



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2225 ~ The Passover.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In this *Bible Adventure*, we continue the story of Moses asking the Pharaoh of Egypt to let God's people, the Israelites go into the wilderness for three days to worship their God. But the Israelites were slaves and Pharaoh's heart was hard towards God and this request. By this time, Pharaoh had stubbornly allowed his Egyptian people and land to go through 9 devastating plagues and much of his country now lay in ruins. At first, Pharaoh had been unwilling to listen to Moses and his brother Aaron, but he resisted in his heart against the Lord and then couldn't find a place for common sense and reason to prevail. His officers and staff understood the dire situation at hand, and they pleaded with him to let the Israelites go, but Pharaoh refused to listen or change his mind.

There's a rule of life here: What we don't use, in time we lose. This is true for people with natural God-given talents to encourage others and enhance our world for good. It also applies to those who are unwilling to help others when they could do so, as in time, they'll come to a place where they are unable to help others. Pharaoh had come to the point where he couldn't help his own people despite their devastating losses.

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In Exodus, Chapter 11, God told Moses about the plague of the firstborn that He would deliver on Pharaoh and the Egyptians; after this, finally Pharaoh would drive out all the slaves and their animals from Egypt. Moses went and warned Pharaoh that God would bring death to the firstborn males of everyone from Pharaoh himself to the most humble servants, as well as the firstborn of the animals at midnight on the coming night. But God would spare the Israelites and not even a dog would bark in their homes.

God would show Pharaoh that the Israelites were His chosen and beloved people. By opposing the Israelites, Pharaoh had actually been opposing God Himself. And now God was about to bring His final judgment and the worst plague of them all on Egypt. After Moses had finished telling this to Pharaoh without Pharaoh changing his heart to avoid this disaster, Moses left Pharaoh's presence very angry, because of all the needless deaths that were about to occur as the result of Pharaoh's pride and wickedness.

Moses called together all the leaders of Israel and he told them what was to come and what they needed to do to avoid being harmed by this last plague of the firstborn. The Israelites had their part to play: once the doorposts and the top had been sprinkled with the blood of a spotless lamb, no one was to go outside again until morning. They were to eat the evening meal dressed ready to leave home. Moses taught the people that this Passover was to be observed every year by the Israelites as a memorial of this great event.

At midnight, God's angel of death passed through. And a great cry of mourning arose in Egypt, and there wasn't any Egyptian house where there wasn't at least one person who had died. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and told them to leave Egypt at once. God had given Moses instructions that after the plague struck, the Israelites were to ask the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold. Moses was very famous in Egypt and the Egyptian people were willing to give what was considered compensation for all the years of hard work forced on the Israelite slaves. Fear may have been a factor in this giving and sending away of the slaves, as the Israelites were urged to hurry and leave. The Egyptians were afraid of what the next plague the Israelites' God might bring on them. This time, they might all be killed.

The Passover is the best known of the Jewish feasts and it's celebrated in March or April each year. The purpose of this special meal is to recall the move from slavery to freedom so the Israelites wouldn't forget God's goodness to them. Passover gives the primary message of believing in and therefore relying on the one, true, everywhere-present God as being one's deliverer from physical, political and ultimately, spiritual oppression.

Each time the Passover story is told, the people express their enormous gratitude to God for redeeming them, for had God not redeemed them, they'd still be in Egypt. This is why the Exodus story shows God's great power among the different people groups in the world. From their earliest childhood, each Jew is taught the history of Passover so that its significance is remembered. It shows that God is a God who cares about His people and they can have faith in His promises, for all God's promises will be fulfilled at the right time.

Faith gives the certainty that whatever our present-day problems are, history moves in the direction of the final messianic redemption. The Passover story conveys that history is not a hit-and-miss affair, but it follows a divine master plan. The true miracle of Passover and its relevance for the ages, is the hope that with God's help, no difficulty is insurmountable. A tyrant like Pharaoh could be overthrown. A nation as powerful as Egypt was in that time in history, could be defeated. Slaves could become free people.

By making the Passover a yearly celebration, God wanted the Jewish people to turn their homes into places of family worship and the Passover meal became an opportunity devoted primarily to answering the questions of Jewish children. The home is where each of us first learns our values and forms our character.

The feasts that the Jews celebrate occur each year, because they were commanded of the Israelites in Leviticus, Chapter 23, as God-appointed times and memorials of the nation, which give stability to the life of the people. The Jews are to speak of God's holiness and righteousness at such times. These feasts have been practised for thousands of years with very little change, because the Jews have preserved their traditions carefully and faithfully.

But what does this all mean for Christians who are not of Jewish descent? An understanding of the Passover helps with the meaning of the Lord's Supper, as introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself just before His crucifixion in Luke, Chapter 22. Seen from the New Testament perspective, this Bible feast presents a symbolic enactment of the divine salvation in Christ as the Saviour of the world. No Christian can fully understand his own spiritual heritage without going back to the history of the Bible and the significance of the Jewish feasts, with their solemn rites and God-appointed observances.

Preparation for Passover is essential. Jewish people clean out their houses and they remove all traces of leaven or yeast used for raising bread. Leaven is a symbol of sin in the Bible. As raising their bread dough using yeast takes hours, the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that they took unleavened bread with them for the journey. Christians too, are to prepare themselves before taking part in the Lord's Supper. People are to examine themselves and to confess and forsake any known sins in their lives, including making things right with anyone they've offended before participating in the supper.

The Passover meal is laid out on the table with various symbols shown: salt water represent the Red Sea through which God led His people; pieces of unleavened bread or cakes that the Israelites hastily prepared when Pharaoh ordered them to leave; and a lamb's shank bone to remember the eating of a lamb in each Jewish household prior to leaving Egypt and its sprinkled blood wiped on the doorposts of each Jewish house.

As well as these things, there are 4 cups of red wine, which symbolize the blood of the lamb, from which the adults take a sip from each cup during the hours of the ritual feast. There are also bitter herbs, usually horseradish, which bring tears to the eyes of the participants to remind them of the bitterness and sorrow of the Jewish slavery under Pharaoh. Included also is a mixture of apples and nuts that represent the clay from which the Israelites were forced to make bricks for 2 great cities of the Egyptian pharaohs.

Passover recalls the time when God committed Himself to be the God of the Israelites and they were to be His people. This covenant or agreement was established and sealed in blood, the blood of a lamb on that original Passover night. When Jesus died, He represented the last spotless lamb to redeem all people of the world from their sin if they turn to Him.

The Lord Jesus intensely wanted a last Passover meal with His disciples before His suffering and dying. He knew that His lifeblood would be sacrificed later in a matter of hours and He wanted to institute a new covenant to remember Him by. He redefined this Passover feast around himself. In Luke, Chapter 22, Verse 17, it says: "Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Jesus' new covenant with Jews and Gentiles alike was ratified by His own shed blood. When Jesus speaks of His body "given for them" and "His blood poured out for them", He isn't speaking about His human flesh and bones, but of His death on the cross. This death, which His body would undergo in a matter of hours, was not a meaningless death, as so many are, but a death with power, purpose and divine authorization – it was a death for the Jews and a death for those who are not Jews. Jesus died on behalf of all people who would claim His salvation from sin by faith in the shedding of His blood.

In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5, verses 7b & 8, the Apostle Paul said: "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Let us all hold fast to the significance of the Passover and in particular, the amazing work Jesus did to free the world from slavery to sin and a sinful nature that only wants to sin.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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