

GOD IS KEEPING HIS PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE WHO ARE OBSESSED WITH CHRIST

Exodus 12: 1-20

Please review this week's catechism question.

Who did you meet new after Sunday worship this last week?

INTRODUCTION

What are some of the main things that identify people who belong to a political party or a labor union or a 4H club or a bowling league or a college fraternity?

When people voluntarily join groups and organizations, they take on certain characteristics or behaviors that all the members of the group share in common. In the days immediately preceding God's delivering Israel from their slavery in Egypt, God tells Israel what it is that will identify them as his people forever. He gives them instructions on how he wants them to remember and celebrate the night he delivered them from Egypt. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are used throughout the NT to describe the person and work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as we examine God's instructions about the Passover we are going to discover what it is that identifies us as members of God's people, the church.

STUDY

1. According to vv. 12-13, 15 and 19, what will happen to those who refuse to put the blood of the lamb on their door and those who refuse to celebrate the Passover meal and Feast of Unleavened Bread in the years following this first "Passover"?

The implication of vv. 12-13 is that if anyone refuses to kill the lamb and puts its blood over their door, the Lord will destroy the firstborn son of that house, even though they are Jewish. Then in vv. 15 & 19 those who refuse to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread will be cut off from the people of God. In other words, participation in the

Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is how you enter into the community of God, how you escape the destroying angel, and how you remain part of the community of God. Israel is to be obsessed with God's delivering them from Egypt through the blood of the sacrificial lamb. They are to be consumed with remembering and worshipping God's deliverance when they had to eat unleavened bread and left behind their bitter slavery.

2. According to Matthew 5:17, Luke 24:25-27, 44-47, 1 Peter 1: 10-12, what is the relationship of Jesus to the entire OT?

The whole OT is about "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that will follow." He is the fulfillment of the OT and the one who fulfills all of the OT.

3. How do the following passages specifically connect Christ to the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread?

- Luke 22:7-20 *The night before Jesus was crucified he instituted a memorial meal for all his people to celebrate until he comes again. In fact, he and his disciples were eating the Passover meal on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish calendar when he said, "This is my body, broken for you." "This is the blood of the new covenant shed for you." Just like Moses commanding Israel right before God delivers them from their slavery to remember God's deliverance from Egypt in the Passover meal, Jesus commands his church to remember his deliverance in the communion meal. What Jesus did during the last Passover meal he ate with his disciples was an intentional reenactment of what God tells Moses to do here.*
- John 1:29 *John the Baptist calls Jesus, "The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." This is a clear reference to Jesus as the Passover lamb.*
- 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 *Paul identifies Christ directly with the Passover lamb that has delivered us from God's wrath. He goes on to identify the yeast with sin and shows that just as Israel had to*

be a community without any yeast so we are to be a community without any sin.

- 1 Peter 2:18-19 *Peter uses the exact same language to describe Christ in his letter that God used to describe the Pascal lamb in Exodus.*

4. If you were Moses and Aaron and knew that you were about to lead over 2 million people who have been slaves for generations, away from civilization and out into the desert, what kinds of concerns might you have?

Where will we get food and water? How will we transport the very young, the very old and the disabled? How will we decide where to go, where to camp, etc.? How will we keep everybody together? How will we govern these people who have been under Egyptian oppression for so long?

5. What does God think is the most important thing they need to know, as they get ready to leave?

God thinks the most important thing they need to know is how to pick out a year old male lamb with not blemishes, on the tenth day of the first month, have it come live in their homes for four days, then kill it and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs dressed to leave at a moment's notice. He wants them to know about this lamb and he wants them to know that they must yearly remember what happened with this lamb for the rest of their generations.

6. What are the ways that this year old male lamb with not defects points to the glory of Christ?

First, just as the lamb comes to live with the family for whom it will give its life and become food, Christ came into the world of sinners. The eternal Son of God came and lived with us. He endured all the miseries of our lives. He experienced the loss of loved ones, including his human father, Joseph. He lived in a family with at least 6 siblings and all the bickering that entails. He experienced being misunderstood and insulted by others, even by those who were closest

to him, his family and disciples. He experienced poverty and hunger and sickness. Jesus is not a God who is far off and distant. He has lived among us. He knows what it is like to be human. He laid aside his rights to be treated as God and to act as God. As Paul says, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." He gave up all the comfort and glory of heaven to come and live with us and endure all that we endure plus the wrath of God on the cross. He did all of this voluntarily, out of his love for God and for us.

The second thing about the lamb that points to the grandeur of Christ's person is that it was without defect. He was tempted in every way that we are tempted, yet was without sin. Jesus has no moral defects. He loved God and people perfectly from the moment of his conception. He never yelled at his parents or siblings. He never lied about anything to anyone. He never tried to make himself look better than others or was jealous when others were treated better than he. He never lusted after a woman. He never swore. He was never angry with God or complained when things didn't go his way. He always hated evil perfectly, without any mixture of selfish lust or pride. No unwholesome talk ever came out of his mouth. Every word he ever uttered met the needs of those to whom he was speaking and was aimed to build them up, not him. He never worried about money or relationships or the future. Jesus continues perfect in his holiness, his justice, his love, his wisdom and his compassion. There is no imperfection in Jesus. He has no flaw. He is perfectly lovely and attractive.

7. How often do you think about the greatness of the incarnated Son of God?

The people of God are obsessed with the grandeur of the person of Christ.

8. God knows which homes in Egypt contain Egyptians and which homes contain Hebrews. Why then does he require the blood of the lamb to be placed on the homes? Why is the blood necessary for him to "pass over" the Jewish homes?

First, by requiring the death of this year old, male, unblemished lamb God shows that the reason he is sparing Israel's firstborn sons is not because Israel is somehow more deserving than the Egyptians. Every home in Egypt, including every Jewish home, deserves to have the firstborn sons in it killed. It would be perfectly just for God to kill the firstborn sons of Israel along with those of Egypt. What will distinguish each Israelite home that does as God says is the blood of the lamb on their doors. If there is no blood on the door, the firstborn son will justly die, even if the family is Jewish. Second, God has provided a substitute for the firstborn sons of Israel in the lamb. Rather than killing the firstborn sons, God accepts the death of the male lamb in place of the sons. Every home, Egyptian and Israelite, deserves to have death visited upon it. Therefore, either the firstborn sons must die or the substitute Lamb that God supplies must die. Third, every home that lives with a lamb for 4 days and then kills it, spreads the blood and eats it is living by faith in the promise of God. There is no logical connection between a year old lamb and a firstborn son except that God himself has said this is the condition for his sparing the Jewish homes. Every home that obeys God does so in faith, believing that the blood of the Lamb secures their salvation.

9. How is the glory of Christ shown in the death of this lamb and in the spreading of this blood?

Every person sitting here deserves to die for his or her sins. Yet, God provided his very own Son to be the satisfaction of his wrath against our sin. God has sprinkled the blood of his son upon each person who trusts in Christ. When he sees the blood, he passes over our sins. He does not give us what our sins deserve because he has given what our sins deserve, death, to his son. The person and the church that belongs to God is obsessed with the death of Jesus for our sins. It is this death that we sing about and think about and pray about and talk about. Nothing is more appealing to us or more astonishing to us than the death of the perfect, spotless Son of God for us. The main event in the history of the universe is the death of Christ.

10. How does thinking about the death of Christ for your sins affect you?

The people of God are obsessed with the grandeur of the death of Christ.

11. According to v. 11 how are the Israelites to eat the Passover meal, even after they have arrived in the land of Promise?

The Israelites are to eat the Passover meal, ready to flee from Egypt. They are to be packed and ready to go. However, you will note that the language doesn't limit the hastiness of the meal or the "ready to leave" attitude to just the first Passover. The meal to be celebrated throughout their history continually maintains this attitude of readiness to leave. The meal is a continual reminder of leaving Egypt and heading for the Land of Promise. Even after they have arrived in the Land of Promise, the meal maintains this forward-looking aspect. While the meal always remembers how God delivered them from their slavery in Egypt it always is also a reminder that there is a greater fulfillment coming than simply living in the land of Canaan.

12. In Luke 22:16, what does Jesus say about his relationship to the Passover meal? What does this mean?

Jesus says in Luke 22:16 that he will not eat the Passover meal again until it finds its fulfillment in the kingdom of heaven. The completion of what God began at the first Passover and the Exodus, continued at the last Supper and the death of Jesus, will only be completed when all God's people are gathered around the table at the wedding feast of the Lamb of God in heaven. We will forever remember and worship the Lord Jesus Christ for his great salvation. The Passover meal is always a reminder of what God has done to save his people but also a looking forward to the final salvation that will come with the arrival of the Messiah at the end of the ages.

13. How does Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:26 emphasize this same characteristic of the communion?

In 1 Corinthians 11:26 the apostle Paul summarizes the purpose of communion by saying, "...whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Communion, like Passover, is a regular reminder of what God has done to save us and

that his final salvation is yet coming. While we are always looking back at the death of Christ, which is the guarantee of God's deliverance, so we are always looking ahead to that final deliverance. We are watching for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

14. Do you think about the return of Christ very often? Why or why not?

The people of God are obsessed with the grandeur of the return of Christ.

Just as the Israelites were to be obsessed, throughout their history with this lamb so we are to be obsessed with Christ. John Owen's, the famous pastor and theologian of the mid-1600s wrote a book entitled, "The Glory of Christ" that seeks to describe his glory so we will be obsessed with him. Finish today's study by reading these passages and discussing how you relate to what he says:

"No person shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight in heaven who does not, in some measure, behold it by faith in the this world.... All of us naturally regard ourselves as fit for eternal glory. But few of us have any idea of how unfit we really are, because we have had no experience of that glory of Christ, which is in heaven.... A fish would not thank you for taking it out of the sea and putting it on dry land under the blazing sun! Neither would an unregenerate sinner welcome the thought of living forever in the blazing glory of Christ."

"It is by beholding the glory of Christ by faith that we are spiritually edified and built up in this world, for as we behold his glory, the life and power of faith grow stronger and stronger. It is by faith that we grow to love Christ. So if we desire strong faith and powerful love, which give us rest, peace and satisfaction, we must seek them by diligently beholding the glory of Christ by faith. In this duty, I desire to live and to die. On Christ's glory I would fix all my thought and desires, and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes and I will be more and more crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy."