

The Passover

God institutes the Passover—Israelites mark their doors with lamb's blood and the destroyer passes over them while Egypt's firstborn die.

Exodus 12:1-42

CHARACTERS: Moses, Aaron, The Israelites, God

THEMES: Salvation through blood, Obedience, Remembrance, Foreshadowing Christ

GOD GAVE MOSES specific instructions for the final plague. 'Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month, each household must take a lamb—one year old, without defect. Take care of it until the fourteenth day, then slaughter it at twilight.

'Take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of your houses. Roast the lamb over fire and eat it with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. Eat with your cloak tucked into your belt, sandals on your feet, staff in your hand. Eat in haste—it is the Lord's Passover.

'On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn, both people and animals. I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you.'

The Israelites did exactly as God commanded. At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt—from Pharaoh's son who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon. Pharaoh arose in the night, and there was loud wailing throughout Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

'Up! Leave my people!' Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. 'Go worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me.'

The Egyptians urged the people to hurry, giving them silver, gold, and clothing. After 430 years, the Israelites left Egypt—about 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children.

'This is a day you are to commemorate,' God said. 'For generations to come you shall celebrate it.' Centuries later, another Lamb would be slain—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

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