

# 5

## Passover



### SABBATH—JULY 26

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Exodus 11:1–10; Exodus 12:1–20; Exodus 12:17–23; Exodus 12:24–28; Exodus 12:29, 30.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘When your children ask you, “Why are we doing these things?” you will say, “This is the Passover sacrifice [offering] to honor the Lord. When we were in Egypt, the Lord passed over the houses of Israel. The Lord killed the Egyptians, but he saved our homes.” ’ So now the people bowed down and worshiped the Lord” (Exodus 12:26, 27, ICB).



**The king's decision hurt many people and destroyed his country.**

**THE 10TH PUNISHMENT** is about to fall on Egypt. Moses gives Pharaoh, king of Egypt, his last warning. The king must make his final decision. Pharaoh and his leaders will soon make a decision that will cause the life or death of many people. Pharaoh's decision will change the lives of everyone in Egypt forever. Pharaoh's thoughts and feelings about the living God of Israel will decide his future and that of every Egyptian.

How do we feel, and what do we do, when we must make a choice that will change the lives of so many people?

God is more than willing to give us wisdom, understanding, and power to make the right decision (1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 2:13).

Sad to say, we don't always want to do what is right. We know what is right, but we refuse to do it. In the story about how God helped Israel escape from Egypt, one king refused to obey God. The king's decision hurt many people and destroyed his country.

**GOD TELLS HIS PEOPLE TO BE FAIR (Exodus 11:1–10)**

Amos was a prophet or special messenger from God. Amos said, “When the Lord God decides to do something, he will first tell his servants, the prophets” (Amos 3:7, ERV). God told His prophet Moses what will happen next for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Moses gave Pharaoh a strong warning. God was going to punish Pharaoh’s pride and other sins. These sins included Pharaoh’s worship of false gods. Pharaoh also hurt God’s people and made them his slaves. All of the king’s sins caused God to punish Egypt.

**What warning did God give Pharaoh before He punished Egypt? Read Exodus 11:1–10 for the answer.**

God gave Egypt time: three days of darkness (Exodus 10:22, 23). During this time, God wanted the Egyptians to think about things that happened and what they meant. God gave the Egyptians a final warning. The warning was clear. God gave the Egyptians a final chance to do the right thing.

But Exodus 11:8 says that “Moses was very angry when he left Pharaoh” (NirV). Why was Moses so angry? Maybe because he knew that the 10th punishment would cause a terrible disaster in the lives of many innocent people. All of these things happened because Pharaoh was so stubborn.

Ten is an important number in the Bible. Ten shows us something that is complete, full, or perfect. (Think about the Ten Commandments as a perfect example of God’s law.) The ten punishments that fell on Egypt show God’s full anger at Egypt’s sin.

God is the Judge. He hates pride. He also hates when people aren’t fair. God hates when people are selfish, mean, or hurt other people. God feels love and pity on people who suffer. God will punish evil. God’s work as Judge shows us His love. (Read Psalm 2:12; Psalm 33:5; Psalm 85:11; Psalm 89:14; Psalm 101:1; Isaiah 16:5; Jeremiah 9:24.)

We, too, should try the best we can to be both loving and fair. We easily can love too much or too little. We may pretend not to see wrongs in other people that need to be corrected. We also can do what is right with no love in our hearts. Both ways are wrong. But “the Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly [with no pride in your heart], trusting your God” (Micah 6:8, ICB).



**The ten punishments that fell on Egypt show God’s full anger at Egypt’s sin.**

## THE PASSOVER (Exodus 12:1–20)

**What does God want Israel to do before they leave Egypt? Read Exodus 12:1–20 for the answer.**

We may expect God to tell Moses and Aaron about how to get the people ready to leave Egypt. What should they do for old people, mothers with small children, animals, and so on? But God gives Moses and Aaron surprising orders. God tells them how to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was the time when God killed in one night the Egyptians' sons who were born first and saved His people from this punishment. So, God's orders are about worship.

Each family must cook a lamb. The Israelites must not waste any part of the lamb. Every family member must eat part of it. If the family couldn't eat the whole lamb, they must eat their meal together with another family.

**What was the Lord going to do for His people when the final punishment fell on Egypt? Read Exodus 12:13, 14 for the answer. What does God's protection symbolize?**



**The word “passover” is a combination of two words “pass” and “over,” because the punishment “passed over” the homes of the Israelites that were marked with the lamb’s blood.**

God commanded the Israelites to celebrate the Exodus each year. The Exodus was the time when God helped His people escape from Egypt. God wanted His people to remember how He saved them in the past. He also wanted His people to trust in Him to save them now and in the future.

Verses 12 and 13 explain the meaning of the Passover: God's punishment will “pass over” the Israelites and not hurt them. The word “passover” is a combination of two words: “pass” and “over,” because the punishment “passed over” the homes of the Israelites that were marked with the lamb's blood. The lamb's blood was the sign of life and God's saving mercy. In the Hebrew language, the name of the Passover is “Pesach,” which comes from an action word that means “to pass over.”

The celebration of the Passover helped the Israelites to remember the mighty and loving things that God did to save His people. This celebration helped the Israelites to become a people and gave them strong reasons for their faith in God.

**Why is it so important to remember the good things God did for us in the past? How does our remembering help us trust that God will do good things for us in the future?**



**PESACH, THE PASSOVER (Exodus 12:17–23)**

**Read about the Passover feast in Exodus 12:17–23. Why is blood an important part of this new celebration?**

The blood of the killed animal is an important part of the Passover celebration. As we saw already, Passover was the time when God killed in one night the Egyptians' sons who were born first. God saved His people from this punishment. In faith, the people put the blood of the killed lamb on the doorframes of their houses. In this way, the Israelites showed their faith that God would save them from the coming punishment. The blood shows us a powerful example of the Good News that Jesus saves us from our sins!

The Passover lamb must be perfect because it was a symbol of Jesus' perfect offering for our sins. Jesus is "the Lamb of God Who takes away [removes] the sin of the world [the people on the earth]!" (John 1:29, NLV). The animal's blood showed God's protection and was the sign of life at a time of death. The Lord promised, " 'But the blood will be a sign on the houses where you are. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. Nothing terrible will hurt you when I punish the land of Egypt' " (Exodus 12:13, ICB).

Hundreds of years later, Paul wrote about this celebration: "Clean out the old yeast [makes bread rise]. Then you will be new bread with none of the old yeast in you. The Jews killed lambs when they left Egypt. Christ [Jesus] is our lamb. He has already been killed as a gift on the altar to God for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7, NLV).

Yeast was added to dough. The yeast helped the bread to rise. The first time the Bible talks about dough is in the story about the Passover, on the night the Israelites got ready to leave Egypt. God commanded the people to make bread without any yeast. God also commanded the Israelites to remove all yeast from their homes. Yeast is an example of how sin behaves (1 Corinthians 5:6–8). So, the people must not use yeast during the Passover celebration for a whole week.

The bread with no yeast is a word picture for the Savior who did not sin. Jesus gave up His life for us (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 4:15). Priests or religious leaders dipped the hyssop, a special plant, in the blood of a lamb. The hyssop was a word picture for God's loving forgiveness that makes us clean from all sin (Psalm 51:7, NIV). So, the Passover shows us the saving work of Jesus.



**God commanded the people to make bread without any yeast.**



## TEACHING OUR CHILDREN (Exodus 12:24–28)

The writer of the Psalms explains how our children can know about God and His loving care: “Parents will tell their children what you have done. They will retell [tell again] your mighty acts” (Psalm 145:4, ICB). One family should talk to another family about God, the wonderful things He did, and His teachings. In this way, parents will teach their children about Bible truth.

**Read Exodus 12:24–28. What important idea do we read about in these verses?**

Parents were the first teachers in Israel. God commanded the parents to tell the story of the Exodus to their children. The Exodus was the time when God led His people out of slavery in Egypt. God wanted the parents to talk about the Exodus as their own experience, and not just as something that happened in the past. When the parents celebrated the Exodus, they lived their history again. The Israelites were **in** Egypt when God commanded them to celebrate their freedom **from** Egyptian slavery. So, the whole celebration was an act of faith.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses tells the Israelites to share the story about their past in a way that makes it their own story. Look at the way the story gets told in these verses: “Then you will speak while the Lord is listening. You will say, ‘My father Jacob was a wanderer from the land of Aram. He went down into Egypt with a few people. He lived there and became the father of a great [mighty] nation. It had huge [big] numbers of people. But the people of Egypt treated us badly [hurt us]. They made us suffer. They made us work very hard. Then we cried out to the LORD. He is the God of our people who lived long ago. He heard our voice. He saw how much we were suffering. The Egyptians were treating us badly. They were making us work very hard. So the LORD used his mighty hand and powerful arm to bring us out of Egypt. He did great [wonderful] and terrifying things. He did signs and amazing things. He brought us to this place. He gave us this land. It’s a land that has plenty of milk and honey’ ” (Deuteronomy 26:5–9, NIV). When parents told their stories to their children in this way, the stories also helped the parents to remember everything God did for them in the past.



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## PUNISHMENT FROM GOD (Exodus 12:29, 30)

**Read Exodus 12:29, 30, which tells the story about how God killed the Egyptians' sons who were born first. Why did God kill these children? (Also read Hebrews 11:28.)**

The last punishment fell on the Egyptians' sons who were born first. This punishment showed God's anger against all the gods of Egypt and the families who worshiped these false gods. As we saw with the earlier punishments, these false gods couldn't save the Egyptians. The 10th punishment showed how useless the gods of the Egyptians really were. This final punishment brought the worst suffering on the Egyptians.

"God punished the pride in the hearts of the Egyptians in every house in the land. The cries of the Egyptians filled the air. The faces of the king and his followers were white with fear and their legs and arms shook. The death of their children filled them with fear."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 280, adapted.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was the highest power in the land. The people believed that he was a god of Egypt. So, the people believed his oldest son was the son of a god. Isis was a female god who protected children. Heqet was a female god who helped women during childbirth. Min was a god who helped people make babies. Many other Egyptian gods helped people have babies. But all of these gods had no power. Only the living Lord had power. Moses says, " 'LORD, who among the gods is like [the same as] you? Who is like you? You are majestic [royal] and holy. Your glory fills me with wonder. You do amazing things' " (Exodus 15:11, NIV). Jethro later said, " 'Now I know the LORD is greater [more powerful] than all the gods. They thought they were in control, but look what God did!' " (Exodus 18:11, ERV).

Exodus 1 tells us that the Egyptians killed the newborn sons of Israel on Pharaoh's command. Pharaoh ordered the babies to be killed to weaken the Israelites and to fill them with shame. Now God punishes all the Egyptians. He takes their first-born sons. God will allow us to suffer the same things we do to cause other people to suffer. Our decisions and behavior change other people's lives, for good or evil. The sad truth is that when we do wrong, we aren't the only ones who suffer. Sometimes many other people, including innocent people, will suffer, too. That is the sad truth about sin.



**The last punishment fell on the Egyptians' sons who were born first.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Passover,” pages 273–280, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

As we saw already, Passover was the time when God killed in one night the Egyptians’ sons who were born first. God saved His people from this punishment. “The Passover was both a celebration and a word picture. The Passover helped God’s people remember how He helped them escape from slavery in Egypt. Also, the Passover helped the people look forward to the work Jesus would do. Jesus would help His people escape from the slavery to sin. The lamb that was killed was a symbol of ‘the Lamb of God’ [John 1:29, ERV]. This lamb is our only hope of being saved. Paul says, ‘Christ, our Passover lamb, was killed to cleanse [make clean] us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7 [ICB]. The Passover Lamb must be killed. Then its blood must be painted on the doorframes. In the same way, the blood of Jesus must make us clean from all sin. We must believe that Jesus died for each one of us. We must accept His offering for our sins.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 277, adapted.



**During the Seder, Jewish families tell the story about the Exodus, the time when God helped His people escape from slavery in Egypt.**

To this day, many Jewish families worldwide celebrate Pesach or Passover. These families have a special feast named a “Seder.” During the Seder, Jewish families tell the story about the Exodus, the time when God helped His people escape from slavery in Egypt. After the story, the families enjoy a special meal together. Just think: Jewish people have been keeping this same feast since the time of the Exodus! Amazing!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ Was God really “fair” when He struck down the sons of Egypt? How should we understand this story?
- ❷ What do we mean when we say that we are covered with the blood of Jesus?
- ❸ “Christians must share in the experience of Jesus. They must accept Bible truth and live it so that it becomes the reason for everything they do in life. They must become the same as Jesus in their hearts. They must show God’s love and mercy. . . . The spirit and work of Jesus must become the spirit and work of His followers.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 278, adapted. How do we allow Jesus to do in us what is written in this quote?



## TRADING SPORTS FOR GOD

**S**ilva Langa was a high school student in Mozambique. Silva's favorite sport was soccer. Silva loved to play soccer so much. He played whenever he could. Soccer was his god. Silva was a good player. He wanted to play soccer for a living after he finished high school.

Then a friend surprised him when he said, "There are many good things about you, Silva. But you don't have God."

Silva was surprised. Then his friend, Hodes, invited him to church on Saturday. Silva never heard about a church that worshiped on Saturdays. Saturday wasn't a good day for Silva to go to church. Most of Silva's soccer games were on that day.

Hodes was a good friend. So, Silva decided to go to church with him on the next Saturday he was free. Silva was surprised again. Church members were loving. The hymns touched Silva's heart. Silva studied the Bible. Then he gave his life to Jesus and got baptized.

Many of Silva's family members and friends didn't understand why Silva stopped playing soccer on Saturdays.

One of his friends said, "Your faith is crazy."

Someone else said, "Why would anyone go to church when he could go to a soccer game?"

Silva explained his faith as best as he could.

Silva's parents got worried when Silva didn't take the tests to get into college. The tests were on the Sabbath. Silva's parents wondered why he was willing to throw away his future for the Sabbath. Silva suffered at this time. But Peter and the other followers of Jesus gave him hope. Their example gave Silva courage to announce, "We must obey God, not men!" (Acts 5:29, ICB).

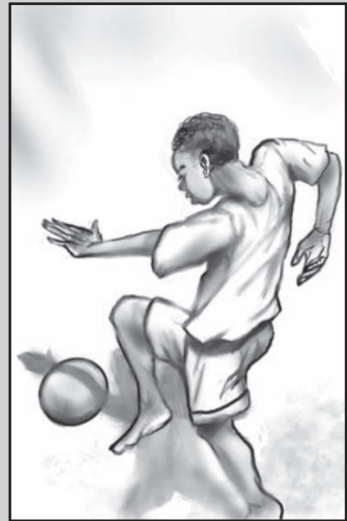
Silva's parents grew more upset when the school called. Silva's teachers wanted to know why Silva wasn't going to Friday night classes. Many family members asked local Seventh-day Adventist leaders to tell Silva to study on Friday nights. In answer, the leaders told Silva's family that God would be with Silva and help him finish high school.

Before long, Silva switched to a Seventh-day Adventist High School. He had no more problems with the Sabbath there. Then he finished high school.

Today, Silva is a businessman. He isn't sorry about giving up his "god" of soccer for the God of heaven. His example of faith caused two of his sisters and some other people to accept Jesus and get baptized.

Silva says, "God blessed my life. I thank Him that today my family respects my beliefs."

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Soccer was Silva's god.**