
Introduction

Today is Palm Sunday, when we commemorate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem ahead of the Passover festival. Our music for today really focused on that energy. Jesus has already won the battle. We have victory in Him because of it. We are free to praise Him every chance we get. Why was Jesus entering Jerusalem? To overthrow the Roman occupation? No. To correct and discipline the Jewish leaders? No. To perform great signs and wonders? No. To be crucified? Yes eventually, but not really.

He entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover meal, because the events of Holy Week were about to reveal the true meaning behind a ceremony that had been celebrated for centuries. We are going to take an in-depth look at what Passover really means.

Pray

I. Exodus 12:1-13 [CSB] – Passover is a big deal to God

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month is to be the beginning of months for you; it is the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they must each select an animal of the flock according to their fathers' families, one animal per family. If the household is too small for a whole animal, that person and the neighbor nearest his house are to select one based on the combined number of people; you should apportion the animal according to what each will eat. You must have an unblemished animal, a year-old male; you may take it from either the sheep or the goats. You are to keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter the animals at twilight. They must take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat them. They are to eat the meat that night; they should eat it, roasted over the fire along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or cooked in boiling water, but only roasted over fire—its head as well as its legs and inner organs. You must not leave any of it until morning; any part of it left until morning you must burn. Here is how you must eat it: You must be dressed for travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in a hurry; it is the Lord's Passover.

"I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both people and animals. I am the Lord; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a

distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

- A. Backstory: The story is occurring in Egypt right before the Exodus of God's people.
- B. God defined the start of the Jewish year based on Passover.
- C. Passover is the first "holy day" of the Jewish year.
- D. Key points:
 - 1. Families must select an unblemished male sheep or goat
 - 2. The sacrifice is slaughtered by the community
 - 3. The blood is used as a sign
 - 4. They ate the lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs
 - 5. They had to eat it in a hurry and be ready to travel
- E. In this passage, God is about to execute judgments
- F. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you"
- G. Imagine being there right now, what comes to your mind?
- H. For me, fear and awe
 - 1. As a firstborn son, I would be afraid that my time has come early
 - 2. Knowing that God used Moses to call down all the other plagues would leave me speechless
- I. The Modern Passover Seder (Hebrew: order)
 - 1. Influenced by many outside cultures like the Greeks and Romans
 - 2. The 15-step meal was established after the destruction of the temple around 70 CE
 - 3. Includes symbolism attributed to Christ, namely the afikomen, where unleavened bread is broken in half and the 2nd half is hidden at the start of the meal only to return near the end of the meal

II. Exodus 12:14-20 [CSB] – The Festival of Unleavened Bread is a big deal to God

"This day is to be a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to the Lord. You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute. You must eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you must remove yeast from your houses. Whoever eats what is leavened from the first day through the seventh day must be cut off from Israel. You are to hold a sacred assembly on the first day and another sacred assembly on the seventh day. No work may be done on those days except for preparing what people need to eat—you may do only that.



“You are to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread because on this very day I brought your military divisions out of the land of Egypt. You must observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent statute. You are to eat unleavened bread in the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day of the month until the evening of the twenty-first day. Yeast must not be found in your houses for seven days. If anyone eats something leavened, that person, whether a resident alien or native of the land, must be cut off from the community of Israel. Do not eat anything leavened; eat unleavened bread in all your homes.”

- A. This festival starts on Passover (14th day of the month) and lasts 1 week
- B. Two Sabbaths were designated:
 - 1. On the first day (14th day of the month)
 - 2. On the seventh day (20th day of the month)
- C. They had to “Spring Clean” their house to remove all rising agents (like yeast) and remain free of these rising agents for seven days
- D. If you eat anything made with rising agents during the festival, you were cut off from Israel!
- E. Why unleavened bread?
- F. It is the “perfect survival food”
- G. From entropysurvival.com, a practical preparedness website:

Unlike the fluffy, risen breads we're accustomed to in modern kitchens, unleavened bread contains no yeast, baking powder, or other rising agents. This seemingly simple difference creates a food that's ideally suited for emergency situations. The absence of leavening agents means unleavened bread can be made quickly, requires minimal ingredients, and stores for extended periods without refrigeration.

The genius of unleavened bread lies in its simplicity. When you're facing a power outage, limited cooking facilities, or need to evacuate quickly, you don't want complicated recipes requiring precise measurements, specific temperatures, or specialized equipment. Unleavened bread can be mixed in any container, cooked on any heat source, and prepared by anyone regardless of their baking experience.

From a nutritional standpoint, unleavened bread provides the carbohydrates your body needs for energy during stressful situations. When you're dealing with emergency repairs, evacuation procedures, or simply the mental strain of uncertain circumstances, your body burns through calories more quickly than



usual. The quick energy provided by carbohydrates becomes essential, making bread a practical survival food that goes beyond mere sustenance.

H. God was preparing His people for the Exodus

III. Exodus 12:21-28 [CSB] – When God instructs, we must go and do!

Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood in the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning. When the Lord passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, he will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you.

"Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, you are to observe this ceremony. When your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' you are to reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, and he spared our homes.'" So the people knelt low and worshiped. Then the Israelites went and did this; they did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.

- A. Symbolism: the sign of the cross using the blood that was shed to protect them from God's wrath
- B. We have the luxury of seeing this after Christ's life on earth
- C. Legacy minded question: What does this ceremony mean to you?
- D. We are celebrating the Lord's Supper, Communion, commemorating Passover

The Crux

Jesus is known as the Passover Lamb, whose blood was shed to atone for our sins once and for all so that God's wrath passes over us. Whether the Lord's Supper was a part of the ceremonial Passover meal or not is immaterial. What's important is that we approach Communion with the same reverence, or respectful seriousness, needed when approaching the throne of God regardless of how often we participate in it.