

PICTURES OF JESUS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE PASSOVER

SETTING

Read Exodus 1-11. Retell story of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage: 450 years since the death of Joseph, terrible oppression (slavery, abuse, murder of all male Israelite babies to curtail their strength and number), birth and sparing of Moses, training in courts of Pharaoh, flight to Midian at age 40 after murdering an Egyptian, years of sheep-tending, Burning Bush, Call of Moses to lead people out of Egypt, Moses' reluctance and God's reassurance, demand of LORD to Pharaoh, "Let my people go", Pharaoh's refusal, 9 plagues (water to blood, frogs, lice, flies, cattle fever, boils, hail and storms, locusts, three day darkness), Pharaoh's heart hardening, the Passover—the final and most severe plague.

THE TEXT

- v. 3 — "a lamb for a household" - every Israelite family included. No part should be wasted; if the family is too small, then share with a neighbor.
- v. 5 — "without blemish"; if any too poor to have a sheep, a male goat would suffice.
- v. 6 — The lamb was separated on the tenth day of the month and slaughtered on the fourteenth.
- v. 8 — "unleavened bread" --bread without yeast—a symbol of purity and sincerity (1 Cor. 5: 7,8).
- v. 9 — cooked whole so that not a bone was broken (Exodus 12: 46).
- v. 12 — plague was to punish Pharaoh and show how useless their idols were. "...against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment."
- v. 13 — "I will pass over you"- therefore the name, Passover.
- v. 29 — every firstborn of man and animal.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PASSOVER LAMB and CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER LAMB

1. on the tenth of the month—Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan
2. every man shall take for himself a lamb—the people chose Jesus on that Palm Sunday; "Hosanna in the Highest!" Matt. 21:9
3. the lamb was set apart from rest of the flock until sacrificed—Jesus was also separated from sinners;

LESSON 1

EXODUS 12: 1-13, 28-31 (NKJV)

Heb. 7:26

4. a lamb—

"Behold the Lamb of God," John 1:29

5. one year old—in the prime of life; Isa. 53:2

6. without defect—"without blemish and without spot"
1 Peter 1:19

7. not torn apart or broken Ex. 12:9,46— "Not one of His bones shall be broken" John 19:33,36

8. lamb died in place of first-born—"Christ died for us"
Rom. 5:8 He took our place; Isa. 53:4,5

9. innocent lamb sacrificed—"Christ, our Passover,
was sacrificed for us." I Cor. 5:7

10. blood on doorposts spared Israel—"The blood of Jesus...cleanses us...." 1 John 1:7

11. saved from the angel of death—saved from eternal death; II Thess. 1:8-1012.

saved by believing God's promises —saved by believing the Gospel—John 3:16

Even as many of the other plagues struck the heart of the heathen worship of Egypt (snakes, frogs, throwing ashes in the air) and in this way was a mockery of their false worship, so also God struck at the very heart of their worship again. The death of the first-born son was not only severe because of the many who died, but in those days the death of the first-born son was mourned much more than other children because of the many privileges he had. After the death of the father, he would be in charge; he received a double portion of the inheritance; he served as family priest; he provided for his mother and family. The first-born son of the king was looked upon as the son of one of their gods (Pharaoh was looked upon as a god). The fact that his son also was struck down dead in such a remarkable way discredited and shamed these gods and clearly showed them to be impostors. The real God is in control. In Israel not even a dog would bark against the people. The LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel (between the unbeliever and believer).

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION:

The Passover was a wonderful audio-visual demonstration of the Gospel promises. This is why God commanded its observance until its fulfillment with Christ. Blood-shedding is a vital part of atonement.

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"Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9:12) "without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9:22). So also we are "justified by His blood." (Rom. 5:8,9) This audio-visual blood assurance of the Passover is carried over into the Lord's Supper for the New Testament Christian, where we receive His very body and blood, together with the bread and wine, as an added assurance of forgiveness. "This do in remembrance of Me.

"The Lord sent this Passover to make a difference between Egypt and Israel (Ex. 11:7). There were many outward differences between the two peoples, but these didn't matter to the LORD. The "difference" lay in their attitudes toward God and His Word. After hearing these instructions, the Israelites "bowed their heads and worshipped." (Ex. 12:27) The Egyptians had scoffed at the LORD. The Word remains the great divider of men. (Heb. 4:12)

"By faith Moses kept the Passover." (Heb. 11:28) What faith it took to keep the Passover! This seemed like a foolish way to avert catastrophe—yet God promised and they believed. To natural man Jesus' blood-shedding is also foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18), yet through it God promised deliverance. His promises are "Yes" and "Amen." (2 Cor. 1:20) Faith believes these promises and rejoices in them. What is faith? Read Heb. 11:1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Give other examples of our beliefs requiring such faith. Creation, Trinity, Deity of Christ, Angels, God's Providence...

Midnight scene in Egyptian and Israelite homes is a picture of the world's midnight (John 5:28-29) when the Lord of deliverance and judgment returns in glory. Two-fold reaction: Agony of the unrepentant and ecstasy of the redeemed.

EXTRA APPLICATION

Show how many of the ceremonial laws were actually Gospel.

- Discuss how people of the Old Testament were saved.
- Stories of Blood of Jesus
- Garden of Gethsemane
- Crown of Thorns
- Beatings
- Cross

SUMMARY

The blood of the lamb which saved the firstborn Israelites from death pointed ahead to the promised Savior. As Israel escaped death and was set free through the blood of this lamb, so we are saved from eternal death through the precious blood of Jesus. And it is through Jesus' blood that we are set free from the slavery of sin. Because of the sacrifice of God's Lamb on the cross, we know that one day we shall be taken to the promised land of heaven. There we will find our real home forever! How important it is that we trust completely in our Savior and His sacrifice for our eternal salvation! There is no other way that we can be saved but through Him.

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SCAPEGOAT

LESSON 2

LEVITICUS 16: 2-10, 20-22 (NKJV)

SETTING

Leviticus 16 describes the ceremonial purification of the whole Israelite congregation on the Great Day of Atonement. This great ceremonial ritual symbolized the cleansing of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, the altar, the priests, and all the people (v. 33). It was an important day in the Jewish religious calendar, the day on which the high priests entered the Holy of Holies. The Book of Hebrews presents Christ as living fulfillment of much of the symbolism of the Day of Atonement.

THE TEXT

v. 8 — "cast lots" - used occasionally in Scripture by God's direction as a way of determining His will (selection of first king, assignment of Palestine to the tribes, detection of guilty party - Achan, Joshua 7, choice of Judas's successor). Usually involved picking white or black stone. "two goats" - one for the LORD, one for a "scapegoat."

v. 9 — Aaron (high priest) sacrifices one as a sin-offering, also a type of Christ, just like the Passover Lamb.

v. 10 — The other goat is presented alive before the LORD.

v. 21 — "lay both his hands on the head" - symbolizing the transfer of the people's sins to this goat, exactly what God did with our sins, having laid them upon His Son, our Savior. "The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:4)

v. 22 — The goat was taken away into the desert and released, never to return, to "bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land." "What a beautiful picture of Jesus' work of removing our sins, "remitting" = dismissing or sending them away. (See Heb. 13:12). Micah 7:18-19 — "cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

Jeremiah 31:34 — "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Psalms 103:12 — "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

"Scapegoat" - The word in the original means a goat removed, separated, or sent away. Even the usage of this term in our language is derived from this passage.

Webster defines a scapegoat as a "person, group, or thing upon whom the blame for mistakes or crimes of others is thrust." It is human nature to seek to blame others for our own failures, weaknesses, and problems. Adam blamed Eve and God for his sin. Eve blamed the serpent. Yet God's way is for us to confess our responsibility and lay our sins on the Heavenly Scapegoat.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY AND APPLICATION

SUBSTITUTION is the key thought. A substitute is a person who fills in or takes the place of another for any reason. See if the children can think of examples of substitution from life. Point out examples from family life, sports, etc. History is full of examples of soldiers in war who gave their lives so that another's might be saved. A former ILC student, facing a head-on auto crash, threw her body in front of her sister. She died, but her sister lived. This is exactly what Jesus has done for us.

Take children through Isaiah 53, particularly v. 4-6 for beautiful substitution prophecy.

2 Cor. 5:21. - "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

John 1:29 - "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

1 Peter 1:18 "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."

Note: It took two animals to portray the work of Jesus, one to die and one to take (carry) away sin.

FOR DISCUSSION

Once our sins have been "sent away," can they return to haunt us? (See Lev. 16:22; Micah 7:18,19)

Why did God give ceremonial laws? To amplify and expand His Gospel promises of Christ.

Why are they no longer needed? Col. 2:16,17.

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THE BRONZE SNAKE

LESSON 3

NUMBERS 21: 4-9 (NKJV)

SETTING

After God had freed His people from the captivity of the Egyptians (cf. lesson 1), He continued to use Moses to lead the children of Israel toward the Promised Land of Canaan. As they neared Canaan, 12 spies went into the Promised Land (Numbers 13). Two reported that, with God's help, they could defeat the fierce enemy; ten said the enemy was too strong. The majority report was adopted and, as a judgment, God declared that Israel would wander for 40 years until all the present generation aged 20 years and over, except for the two faithful spies, would die. It is near the end of this period that our story of man's sin and God's grace take place.

THE TEXT

v. 5 — "there is no food"... "our soul loathes this worthless bread." God had faithfully and daily provided daily bread, called Manna (see Exodus 16). They had food, but they didn't like what God was providing. This was a serious sin as evidenced by the punishment God sent and their confession in v.7.

They "tempted Christ." See I Cor. 10:9

v. 6 — "fiery serpents" so-called either because of the color of the snake or because of the burning which followed the deadly bite. What serious and sudden danger we face the moment that God removes His protecting hand.

v. 8,9 — God's solution used a figure resembling the problem. So the Son of God took upon Himself our human nature to save us sinful humans.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

John 3: 13,14 - "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

"Israel's sin is a picture of our sin. How often don't we complain? How appropriate are Luther's words in the 4th Petition - "Lead us to appreciate and to receive with thanksgiving our daily bread."

Israel's punishment is a picture of the punishment of sin, i.e. death. The pole is a picture of the cross; the saving look is a picture of faith. Sin is like poisonous

snakes; it bites us and we die. Faith is like looking to the Bronze Serpent while trusting God's Word that by looking at it one would be saved. (John 3:15,16; I Peter 2:24)

Jesus is like the Bronze Serpent hung up on a cross to save mankind. Even as the serpent looked like the poisonous snakes, so also our Savior carried on His soul the sins of the whole world and looked like a common, convicted criminal.

APPLICATION:

Discuss the difference between physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Discuss with the students what they would do if bitten by a deadly snake. (Doctor, cutting out the poison, tourniquet, applying medication.) All of this did nothing. Death reigned. Only those were saved who looked on the serpent of bronze. So it is today. People offer many theories on how to get rid of sin and eternal death. (Try hard to do good, pray, go to church, obey your parents, punish yourself for doing wrong, change the moral code, try to drown all your problems with alcohol and drugs, believe really hard). Yet it remains true that only he who believes in Jesus will be saved. (John 3:16-18, Mark 16:16).

You wonder also how many people died because they thought it was utter foolishness to look on the bronze serpent. So many view the preaching of the cross as foolishness. See I Cor. 1:18-25; 27-31.

People who were rescued from death by looking upon the bronze serpent surely must have spread the news around fast, and so others were saved. Remember there was no radio, TV, or newspaper, yet millions needed to hear God's plan of salvation. We who have been led to look on the cross and have been rescued by the death of Jesus need to get the message out to others who are dying. Tell your neighbors, friends, classmates, "Jesus died for ALL!"

FURTHER SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 Cor. 10:9; I Peter 2:24; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:14-16; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 8:3

"The simplicity of the remedy - only to look up in faith, its immediateness and its completeness as well as the fact that this was the only but also the all-sufficient

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remedy for the deadly wound of the serpent-all find their counterpart in the Gospel." (Edersheim Old Testament Bible History -Vol. 2 - Page 195)

Note: The bronze serpent was preserved by the children of Israel and kept for many years as a reminder of both the work of God in the desert and of His work to come on Calvary. However, people began to misuse the bronze serpent and burned incense to it. It was then destroyed (2 Kings 18:4). So also today, the empty cross can serve as a reminder of the death of Jesus, but in and of itself it possesses no saving power and must not be made an idol.

SUMMARY

God has given us everything that we need for our body and life. We so easily complain that we do not like the food served to us at mealtime or the clothes

we are wearing. Any complaining about our earthly blessings is really a complaining against God. And this is a sin. But God knows our sin and the only remedy for it. He gave us His Son to hang on the cross in payment for our sins. We need only to look to Christ, that is, believe in Him, and we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus promises that those who believe in Him and their Savior will be saved. May we always trust in Christ for our salvation, be content with whatever He gives us in this life and be thankful for all of His mercies toward us.

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JONAH AND THE FISH

LESSON 4

JONAH 1: 1-5, 10-17 - 2:10

SETTING

Read Jonah 1:1-9 (additional reading: the whole book of Jonah)

- Time - about 800 BC ; 80 years after Elisha, during the reign of Jeroboam II.
- Jonah from the tribe of Zebulun and the kingdom of Israel.
- Nineveh - capital of Assyria (Gentiles) - 500 miles NE of Jerusalem on Tigris River; very large and worldly city.

Jonah fled and tried to sail to Tarshish, in the opposite direction from Nineveh and literally at the edge of the then-known world. Why? Because he did not want the heathen to have God's grace. (Compare 3:10 and 4:1-3). Jonah's shipmates seem to have been heathen (v. 5) who through the experience with Jonah and his testimony (v. 9-10) may have become believers in the true God (v. 14,16).

THE TEXT

v. 4 — "But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea..." God controls not only the weather but all of history.

v. 5 — "every man cried out to his god." Note the heathen sailor's superstition, all praying to their respective gods and then encouraging Jonah to do the same.

v. 14 — True faith? Is there a reason not to conclude that the Spirit converted these men through the reluctant preaching of Jonah? But even with the absence of true faith, these men must have been impressed with the power of God. Interesting contrast with Pilate's washing of his hands and his plea of "innocent of the blood of this just man". Here, recognition of their responsibility versus Pilate's shifting of it. Here, recognition of the LORD's will.

v. 17 — "great fish" - not necessarily a whale, perhaps large shark or some other fish.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

Matt: 12:39-41 - "But He answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the

heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." (See also Luke 11:29-30,32).

Matt: 16:4 - Sign of Jonah also mentioned.

THE APPLICATION

Resurrection was always a part of the Savior's work. Consider the following references by Jesus beginning several years before and up to the last week before Good Friday. Matt: 12:40; 16:4,21; 17:22,23; 20:17-19; 26:2,29,32 (even unbelievers get the message - 27:63)

Mark 8:31; 9:9,31; 10:33,34; 14:25,28,62

Luke 9:22,44,51; 11:29; 18:31,33; 22:69; 24:6-8,25-27 (compare 24:46)

John 2:18-22; 3:14,15; 7:6-8,33; 8:14; 10:17,18; 12:32,33; 13:2,33,36; 14:2-4,19,28,29; 16:16-22,28; 17:21-26

The Resurrection is a fundamental belief of the Christian faith. (1 Cor. 15:14,17-20) "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain...And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

John 10:17-18 - "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Other religions may claim that their leader did or will rise from the dead (House of David). Only Christ actually did. Thus the sign of Jonah is a powerful sign in the days of the Old Testament, in the time of Jesus, and today. We must be careful. Signs and wonders, however amazing, do not convert people. That is accomplished by the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation (Rom.

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1:16; II Tim. 3:15). The unbelievers spread lies about the Resurrection they knew took place. The soldiers accepted bribes to cover up the truth. For believers the Resurrection was additional proof of Jesus' work as Savior. It strengthened their faith.

Even today many deny the factualness of the Jonah story, using their reason to deny Jonah could have survived inside a fish's stomach. Such thinking would also rule out Jesus' resurrection and ours. Others today look to "Thanatology" (the science of dying) and report "death visions" for their assurance of the hereafter and what it will be like. "We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place..." (2 Peter 1:19) We have God's inspired Word with its account of the sign of Jonah.

Buddhists report that they have now found a bone from their god, Buddha. They are rejoicing over this find and worshipping their bone. If Jesus' bones were ever excavated and found, our whole belief system would collapse. There would be no joy. Our faith would be useless. Christ would still be dead. BUT—Jesus did rise! His body is no longer in the grave. He lives, He lives forevermore!

FURTHER SCRIPTURE READINGS

Other Old Testament passages predicting the Resurrection: Gen. 3:15; Job 19:25; Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Daniel 12:2; Is. 26:19

SUMMARY

The resurrection of Christ holds many comforting truths for us:

1. Jesus is proved to be true God with the Father.
2. The fact that He rose as He said proves the truth of His words and all of the Bible.
3. By raising Him, the Father showed that He had accepted Christ's atoning sacrifice as sufficient and completed.
4. Because He rose, we too as believers shall rise as He promised. All believers will rise to eternal life with Christ.
5. Because He lives never to die again, we may be sure that He will always be with us.
6. All the enemies of our salvation have been overcome and vanquished and the debt of our sins has been paid.
7. We are freed from the curse of the law.
8. We are at peace with God.
9. We have access to the throne of grace.
10. We have hope that sustains us in the midst of trials and revives us on our earthly pilgrimage.
11. We have strength to carry on the Lord's work despite obstacles.
12. We have power to walk in newness of life.
13. We have a compelling desire to share this good news with others.

Jesus Christ died and rose for YOU!

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THE SHEPHERD PSALM

LESSON 5

PSALM 23

SETTING:

A psalm (hymn or song) written about 1000 BC by the Spirit through David.

THE TEXT:

David's life as a shepherd boy (1 Sam. 17:34-37)

v. 1 — "shepherd"— one who feeds, pastures a flock. One who leads, rules, and governs his flock.

v. 2 — "green pastures" - literally pastures of tender grass, pastures of first sprouts of young herbage. A pasture of grass ideally succulent and nourishing for the sheep.

"still waters" — literally waters of rest. Quiet waters, calm and serene, at rest, as opposed to tempestuous, stormy, wind-driven, gale-lashed waters.

v. 3 — "paths of righteousness" - the right way, the proper path as declared by the LORD. In opposition to this are all other ways which are improper paths, wrong ways, dead end streets.

"for His name's sake" — This work is done because of God's own name (love, grace, power, mercy) and thus results in the praise and glory of His Holy Name.

v. 4 — "rod and staff" - Rod - a short club used primarily as a weapon for protection. Staff - a long crooked pole used on occasion as a weapon, but also a tool (to lift sheep from crevice, free from brush, keep them in the flock). The phrase is descriptive of God's protective and sustaining power, and His Word that works on our heart. (Law & Gospel)

v. 5 — "prepare a table...in the presence of my enemies" — God's loving care preserves us so that we can even sit down to eat and have security. A picture of the LORD providing for our every need of body and soul. We need never worry or fear!

"anoint my head" — symbolizing the soothing, the comfort, and the healing to be found in the LORD. "my cup runs over" - from a full cup one may drink deeply and refreshingly. Symbolic of the abundant blessings that are ours because the LORD is providing for us.

v. 6 — "goodness and mercy" - attributes of God. Because God is good and merciful, we are blessed greatly.

"house of the LORD" — the gracious rule of God culminating in eternal, heavenly glory. Who would think of spending eternity in the house of the LORD and not

also spend time here on earth in His house, the church?

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

John 10:14-18 - "I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (see also v. 1-13).

APPLICATION

The picture of sheep and shepherd is used throughout Scripture. Sheep are helpless animals - Jesus cares for all our needs - body and soul. Sheep are easily scattered (Isaiah 53:6). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jesus gathers us together. Sheep are easy prey to wolves (false prophets Matt. 7:15) and lions (the devil - 1 Peter 5:8). So the LORD defends His helpless children. The Shepherd died for the sheep. We have forgiveness of sins and life. We now lack nothing, even in the presence of enemies (sin, death, the devil) or in the face of death itself. With the Bread of Life (Jesus) and the oil of gladness (Gospel message), our joy is full in the LORD and He will be ours here on earth and in heaven.

FURTHER SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 15:3; 1 John 2:2

SUMMARY

All that Jesus did for us while He lived on this earth as our Good Shepherd was an expression of His great love for us. We are reminded of this great love each time we confess the Second Article. As our Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for us. Thus He was our perfect high priest before God the Father. Old

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Testament priests were anointed to represent the people before God and to make sacrifices for their sins. As our high priest, Christ sacrificed Himself for our sins and pleads for us before God. Nothing could be greater than this love which God showed for all His sheep. Our response to this great love of our Good Shepherd should be to hear His Word, believe it, obey it, live in it and then lead others to do the same. May we serve our Good Shepherd by proclaiming the Word so that the Holy Spirit can gather still more sheep into His flock!

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