

Discovery Hour  
E100 Week 4  
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January 31, 2010

The five passages for this week all come from the book of *Exodus*. The title *Exodus* comes from a Greek word (exodus) which means departure. In the Hebrew Bible the book is known by the first two words of the text, a common practice for labeling a book at that time, and so its title is “these are the names,” or simply, “names.” In any case, this is the dramatic account of how God brought his people out of their slavery in Egypt. The book ends with the Israelites on their way to the Promise Land, though difficult days lay ahead.

The Passover event marks a watershed moment for God’s people. The yearly festival to commemorate it continues to this day in observant Jewish homes. Our reading, in *Exodus* chapter 12, explains both the event itself as well as the commands to remember it annually. It establishes a ritual celebration for the Israelites which includes very tangible and concrete elements such as the specifics of the meal they are to eat and the requirement that the people cleanse their homes of yeast prior to celebrating it and the command to eat unleaven bread for a week following the Passover celebration. The focus on passing on the history of this event, and God’s great act of deliverance, to each succeeding generation is quite clear. To this day it is the case that the youngest person present, typically a child, asks a version of verse 26, “what does this ceremony mean?”

It is hard not wonder about the Egyptians in this story, yet upon examination the text makes clear that God sought a relationship with them as well. Each plague was done so “that you [Egyptians] might know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth” (*Exodus* 8:22; see also 9:14, 16, 29-30).

Even after the miraculous deliverance was accomplished on the evening of the Passover, many Egyptians still clung adamantly to their reckless course of direct confrontation with this incomparably great God. Patiently, the divine offer of grace remained open as they pursued Israel as she crossed the sea. They must ‘know that I am the Lord (Exod. 14:4) even when that God had received praise and glory from Israel for His might victory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horseman (v. 18). The effect on Israel was overwhelming. After she saw what God had finally done against the impervious Egyptians, they ‘feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses” (Exod. 14:31). Walter Kaiser, *Toward on Old Testament Theology*, p. 104).

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. When practiced appropriately, how would the celebration of the Passover each year function in the lives of the Israelites and their faith?
2. How do the Lord’s Supper, Communion, and even our weekly services function in a similar way?
3. Why is it that ceremonies like the Passover can lose their significance or meaning over time and after many repetitions?