

File No. 27

EXODUS 11:1 – 12:42;

Exodus 3:21–22; Psalm 105:36

THE PASSOVER NIGHT

(SBS Bk 1 Story No. 39)

Story Notes

Background Information

All peoples needed to observe and fear as they saw God speaking to and setting his people free. The blessing they needed for their own life would be available to them as they blessed Israel and the God of Israel.

We should always remember that God has compassion on the nations and, through saving his people, reveals his nature and his purpose to bring salvation to all nations.

Main Lesson

Nine different plagues had come on Egypt, all of them by God's word. These revealed the power and the purpose of God to save his people. Now the contest of man against God came to its finale which God had outlined at the beginning — my 'son' Israel must be set free to worship me, or your son will die.

Egypt's people and government now saw Moses as having executive authority in the country, and the Hebrews as people to be served rather than treat as slaves. God had established the greatness of his name in the blessing of his people. Now God made an ultimate distinction between his people and those who were not his people.

Israel was distinct from all other nations, but not because they were better than any other nation. If they were to be 'passed over' when the angel of death visited, preparations had to be made. A lamb was to be killed, its blood sprinkled around the house's door, its flesh eaten. These were signs of something to come but were a sign to keep the angel of death at bay.

The Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are spoken of together. In times to come, the latter feast would follow on for 7 days after the Passover (Exod. 12:11,15; 34:18, 25). In the New Testament, they are regarded as one event (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1).

It was God who made this distinction between the world and his people. It was his offering that prevented wrath falling on the homes of his people. This was to be the beginning of their new history, and an on going remembrance through their years. On that night, they did not have opportunity to put yeast in their bread, and, to remember this fact, their annual festival was to include no food made with yeast. This was later interpreted as a sign of separation from evil (Matt. 16:6; I Cor. 5:6–8).

So, the congregation of Israel was formed. They were a people created by God's saving deed, distinguished by their reliance on the sacrifice provided by God, and separated from dependence on the powers of this world.

In this ancient event, God prepared his people for the exodus to be effected by his Son at the cross (Luke 9:31). He foreshadowed the sprinkling of Christ's blood which would save us from the wrath to come (Rom. 5:9), and anticipated his enthronement as Lord over all our enemies. He prepared us for our radical separation from this world and its sin — so that we would have no hope other than the living God and his grace (Phil. 3:3).