

WEEK 3: THE JEWISH PASSOVER

Introduction

1. Sessions 1 and 2: Worship and Sacrifice in the Old Testament
2. The Death of Christ: the ultimate sacrifice; the pure offering
3. Question: How can the Eucharist be a sacrifice when Christ died 2000 Years ago?
4. Answer: to see the Eucharist through ancient Jewish eyes, as a *new Passover*
5. The *Catechism* on Jewish Worship and Christian Worship (CCC 1096)

A better knowledge of the Jewish people's faith and religious life... can help our better understanding of certain aspects of Christian liturgy. The relationship between Jewish liturgy and Christian liturgy, but also their differences in content, are particularly evident in the great feasts of the liturgical year, such as Passover. -CCC 1096

- a. Jewish Liturgy: a “better knowledge” can “help our better understanding”
- b. Passover: connections “particularly evident” in “the Passover”

Egypt: Israel in Slavery and Sin

1. Prophecy: Abraham’s descendants will be enslaved for “400 years” (Gen 15:13)
2. Promise: God’s will on day set Israel free (Exod 6:6-8)

Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment, and I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.’” -Exod 6:6-8

- a. Redemption: “I will deliver you from their bondage” (Exod 6:6)
 - b. Covenant: “I will take you for my people, and I will be your God” (Exod 6:7)
 - c. Promised Land: “I will bring you into the land...” (Exod 6:8)
3. Israel in Sin: they fell into idolatry (Ezek 20:6-8)
 - a. Idolatry: the Israelite defiled themselves with “the idols of Egypt”
 - b. Rebellion: God called them to turn away, but “they would not listen” to him

The Plagues of the Exodus

1. God’s Message to Pharaoh: “Israel is my *first-born son*” (Exod 4:22)
2. Reason for the Exodus: so that they may *worship* me (Exod 5:1-3)

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover I will not let Israel go.” -Exod 5:1-2

3. Pharaoh’s Response: No! “Get to your burdens” and “work” (Exod 5:4-5)
4. God’s Response: the ten Plagues of the Exodus (Exodus 5-11)

The Plagues of Egypt

1. Nile to Blood
2. Frogs
5. Cattle
9. Darkness
10. First Born of Pharaoh

The Gods of Egypt

1. Hapi, god of the Nile, fertility
2. Hekhet, frog goddess of fruitfulness
5. Apis, Hathor, cow-gods
9. Amon-Rē the Sun god
10. Pharaoh considered a ‘god’

5. Purpose of Plagues: “On all *the gods of Egypt* I will execute judgment” (Exod 12:12)

6. Passover: the final plague that sets Israel Free (Exodus 12-13)

Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever. -Exod 11:10, 12:1-14

The Passover Sacrifice

1. Step 1: Choose an Unblemished Male Lamb (Exod 12:1-5)
2. Step 2: Sacrifice the Lamb (Exod 12:6)
3. Step 3: Spread the Blood of the Lamb on the Door (Exod 12:7; cf. 12:22-23)
4. Step 4: Eat the "Flesh" of the Lamb (Exod 12:8-13)
5. Step 5: Keep the Passover as a "Memorial" (Exod 12:14)
6. Meaning: "because of what the Lord did for *me*..." (Exod 13:7-8)

Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' -Exod 13:7-8

The Passover and the Exodus Journey

1. Exodus *Begins* with Passover: "a night of watching" (Exod 12:40-42)

The time that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It was a night of watching by the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the Lord by all the people of Israel throughout their generations. -Exod 12:40-42

2. Exodus Journey: 40 Years in the Desert! (Numbers 14; Deuteronomy 1-34)
3. Exodus *Ends* with Passover: Joshua crosses Jordan River at Passover (Josh 5:10-11)

Later Jewish Tradition: the Passover as a “Remembrance”

1. In the Promised Land: they continue to celebrate Passover every Spring
2. The Annual Passover: a “participation” in the first Exodus from Egypt

In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt, for it is written... “It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt” (Exod 13:8). Therefore we are bound to give thanks... -Mishnah, Pesachim 10:5; trans. H. Danby

Later Jewish Tradition: Blessing of the Bread and Wine

“Blessed are you, Lord God, who brings forth bread from the earth.”

-Mishnah, *Beraokoth* 6:1

“Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.”

-Mishnah, *Berakoth* 6:1

Later Jewish Tradition: the Passover and the Coming of the Messiah!

Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah:

“In the night that they [Israel] were redeemed...”

In that night they will be redeemed” -*Mekilta on Exod 12:42*

The New Passover of Christ

St. Paul:

Christ, *our paschal lamb* (Greek *pascha*), has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, *keep the feast...*! -1 Corinthians 5:7-8

The Catechism:

The Eucharist is *the memorial of Christ's Passover...* In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, *they become in a certain way present and real*. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: *every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present* to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them. In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. *When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's Passover, and it is made present:* the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present. “As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which ‘Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed’ is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out.” -CCC 1362-64