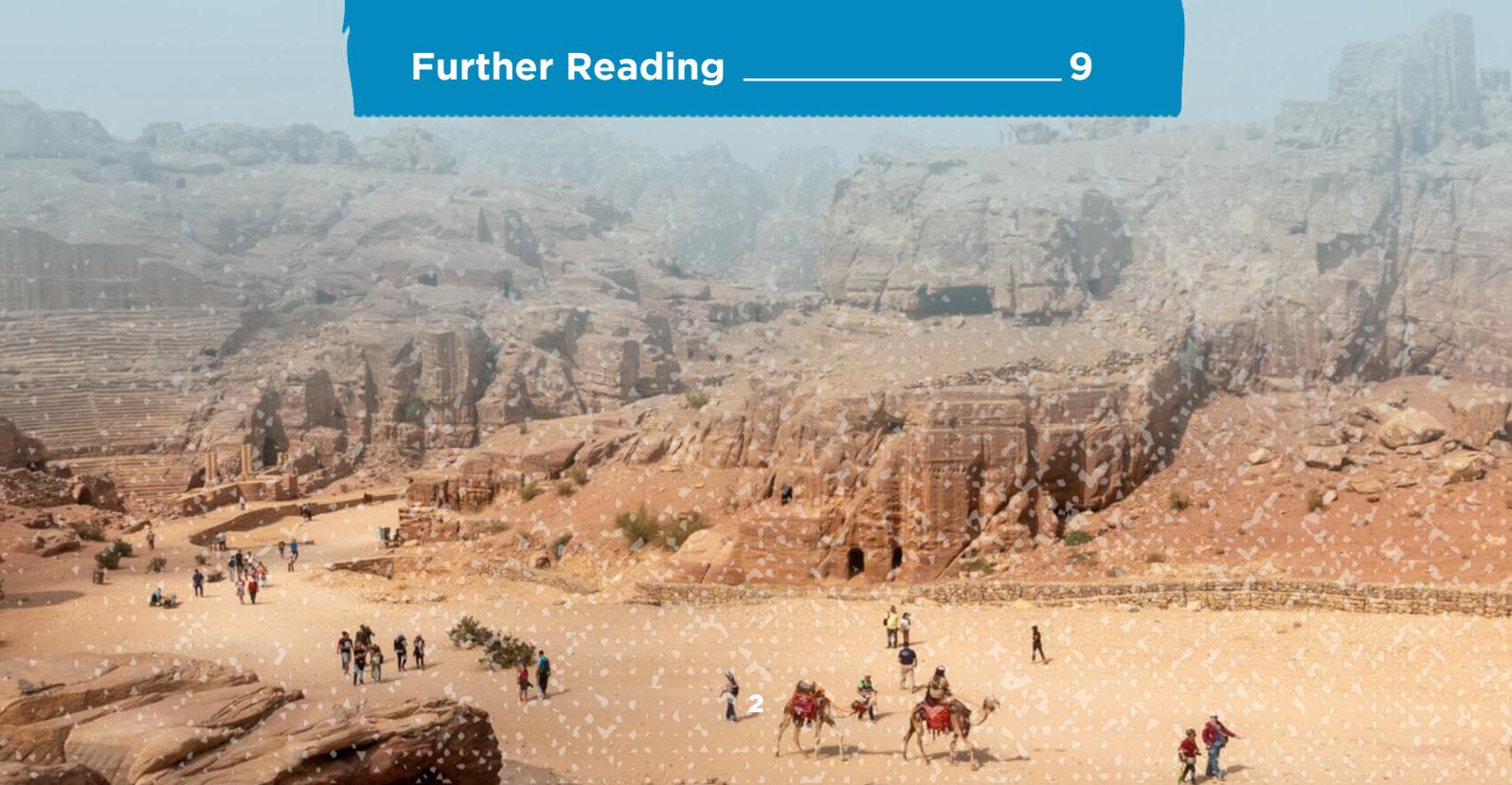
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THE STORY OF PASSOVER

Passover is one of the seven feasts, often called “the appointed times,” listed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

These feasts are set apart by God, who desired to fellowship with His people. The feast of Passover begins on the 14th of Nisan, the first month on God’s calendar. The event was such a formative experience in Jewish history that it became a reference point to count the years in the Old Testament days.

THE REFUGE THAT BECAME BONDAGE

Passover commemorates God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

Years earlier, Jacob, his sons and their entire family had left the Promised Land due to drought and famine. They came to Egypt where Jacob’s son Joseph, once sold into slavery by his brothers, became Pharaoh’s closest advisor. Thanks to Joseph’s position, Jacob’s family found favor and prospered in Egypt.

However, a new pharaoh came into power who did not know Joseph and took away the privileges previously offered to the Hebrews. He turned them into slaves and oppressed them, even killing their children.



A MIRACULOUS RESCUE

The Israelites cried out to God, who heard their plea and commanded their release. The heart of Pharaoh was hardened, so the land of Egypt was struck with increasingly dreadful plagues. The Lord used Moses (and his brother Aaron) to speak to Pharaoh.

Because the Pharaoh was unrelenting, the tenth plague was the most severe. That night every firstborn son in every household in Egypt would be slain. But the Lord “passed over” the households that followed His instructions to put blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

Pesach (פסח) - Hebrew word implying spreading of wings or shawl over something to cover and protect it.

The following morning the Israelites collected all they could carry and rushed out of Egypt, while the Pharaoh mourned his son and ordered the Hebrews to get out.

THE PASSOVER LAMB

The first instructions for the Passover are recorded in Exodus 12 and begin with the lamb.

On the 10th day of the first month of the year, a lamb was to be selected, brought home, and inspected for five days to check for blemishes. The lamb had to be perfect. After the killing of the lamb on the 14th of the month, the blood was applied to doorposts of every house.

The lamb was then to be roasted over a fire and eaten that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

“On the first day [of Passover] you shall remove leaven from your homes.” (Exodus 12:15)

To remove any trace of leaven (or yeast) during Passover, many Jewish families today meticulously scrub down and clean their homes. In the Scriptures leaven symbolized sin, so symbolically, they removed sin from their camp. And in the end, the blood of the lamb saved them from death.



A JEWISH SEDER

In keeping with the story of the first Passover, the first meal of the holiday is known for its specific order – in Hebrew: *Seder* (סדר).

While recounting all the events surrounding the exodus, every year Jewish families in Israel and around the world retell the story in detail. They remember the slavery, the plagues and the miracles that followed. With symbols and songs, the *Seder* is a fascinating journey for children and adults alike.

We don't know the exact details of the *Seder* from Old Testament days. In fact, the earliest and most detailed record of the Passover meal can be found... in the Gospels.

What we commonly refer to as “the Last Supper” was in fact a *Seder*, a Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. They followed a tradition which is still used by Jewish families today.

THE LAST SUPPER - THE FIRST COMMUNION

Exactly at Passover, centuries after the exodus from Egypt, the Lamb of God was slain to save the lives of many.

Through the elements of the *Seder*, Jesus communicated symbolically what would occur over the next days. The unleavened bread and wine represented His own body and blood, which identified Jesus with the Lamb that needed to be slain to save lives.

That night, the *Seder* was no longer just a Jewish observance - all people were invited into the story of Passover. We who are delivered from sin and death by the Lamb of God are also told to purge leaven from our lives (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus' blood needs to be applied to the doorposts of our hearts.

Just like for the Hebrews in Egypt, God fights on our behalf today.



A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

The Apostle Paul recounts Jesus' last supper in 1 Corinthians 11 and says that every time we take this meal, of unleavened bread and wine, we do so in remembrance of our Savior's death and resurrection.

John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, cried out, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

The Bible teaches a period is coming when God will release judgments on the earth not unlike those that befell Egypt. If our battles are greater than we expect, let's remember the victory God intends is greater, too. Meanwhile, He will be with us as He was with Israel in Egypt.

At the appointed time, Messiah will return and effect full victory. He will restore all the earth to the Kingdom of God.

FURTHER READING

Click on the links below for more articles about Passover:

[Passover Facts: 9 Things You Don't Know about the Holiday](#)

[The Passover Lamb: What Passover Means to Christians](#)

[The Last Supper and First Communion at Passover](#)



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