

Core Study #5

Passover

Passage: Exodus 12:1-28

Themes: Ritual, tradition and liturgy

Background Summary: The drama of the plagues leading to the departure from Egypt gives way to what seems like a liturgical interlude in chapter 12. But, this is much more than an intrusion of legal mumbo jumbo. It is the institution of a powerful, everlasting observance whereby God's love for his people Israel will be remembered – indeed, reenacted – until the end of time. The purpose of these celebrations is clearly for the benefit of those generations who did not participate in the Exodus itself. Yahweh's acts on behalf of his people are never meant to be anything less than acts that transcend time and space. There is more to the Exodus than simply delivering slaves from Egypt. God's field of vision is far and broad.¹

Introductory Question:

- What are your thoughts about ritual and tradition in the church? Are they life-giving? Boring? A necessary part of a church service or should they be abandoned? What reasons do you have for your thoughts?

Discussion Questions:

- After hearing about the 10th and final plague of the death of the first born of every household, what steps are the Israelites to take to be spared? (12:1-13)
- What is Passover and what steps are involved in it? What is the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (vs 14-20).
 - What one regulation stands out to you and why?
 - *Passover is a time for 'telling,' 'traditions,' 'ritual' and 'celebration'. The purpose of the Passover meal is to provide families with the opportunity to consider the dramatic and miraculous events that led to the Exodus over 3,000 years ago. The God of Abraham changed the lies of His people when He rescued them from slavery under the Egyptian Pharaohs. He became God their Savior. It is no wonder they remembered and celebrated the even*

¹ "The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus", Peter Enns, 257.

Core Study #5 Passover

every year.²

- How effective do you think these celebrations would be as a continual tradition of remembering the Exodus? Why?
- If you were head of an Israelite household, how would you explain the meaning of the Lord's Passover to your children? (12:26-27)
- The New Testament sees Christ as our Passover lamb. Look at I Corinthians 5:6-8 and discuss what is required for us today to have Jesus as our Passover lamb.
 - *The unleavened bread is a picture of Christ. It is made of pure flour and water – without yeast to ferment and sour it. Yeast is a vivid symbol of sin and what it does to a human life. After the dough is flattened, before it is baked, it is pierced and striped with a pointed tool to keep it from bubbling under the flame.*³
- The blood of a perfect lamb was the shield against the 'destroyer' (12:23). Christ's blood secures the Christian's salvation from eternal death. Read John 1:29, Hebrews 9:14. What is your response to Christ's death for you.

Response:

- How would you explain to your dorm mate the reason behind the Passover and the Lord's supper.
- Discuss the ways that ritual and tradition such as The Lord's Supper and Passover can enhance how we 'abide in Christ and are transformed by him' (according to our theme verse for the year)

² "Celebrating Biblical Feasts", Martha Zimmerman, 68.

³ "Celebrating Biblical Feasts" by Martha Zimmerman. 81.