

Passover

Sabbath Afternoon, July 26

The observance of the Passover began with the birth of the Hebrew nation. On the last night of their bondage in Egypt, when there appeared no token of deliverance, God commanded them to prepare for an immediate release. He had warned Pharaoh of the final judgment on the Egyptians, and He directed the Hebrews to gather their families within their own dwellings. Having sprinkled the doorposts with the blood of the slain lamb, they were to eat the lamb, roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "And thus shall ye eat it," He said, "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover." Exodus 12:11. At midnight all the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Then the king sent to Israel the message, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people; . . . and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said." Exodus 12:31. The Hebrews went out from Egypt an independent nation. The Lord had commanded that the Passover should be yearly kept. "It shall come to pass," He said, "when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians." Thus from generation to generation the story of this wonderful deliverance was to be repeated. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 76.

The Lord then gave Moses special directions, to give to the children of Israel, in regard to what they must do to preserve themselves and their families from the fearful plague that he was about to send upon Egypt. Moses was also to give them instructions in regard to their leaving Egypt. He related to them the command of God to slay a lamb without blemish, and take the blood of the lamb and strike it upon the door-posts, and also upon the upper door-posts of their houses. And while this token should be without for a sign, and they should be eating the lamb, roasted whole, with bitter herbs, within, the angel of God would be passing through the land of Egypt doing his dreadful work, slaying the first-born of man and the first-born of beast. "And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are. And 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. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever." —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 222.

Sunday, July 27

One More Plague

Notwithstanding Moses had been forbidden to come again into the presence of Pharaoh, for in the day he should see his face he should die, yet he had one more message from God for the rebellious king, and he firmly walked into his presence, and stood fearlessly before him to declare to him the word of the Lord.

“And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.”

As Moses told the king of the plague which would come upon them, more dreadful than any that had yet visited Egypt, which would cause all his great counselors to bow down before him, and entreat the Israelites to leave Egypt, the king was exceedingly angry. He was enraged because he could not intimidate Moses, and make him tremble before his kingly authority. But Moses leaned for support upon a mightier arm than that of any earthly monarch. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 221, 222.

Before the execution of this sentence the Lord through Moses gave direction to the children of Israel concerning their departure from Egypt, and especially for their preservation from the coming judgment. Each family, alone or in connection with others, was to slay a lamb or a kid “without blemish,” and with a bunch of hyssop sprinkle its blood on “the two side posts and on the upper doorpost” of the house, that the destroying angel, coming at midnight, might not enter that dwelling. They were to eat the flesh roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, at night, as Moses said, “with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s Passover.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 274.

Healing the Body

Here was a work required of the children of Israel, which they must perform on their part, to prove them and to show their faith by their works in the great deliverance God had been bringing about for them. In order to escape the great judgment of God which he was to bring upon the Egyptians, the token of blood must be seen upon their houses. And they were required to separate themselves and their children from the Egyptians, and gather them into their own houses, for if any of the Israelites were found in the houses of the Egyptians, they would fall by the hand of the destroying angel. They were also directed to keep the feast of the passover for an ordinance, that when their children should inquire what such service meant, they should relate to them their wonderful preservation in Egypt. That when the destroying angel went forth in the night to slay the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast, he passed over their houses, and not one of the Hebrews was slain that had the token of blood upon their door-posts. And the people bowed their heads and worshiped, grateful for this remarkable memorial given to preserve to their children the remembrance of God's care for his people. There was quite a number of the Egyptians who were led to acknowledge, by the manifestations of the signs and wonders shown in Egypt, that the God of the Hebrews was the only true God. They entreated to be permitted to come to the houses of the Israelites with their families, upon that fearful night when the angel of God should slay the first-born of the Egyptians. They were convinced that their gods whom they had worshiped were without knowledge, and had no power to save or to destroy. And they pledged themselves to henceforth choose the God of Israel as their God. They decided to leave Egypt, and go with the children of Israel to worship their God. The Israelites welcomed the believing Egyptians to their houses. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 223.

When the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, the Lord sent Moses to set them free. He bade Moses go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say:

"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." Exodus 4:22, 23.

Moses carried this message to the king. But Pharaoh's answer was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Exodus 5:2.

Then the Lord sent fearful plagues upon the Egyptians. The last of these plagues was the slaying of the first-born son of every family, from that of the king to the lowliest in the land.

The Lord told Moses that every family of the Israelites must kill a lamb, and put some of the blood upon the door-posts of their dwellings.

This was a sign, that the angel of death might pass over all the houses of the Israelites, and destroy none but the proud and cruel Egyptians.

This blood of the "Passover" represented to the Jews the blood of Christ. For in due time, God would give His dear Son to be slain as the lamb had been slain; so that all who should believe in Him might be saved from everlasting death. Christ is called our Passover. (1 Corinthians 5:7.) By His blood, through faith, we are redeemed. (Ephesians 1:7.) —*The Story of Jesus*, pp. 17, 18.

Tuesday, July 29

Pesach

In commemoration of this great deliverance a feast was to be observed yearly by the people of Israel in all future generations. . . .

The hyssop used in sprinkling the blood was the symbol of purification, being thus employed in the cleansing of the leper and of those defiled by contact with the dead. In the psalmist's prayer also its significance is seen: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm 51:7.

The lamb was to be prepared whole, not a bone of it being broken: so not a bone was to be broken of the Lamb of God, who was to die for us. John 19:36. Thus was also represented the completeness of Christ's sacrifice.

The flesh was to be eaten. It is not enough even that we believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sin; we must by faith be constantly receiving spiritual strength and nourishment from Him through His word. Said Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life." John 6:53, 54. And to explain His meaning He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Verse 63. Jesus accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. . . .

The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, as pointing back to the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt. So when we feed upon Christ, it should be with contrition of heart, because of our sins. The use of unleavened bread also was significant. It was expressly enjoined in the law of the Passover, and as strictly observed by the Jews in their practice, that no leaven should be found in their houses during the feast. In like manner the leaven of sin must be put away from all who would receive life and nourishment from Christ. So Paul writes to the Corinthian church, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. . . . For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 277, 278.

Passing the Torch

The Lord gave Moses special directions for the children of Israel in regard to what they must do to preserve themselves and their families from the fearful plague that He was about to send upon the Egyptians. Moses was also to give his people instructions in regard to their leaving Egypt. On that night, so terrible to the Egyptians and so glorious to the people of God, the solemn ordinance of the Passover was instituted. By the divine command, each family, alone or in connection with others, was to slay a lamb or a goat “without blemish,” and with a bunch of hyssop sprinkle its blood on “the two side posts, and on the upper door post” of their houses, as a token, that the destroying angel, coming at midnight, might not enter that dwelling. They were to eat the flesh roasted, with bitter herbs, at night, as Moses said, “with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.” This name was given in memory of the angel’s passing by their dwellings; and such a feast was to be observed as a memorial by the people of Israel in all future generations. — *From the Heart*, July 29, 222.

Not one act in the life of Christ was unimportant. Every event of his life was for the benefit of his followers in future time. This circumstance of the tarry of Christ in Jerusalem teaches an important lesson to those who should believe on him. Many had come a great distance to keep the passover, instituted that the Hebrews might keep in memory their wonderful deliverance from Egypt. This ordinance was designed to call their minds from their world-loving interests, and from their cares and anxieties in relation to temporal concerns, and to review the works of God. They were to call to mind his miracles, his mercies and loving-kindness, to them, that their love and reverence for him might increase, and lead them to ever look to him, and trust in him in all their trials, and not turn to other gods.

The observance of the passover possessed a mournful interest to the Son of God. He saw in the slain lamb a symbol of his own death. The people who celebrated this ordinance were instructed to associate the slaying of the lamb with the future death of the Son of God. The blood, marking the door-posts of their houses, was the symbol of the blood of Christ, which was to be efficacious for the believing sinner, in cleansing him from sin, and sheltering him from the wrath of God which was to come upon the impenitent and unbelieving world, as the wrath of God fell upon the Egyptians. But none could be benefited by this special provision made by God for the salvation of man unless they should perform the work the Lord left them to do. They had a part to act themselves, and by their acts to manifest their faith in the provision made for their salvation. — “The Life of Christ,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 31, 1872, par. 11, 12.

Thursday, July 31

The Divine Judgment

The Lord gave special directions to the Hebrews, for each family to slay a lamb and sprinkle the blood upon their door-posts, that when the destroying angel should go forth upon his errand of death, the blood upon the post of the door should be to them a sign that those who were within the house were the worshipers of the true God. The angel of death passed over the houses thus designated. Upon that eventful night the Hebrews were directed to be prepared for their journey. The Lord directed them in regard to their eating the passover lamb. "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover."

The Lord did not send any plague upon Egypt before giving them timely warning. Moses and Aaron, under God's direction, came to the king with their message: "Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the midst of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man and beast, that ye may know that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." Pharaoh would not yield his stubborn will to the requirement of God. He hardened his heart against the Hebrews and refused them their liberty.

About midnight every Egyptian household was aroused from their sleep by the cry of pain. They feared they were all to die. They remembered when the cry of distress and mourning was heard from the Hebrews because of the inhuman decree of a cruel king to slay all their male infants as soon as they were born. The Egyptians could not see the avenging angel, who entered every house and dealt the death blow, but they knew that it was the Hebrew's God who was causing them to suffer the same distress they had made the Israelites to suffer. —"The Life of Christ—No. 6," *Youth's Instructor*, May 1, 1873, par. 4–6.

The vast armies of Israel marched in glad triumph from Egypt, the scene of their long and cruel servitude. The Egyptians would not consent to release them until they had been signally warned by the judgments of God. The avenging angel had visited every house among the Egyptians and had stricken with death the first-born of every family. None had escaped, from the heir of Pharaoh to the eldest-born of the captive in his dungeon. The first-born of the cattle also were slain according to the mandate of the Lord. But the angel of death passed over the homes of the children of Israel and did not enter there.

Pharaoh, horror-stricken at the plagues that had befallen his people, called Moses and Aaron before him in the night and bade them depart from Egypt. He was anxious that they should go without delay; for he and his people feared that unless the curse of God was removed from them, the land would become a vast burial ground. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 20, 21.

Friday, August 1

For Further Reading

"The Passover," *Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1880, par. 1–9.
"The Passover Visit," in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 75–78.