

THE LAST PLAGUE & THE FIRST PASSOVER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EXODUS 11-13



God's judgment is stayed by the blood of the lamb.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Pharaoh was warned but does not relent – Moses brought warning of the final plague to Pharaoh (Exodus 11:4-8). Moses even told Pharaoh that his own son would die (Exodus 11:5). Pharaoh's response is not recorded, but we are told that he would not allow the Israelites to go (Exodus 11:10). Given all the wonders performed and the miraculous plagues, it is a wonder that Pharaoh didn't relent. This shows the stubborn power of sin apart from the grace of God.

Israel is warned and obeys – Just as Moses warned Pharaoh, he also warned Israel. But he gave Israel a way of escaping the coming judgment. Moses instructed the Israelites to kill a lamb and place the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes. Through Moses, God told Israel that when He saw the blood on the doorposts He would pass over your homes (Exodus 12:13). This is where the name Passover comes from.

The last plague comes – Just as the Lord had foretold, He struck down every firstborn. Not a house in all of Egypt escaped without someone dying. Even the firstborn cattle died.

Egypt sends the Israelites away with gifts as foretold – The last plague came just after midnight. Before the night was over, Pharaoh sought out Moses and commanded him to get out of bed and leave Egypt. It is interesting to note that Pharaoh had come to understand the power of God as resident in Moses and asked Moses for a blessing (Exodus 12:32). It would not be long until Pharaoh would regret his decision and come after Israel. In the meantime, the Israelites did as God instructed, asked the Egyptians for gifts, and left Egypt with silver and gold jewelry, and clothing.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In the Passover, we have the clearest foreshadowing of Jesus' sacrificial atonement. God promised that if the blood of the lamb was painted on the door frame, the Angel of Death would pass over that home and the firstborn son would not be killed. Similarly, Jesus is the lamb who was slain for us. It is His blood which covers over our sin, allowing death to be defeated.

Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast - as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

(1 Corinthians 5:7-8)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 45:1-4

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the most excellent of men who's lips have been anointed with grace. He is blessed forever. He is the one clothed for battle who rides on behalf of humility and righteousness. Jesus was a king and warrior. His battle was not waged against man with sword and might but by laying down his life in humiliation upon a cross. Only Jesus can claim a victory for righteousness through humility. There is a distinct parallel with the description of the one who bears the sword in verse three to Revelation 1:16 and 19:11-16.

Questions for reflection:

- What does this passage say about this king's throne? (This passage says that the throne will last forever and ever.)
- Why is this passage quoted in the book of Hebrews? (In the first chapter of Hebrews there are several references from the Old Testament to show the supremacy of Christ.)
- How is this passage similar to Revelation 1:16 and 19:11-16? (Both of the men described are kings, bear swords, are riding a horse, and ride for the cause of truth.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

A LITTLE LAMB AND UNLEAVENED BREAD

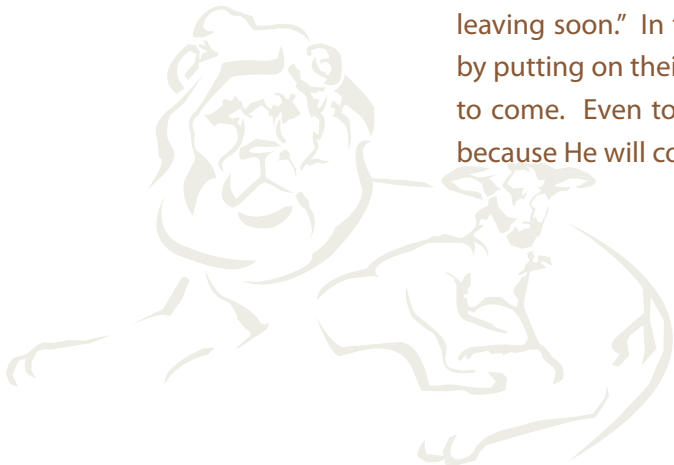
Supplies

- prior to class roast a small portion of lamb and either bake or purchase some unleavened bread (such as tortillas, pitas, or matzos), plates

Pass out small portions on plates for them to taste as you read through the story.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What was so magical about the blood of a lamb that it was able to hide them from judgment? (The blood of the lamb was not magical and it didn't hide the firstborn of Israel from God. The blood of the lamb reminded God of the coming sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. God looked ahead to the forgiveness that would come through His Son and based upon this God was able to pass over and not judge the firstborn of Israel.)
- Why should the Israelites eat with their belts fastened, sandals on their feet, staffs in hand, and eat quickly? (God was surely going to deliver them from Egypt and they needed to be ready to go. Just like when your mom and dad call out and say just before a trip, "Okay everyone, get your shoes and your jackets on, we are leaving soon." In the same way, Israel was able to demonstrate their faith in God by putting on their sandals and eating quickly because their deliverance was soon to come. Even today Matthew 24:44 tells us to be ready for the return of Christ because He will come when we least expect it.)



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THE FIRSTBORN

Supplies

- 8.5" x 11" red construction paper cut into quarters
- scissors

Pass a red rectangle of construction paper and a pair of scissors to each child. Have each child cut a cross out of their rectangle. (These need not be exact or all the same.) After all the children have finished, ask them to place their red crosses under their chair, and sit back down. Read the account of the final plague from Exodus 11:4-6.

Explain what it means to be the firstborn (see *A Little Theology*) and ask every firstborn child present in the room to stand. Explain to them that if they had been in Egypt on the Passover evening, they would have been in danger of death. Only one thing would have saved them.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What is the one thing that would save the firstborn of Egypt from death? (God instructed Israel to place the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their homes and then the last plague of death would pass by. Have the children who are standing pick up their red crosses and hold it while they stand.)
- What about the cattle, what would happen to the cattle that evening? (The firstborn of the cattle would also die.)
- While the firstborn are still standing, ask the class, what does the Passover foreshadow? What does the Passover point toward? (The Passover points to the day when Jesus would die for the sins of man. His blood would be sufficient to cover over our sins.)

Ask any children not standing to stand if they sinners and in need of God to cover their sin. Coach them so they understand that everyone is a sinner. Have them hold up their crosses and then pray for the class that God would help them to trust in Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.



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FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Supplies

- cut-out of a lamb
- large plastic bag filled with pieces of crackers
- belt to be tied around a child's waist
- a pair of sandals
- a large cardboard cross to be used in the end of this illustration

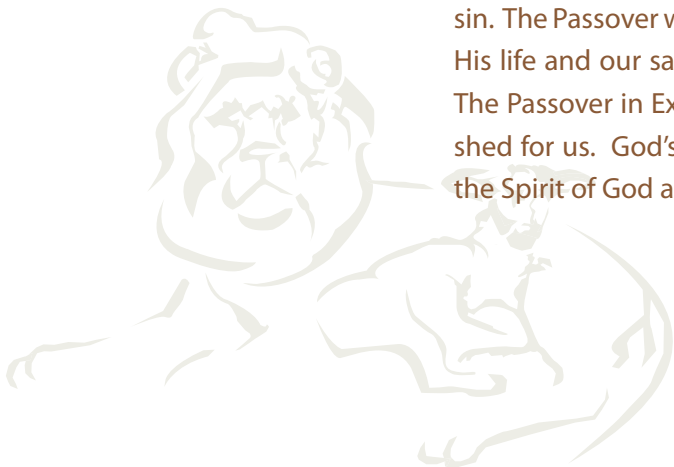
Place the children in a large circle. Pair them off with a partner. Tell them that each group of two people represents a generation in Israel. Read Exodus 12:14-17 and explain that God instructed Israel to remember the Passover feast and to pass it on to their children, who should also remember and keep the Passover.

As you tell the story of the Passover, give one pair of children the belt, sandals, the cut-out of the lamb, and crackers. One child should put on the sandals while the other puts on the belt. They should hold the lamb while they each eat a piece of cracker, then they should pass on the bag of crackers, lamb, belt, and sandals to the team to their right. The process continues as you tell the story of the Passover.

After at least two revolutions of the Passover, hold up the cross in the middle of the circle and ask them if they recognize what you are holding. They will say it's a cross and that it represents Jesus.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What do the lamb and its blood on the doorpost represent? (The lamb of the Passover represents Jesus and the blood of the lamb represents Jesus' blood that was shed for us on the cross.)
- Why do you think God had Israel practice the Passover every year down through the generations? What do you think God was preparing them for? (God had the Israelites celebrate the Passover every year so they would one day recognize that Jesus is the Savior, the Lamb of God.)
- Though some people still enjoy celebrating the Passover today, why is it no longer necessary? (Jesus, the Passover lamb, came to die once and for all to take away our sin. The Passover was meant to point to Jesus. Now that we have Jesus we celebrate His life and our salvation from sin and death through His death and resurrection. The Passover in Exodus was a shadow of the real Passover when Jesus' blood was shed for us. God's judgment passes over those of us who have been changed by the Spirit of God and who trust in the finished work of Christ.)



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PASSOVER BRACELET

Supplies

purchase enough colored beads and string for each child to make a simple bracelet. They will each need 12" of brown string, and two beads of each color – Black, Red, Gold, White

Use the making of the bracelet as a way to help the children remember the first Passover. In Exodus 12:23-27 God tells the people they are to remember and teach the story of the Passover as a lasting ordinance for their descendants. We of course still remember the Passover but, unlike the Jews who celebrate the Exodus from Egypt alone, we celebrate the ministry of Christ. The Passover is meant to point forward to Jesus. So now that Jesus has come, we remember Him. In fact, at the last supper, the Passover meal, Jesus gave us a new ceremony that we should remember Him with, the Lord's Supper. Now when we read about the first Passover we should always think about the ministry of Jesus to which it pointed.

Use the making of the bracelet to help the children remember the first Passover and then move to tell the story of the Gospel. Help the children connect the black, red, and white beads from both stories.

Brown string – The cross of Christ which was the plan of God through all of history

Black – The last plague of death which God sent to Egypt

Red – The blood of the lamb marking the doorpost, protecting Israel from God's judgment

Gold – The treasure given the Israelites by the Egyptians as they fled Egypt

White – The presence of God leading them into the promise land.

Black – The presence of sin in the lives of all people

Red – The blood off the Lamb which takes away our sin

White – The presence of God living within all believers now white as snow

Gold – Our treasure is in heaven together with Jesus



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children do a pencil drawing of a house, big enough to show a door frame and then pass out red markers and have them mark the doorposts with red.

FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies

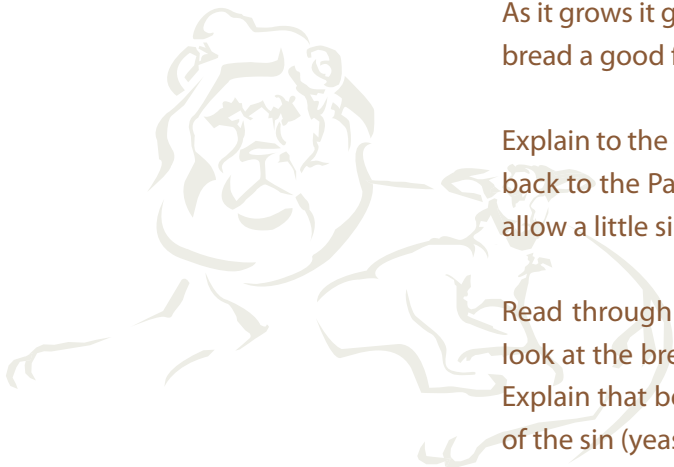
- bread dough
- glass bowl
- damp cloth
- warm location in classroom

Bring in a batch of bread dough that was allowed to rise once and then punched down just before class. Dough should be in a glass bowl with a damp cloth placed over it. The dough should be placed in a warm location so that it can rise during class.

Show the class the lump of dough when they first arrive. Explain how yeast works. Yeast is a microscopic, single-cell organism that produces alcohol and carbon dioxide as it grows. The carbon dioxide bubbles are caught and trapped in the strands of gluten in the bread mixture, causing it to rise. The longer it is allowed to sit at a warm temperature the more the yeast grows and multiplies. As it grows it gives off more and more carbon dioxide and maltose, which gives bread a good flavor. That is why bread is allowed to rise twice.

Explain to the children that 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 compares yeast to sin and refers back to the Passover and eating bread without yeast. The lesson is that if you allow a little sin in your life, it will grow and multiply.

Read through the story of the Passover and at the end of class take another look at the bread which should have risen over the course of your instruction. Explain that because Jesus was sacrificed for our sin, we should look to get rid of the sin (yeast) in our lives.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Firstborn – The term firstborn means the one who is born first.

The birth order of being the firstborn son brought with it a special blessing and inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). The firstborn son is said to be a sign of the father's strength and this son should inherit a double portion of the father's estate.

When God judged the firstborn of Egypt, He was bringing a significant judgment to every household of Egypt. Jesus is called the firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15); firstborn from among the dead (Colossians 1:18); and God's firstborn (Hebrews 1:6).

By protecting the firstborn of Israel and sparing them judgment, God made way for His firstborn son to be judged. Israel did not escape judgment; their judgement was simply postponed.

Jesus would take the judgment of the firstborn for Israel and of all people who by trusting in His sacrifice as atonement for their sins, might be spared the wrath of God.

