

Marked by Blood of the Lamb: Celebrating Passover During Coronavirus

The height of coronavirus infections and quarantines in the United States will more than likely occur right around Passover, or mid-April, this year. The timeless lessons of the famous Israelite exodus from Egypt are rich in significance for us, some 3,400 years later, as we deal with our own plague-like contagion. The story describes mandatory confinement and provides a way of escape from a deadly plague.

Marked by the Blood of the Lamb

The story is found in Exodus 12, where the Israelites are instructed to kill a lamb and to wipe its blood onto the lintel and doorposts of their homes. Mandatory confinement is then ordered in verse 22 when the Israelites are told: “None of you shall go out from the door of his house until the morning.” Safe in their homes marked by the blood, they would not be harmed by the judgment that would be executed throughout Egypt that night.

... kill the Passover lamb. You shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin, and none of you shall go out from the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to kill the Egyptians. And when He sees the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not permit the destroyer to come to your houses to kill you (Ex. 12:21c-23).

The blood of the sacrificed lamb was to be sprinkled on the doorposts as a sign or marker, so when the Lord passed over

Egypt in judgment, the “destroyer” could not enter that home. Later in Sinai, when the Law was given and the sacrificial system was established, the greater meaning of sacrifice was understood as a covering and forgiveness of sin. The blood of the lamb was a marker that signified payment for sin, and this home belonged to forgiven ones.

The tenth plague was completely impartial and would strike everyone. Only the families marked by the blood that night—those who trusted God for their salvation and obeyed His instructions—would be spared. Whoever hid behind the blood was safe—the price for their sin had been paid, and they were spared this judgment. Death would pass over them.

The apostle Paul later referred to Jesus as the Passover lamb who was sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7). Through faith in His atoning sacrifice, we are marked by His blood and no longer deserving of judgment—it will pass over us.

Protection in the Blood

There is much discussion throughout the Christian world as to whether this coronavirus pandemic is God’s judgment on the earth or simply a highly infectious virus. Some say it is judgment, others that it is a warning of judgment to come. Whichever it may be, let’s learn the lessons afforded us in the Passover story and in faith and obedience place ourselves under the protection God has provided for His children.

When we come under the blood of Jesus, our Passover lamb, we are marked as those who trust God and obey what His Word instructs us to do, and as such are part of the family of the redeemed. Our family has a loving and generous heavenly Father who bestows on us wonderful blessings and gives us many gifts.

We still live in a fallen and sinful world experiencing bouts of judgment and consequences of rebellion against God. We do not live in a protective bubble and may be affected by the sin, disease and worldly disasters around us. Nevertheless,

the Word is very clear that we are also part of the kingdom of God, and we can boldly approach His throne of grace and receive help in our time of need (Heb. 4:16).

Healing in the Blood

It was while celebrating the Passover that Jesus astounded his followers by holding up the third cup of wine in the seder (ritual) meal—the cup of redemption—to signify the cutting of the New Covenant with His blood. He instructed his disciples to drink of that cup and eat of the unleavened bread in remembrance of Him. Churches all around the world do just that in what is known as Communion.

When we partake of Communion, we are reflecting upon the body of Jesus that was broken and His blood that was shed as a propitiation for our sins. Through His death on the cross, we are forgiven and adopted into the family—the kingdom of God—with all of its blessings, including forgiveness, protection and healing.

The apostle Paul made this profound connection in 1 Corinthians 11:27–30 when he told the church at Corinth that they were not respecting the body and blood of Jesus as required in the Communion service, and this was why some were “weak and sick” and others had died. The power of the atoning blood of Jesus was to have kept these believers walking in all the benefits found in their Father’s kingdom, including healing. But they had taken Communion without the correct attitude of somber remembrance of the sacrifice made for them; therefore, they did not receive the benefits of protection and healing it symbolized.

Healing is part of God’s nature. After the Israelites left Egypt, the very first lesson God taught them was that He was Jehovah Ralah, the “Lord who heals you” (Ex. 15:26c). Another translation could be the “God who keeps you well.” Later, when the Law was given at Sinai, it promised healing to those who

lived in covenant with the God of Israel: "The Lord will take away from you all sickness" (Deut. 7:15).

Jesus indicated physical healing was part of forgiveness of sins. In Matthew 9, He explained that healing and forgiveness are connected and that healing the paralytic demonstrated his sins had been forgiven:

"'For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" or to say, "Arise and walk"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, pick up your bed, and go into your house.' And he rose and departed to his house" (Matt. 9:5-7).

Remove the Leaven

The first step in experiencing these great benefits afforded to us through Jesus is repentance. In the Passover story, God told the Israelites not to leaven their bread—the obvious reason being they had to leave quickly. But leaven represents sin and corrupting influences in the Bible. Therefore, the apostle Paul said we too must "purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7, NKJV).

Purging of sin is an ongoing process and is part of maturing spiritually, but it is absolutely necessary to walk in the fullness of all that Jesus won for us on the cross, including healing (James 5:16). While we will only enjoy the fullness of the kingdom of God once we pass into eternity and take on immortality, we can apply its principles to our lives now and experience help in our times of need.

The Passover message during this coronavirus pandemic is that through Jesus, our Passover lamb, we have been forgiven and adopted into the family of a loving Father and have full access to all of His provisions. We can come to him for protection and healing in our time of need. We only need to

come to Him in repentance, removing all leaven from our lives and come under the protective blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb.

When the pandemic is over, may you be able to say along with the Psalmist

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies (Ps. 103:2–4) {eo}

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