

## IT IS THE LORD'S PASSOVER

*Be still and know that I am God...*

As we draw closer to the Holy week, the Lord is saying, “...*be still and know that I am God...*” The events of the cross, in the gospel stories will bring us to the realization that He is God! In the coming week, Jesus is scheduled to have a Passover meal with his disciples. In (**Matt 26:17**) the disciples ask him, “*Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?*” The Passover was an event that brought total deliverance to the children of Israel! After a long time of oppression, the children of Israel were led with a mighty hand of God from slavery to freedom.

→ But this freedom was not without a price tag! Now, many people talk about freedom without necessarily wanting to pay the price. For the sake of Israel, God paid the price. The events that led the Israelites, to finally come out of Egypt help us to understand how God set a strong foundation for his people to be delivered from sin by Jesus Christ in the NT. It is this event that we first get to know God as a deliverer!! We have been delivered from the powers of darkness, eternal death and pains of this world through the blood of Christ; but the Old Testament sets the foundation, with which the NT then brings into reality through Jesus Christ.

The Passover leads to the exodus; the Passover represents the final blow on the enemy; it is an “*enough is enough scenario!*” the exodus on the other hand represents the freedom that God gave the Israelites! In other words, the Passover and the Exodus are inseparable; one of them, would not have happened without the other. There is no liberation without the blood of the lamb, there is no salvation without sacrifice, and there is no freedom without the cross of Jesus!!! The events of the night when Israel was set free from their cruel bondage in Egypt (**Exod.6:9**) were the defining events of their history. That night was to them the beginning of a new era of freedom!

The freedom that God gives, is total freedom; that's why when they were released they even carried stuff from Egypt and plundered the Egyptians! God is not a human being to give partial freedom! (*In 1958 Hastings Kamuzu Banda came to Malawi from UK and declared freedom: “freedom!” but people were disappearing in a land of freedom; was it freedom, or “free-doom?*) only God gives total freedom, Man gives free-doom! Surrender your little freedom to God. ! The children of Israel after their deliverance in **Exd.14.11** saw the Egyptians pursuing them; “*They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? They*

thought the small freedom they had was too good to surrender, they wanted to keep the status quo., yet God wanted total freedom for them. They thought that eating meat in Egypt as a slave, was better than being free and worshipping God.

→ Sometimes we think God is making a mistake when he has not done what we thought he would do. We therefore don't want to surrender our small freedom (*\*\*back in the years....high school.../ & 2006 experience of University of Pretoria, vs ucu.*) I surrendered and watched what God wanted to do.

During this lent season the Lord is inaugurating a new era of total freedom, for you and accept it! An era of visitation! Now before the Passover, the Israelites cried becoz of oppression; but in a twist of events, on the night of the Passover in (**Exd.12:30**) the bible says, "*And there was a great cry in Egypt,*" so this time, it was the Egyptians who cried!!

The Passover is a reminder that what God does in your life, has a way in which it shapes your understanding of who he is! For the sake of Israel, the night of the Passover fashioned their understanding of God. It framed their worldview, and configured their laws, shaped their social life. Having gone through that night, meant that their life was now under new management! The management of Pharaoh had long gone! What God does in your life, will shape your understanding of who he is;

The night of the Passover made the children of Israel know God as deliverer! Their obedience to his instructions paved a way for deliverance. Their freedom came because of obeying God's word. In **Exd.12:50** it says "*All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.*" In **vs. 51** we find the benefit of doing what God had commanded them, and it says, "*And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.*" Let me tell you, if you want to be free from any oppression, you must obey the voice of God, what is God saying about your situation? You must also believe the word of instruction from God.

Let's look at some of the instructions that God gave to the children if Israel.

**1. They were to choose a Victim:** Careful instructions were given to them about the nature of the sacrificial animal they were to choose. Look at **Exod.12:5** "*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of one year old.*" It was to be a lamb without blemish. The stress is on the need for the sacrifice to be perfect. They were instructed to offer the very best to God; without defect, blemish! This was to foretell an act in the NT where Jesus who was without sin, became our sacrifice! So you see, Jesus is the best sacrifice that ever existed! Nobody can ever take his place! Jesus became a victim once and for all to grant us total deliverance!!

**2. The blood of the lamb was to be smeared:** This blood was to be the sign that would lead or guide the angel as he visited Egypt that dreadful night, and it was to be the means by which the children of Israel would gain protection. This blood was to be a “*sign*” not simply a “*marker*”. There is a difference between a sign and a “*mark*” A sign is something that gives a message, like “*stop...*” A mark is more to do with the border or boundary. The sign of the blood smeared on the door carried a message of protection for Israel! You see in the blood was the life; according to **(Lev.17:11)** In other words, it was that “*life*” that provided “*life*” for Israel, not simply blood as a marker of protection! Life could only be bought by another life! It had to be blood!

Sadolin paint, or red ink, would not have provided any protection because there is no life in it! This is very powerful if we are to understand the idea that it is only the blood of Christ Jesus that provided life for mankind! For the world to live again, that particular blood of Christ had to be shed!!

**3. The Flesh was to be eaten:** Instructions about the Passover meal were given in a very detailed manner. The meat was to be accompanied by bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The herbs were to remind them of the bitterness they had experienced in Egypt. These details gained importance as they were applied to the work of Christ.

The Passover in the OT proved 4 things about God:

**1. *The Passover revealed the Power of God:***

God has power! His power cannot be equated to any other power! He was the commander in-chief directing the whole operation. Operation Exodus was successful because of his power! In **(Exod.15:3)**, the bible says, “*The LORD is a man of war*” In actual fact, if we were to think as military scientists, this is what we call “*Asymmetric warfare!*” The military power and strategy of God, differed significantly from that of Pharaoh. The Egyptians were facing a power that was far greater than they thought. God didn’t enter into any negotiations with Pharaoh as if he were a politician on equal terms with Him; He moved against Pharaoh and the bible says, he did so with “*an outstretched arm, and with mighty acts of judgment...*” He raised his mighty hand against this totalitarian ruler without any fear that he might be entering a contest he might not win! No! God does not have to think twice to deal with your enemies! He does not negotiate with any demonic power! He is God!

God acted in prevailing and transforming power. He pulled them out of danger, in fact the word here is similar to that of a decisive military action, and of being released

from slavery. He decisively dealt with this hostage situation! (*The US that invests heavily in security systems, has a dangerous Force known as the SWAT team: "Special Weapons & Tactics Team"*) This team is equipped to handle only hostage situations and armed criminals. They don't negotiate! When they move in, there is trouble; someone must gain freedom!

God is in the business of granting us freedom! Just like a decisive military strategist, he moves in, to do just that! That's why in **2 Cor.3:17** it says, "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*"

In **John 8:36**, Jesus said, "*the slave does not remain in the house forever; while the son remains forever; and that if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*"

\*\*\*There is a new season being inaugurated by God. I see a season of freedom tonight! Your prayers during lent haven't been in vain! Let's look at (**Dan.2:21**) "*He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding*)

(Ex.12:2 "*This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.*)

- 2. The Passover revealed the God's Faithfulness to his word.** The bible says in **Num. 23:19** "*God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*" Now generations before, in **Gen.15:13** God had warned Abraham that his descendants would endure a long period of slavery. He said, **Gen 15:13** "*Know for sure that your offspring will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years,*" but at the end in **vs. 14** God promised him, he said, "*but I will punish the nation they serve as slaves and afterwards they will come out with great possessions*" God will bring into judgment those that are oppressing you! He is faithful to his word! This is a promise that the book of exodus recalls more than once, speaking about it in a very deliberate manner as a covenant that he entered. Let me tell you, God can be trusted! After 430 years through the leadership of Moses, that time came to pass. The Passover lies at the heart of a great redemptive and transformative act of God. He set a time and a date for them to begin preparing for the Passover meal, In fact it is said that, that time they left Egypt, was a time when their corn in the fields would begin to ripe. This was symbolic to mark a fresh start for Israel as a nation.

The Passover was to be understood as a day when God would make a fresh start and begin a new thing in their lives! In the NT when Jesus comes to die on the cross, he brings together his disciples and celebrates the Passover meal with them, the intention was to mark the beginning of a new era, when man would receive salvation from the bondage of sin, putting an end the era of slavery to sin!

The Passover therefore is replaced by the Holy Communion which Jesus instituted to mark the NT era. The blood of the Passover lamb, saved and ushered the Israelites into a new life, while the blood of Jesus has saved and ushered us into eternal life, once and for all!

3. ***The Passover revealed the Compassion of God for his people.*** The bible says, the Lord heard their groans, listened to their cries for help, saw the misery they were in; and the bible says “he had pity on them.” (Exod.2:23-24) In Ps.72:12-14 it says “*For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.*”

God is a very compassionate being! God promised to rescue Sarah from the shame of barrenness, and he did so. God as a compassionate being, can undo anything that the enemy has done in a blink of an eye! He is the first person to use that short cut of **Control Z**, before the owner of Microsoft had ever thought about it!

\*\*\*\*The Lord says, He has been seeing your misery! He is a compassionate God! Today, call upon him to help you!! As we crown up this lent, he will not only deliver you, but you will grow in the knowledge of his word as well. God is so compassionate! The Israelites being held in slavery, and forced to submit to Pharaoh, he came down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians! God inflicted the final blow on Egypt for the sake of Israel. In (Exd.33:19) the compassionate Lord said, “*I will make all my goodness pass before you; and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.*”

4. ***The Passover revealed total Defeat for Egyptian gods:*** It is very important to understand that Egyptians were people who were worshipping idols. The contest between Egypt and Israel, Pharaoh and Moses was a contest not only of strength but of spiritual power. It was a contest between the living God of Israel and the gods of Egypt. God undermined and defeated the gods of Egypt. For example, the Egyptians believed that the Nile had a special god that would bring fertility to Egypt., so when God turned its water into blood, it was a big blow to the economy as well as the

religious system of Egypt. When God sent the plague of frogs, it was also a big blow to the Egyptians because they believed that frogs were associated with the goddess known as Hegt who was responsible for helping women in child birth. However frogs were unclean to the Egyptians and that plague meant that the whole land would be defiled and the goddess would lose control.

*\*\*\*Prayer for total defeat of every arrow the devil has set against his servants!*