



# The Passover in Exodus



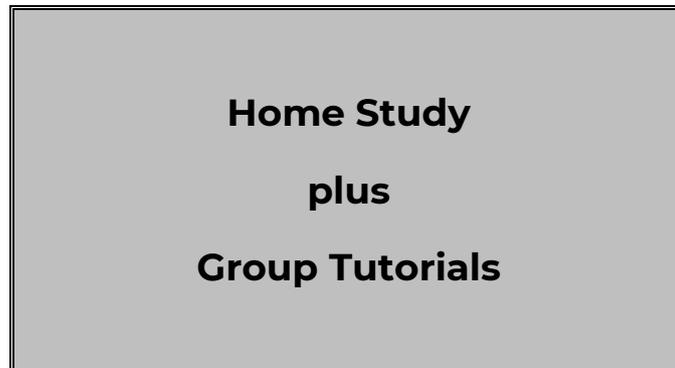
A sample lesson from:  
**Foundations of God's  
Covenant Community**  
A Study of Exodus to Deuteronomy

A flexible open learning course from  
the **Group-based Open Learning Discipleship** Project



## Introduction

Our Open Learning courses are designed to help you learn by means of:



## Home Study

**Each course** is made up of **five Blocks** and each Block has **eight lessons**. If you have about  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr to spare (very roughly), you can complete one lesson. These lessons require you to read and interact with the course material as well as with your Bible.

Each lesson is **programmed** to help you check your progress as you work through. To get the maximum benefit it is important that you use the course in the way it was intended:

1. Read section 1 (often referred to by the technical term 'frame' 1).
2. Make the response required, if there is one.
3. Check that your answer corresponds with the feedback given in the 'feedback' section at the end. (Wherever feedback is given, it is marked with a raven).
4. Proceed to section 2.

Note that the **course** is programmed—**you** are **not** being programmed! The aim of programming is that:

1. you can check frequently that you have understood the material presented;
2. you are stimulated to active and critical thinking;
3. you reinforce what you learn and are better able to remember it.

Sometimes, discussion frames are given. These are clearly indicated by a heading 'For Discussion' and box. Here you should answer the question in your own words and come to the tutorial prepared to discuss the question as indicated.

At the end of each lesson, we encourage you to spend some time in reflection on how what you have learnt applies to you in the situation where God has placed you.

## **Group Meeting**

Regular group meetings take place (normally fortnightly) where you will have the opportunity to discuss points of interest that have arisen and think through with others how your learning may be applied. At the end of each block of home study, you will also normally be given a five-minute quiz.

The group tutorials give the opportunity for you to clarify ideas and to share your own thoughts and to listen to the ideas of others. The process of learning from the Bible in a group is an essential part of the programme. It is here that you are able to think through areas of application and to pray and support each other in your studies.

**Preparing for this lesson:**

- Take a moment to pray that God will help you as you look at the Passover in Exodus.
- Remember to keep a notebook handy to note down any questions or issues for discussion.

**Objectives**

- At the end of this lesson you will be able to:
1. identify the two main elements of the Passover in Exodus;
  2. list the other details of the Passover in relation to these two main elements;
  3. summarise in your own words the significance of the Passover in Exodus;
  4. explain the meaning of the word “redeemed” with reference to two Hebrew words.

## **a. Introduction**

1. In this Block we have spent a significant amount of time looking at the significance of the LORD’s name “YHWH” as revealed in Exodus 3 and 6. At the beginning of the Block we suggested that understanding the significance of God’s name was central to the theology of the book of Exodus. In other words, if we want to understand what Exodus says about God, we must understand what it says about his name. In our study, we have seen that God’s name is linked not only to what he says about himself, but also to what he does.

What particular event is linked to the revelation of God’s name?

\_\_\_\_\_ 

2. Now we go on to think about the theological significance of the exodus by looking at the event that immediately precedes God’s dramatic rescue of his people and is probably the most significant event defining the people of Israel.

What do we call this event? \_\_\_\_\_ 

## b. The details of the Passover

3. Look through Exodus 12:1-11 and write down in note form the details of the Passover ritual.

---



---



---



---



4. Further details are given in vv 22, 43-49. Make a note of them.

---



---



5. You may already have noticed that in 12:3 God says, "Tell the whole congregation of Israel that..." but in 12:21ff Moses leaves out most of the detail and adds one or two other instructions.

### For Discussion

Why is this? (Tick one or more of the following)

- a. Vv 1-20 and 21ff belong to different sources.
- b. This avoids needless repetition. It is understood that all the instructions were passed on.
- c. It implies a certain freedom in the way Moses interpreted the Lord's commands.
- d. Vv 1-20 contain much that relates to future celebrations of the passover (and unleavened bread). They express God's intention but not necessarily the exact words he spoke at that time.
- e. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_



6. Many critical scholars have suggested that these verses give a description of how the Passover was celebrated in the time of the particular writers who wrote the story of the Exodus down. They suggest that this does not necessarily describe how the original Passover took place. How would you respond to this suggestion?

- a. It doesn't really matter what the origins of the text are, what is important is the final form of the text as we have it now.
- b. The essential traditions of such an important festival would have been handed down very carefully, so we can be fairly sure that what is given in Exodus and what was celebrated later are very similar.
- c. Scholars are experts, so we must accept their opinion.
- d. The Bible is God's word, so this must be how it happened.
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_



7. Whatever we conclude about the questions above, the two main elements in the Passover are:
- eating the lamb;
  - smearing the blood.

If you have these clearly in mind you will probably remember the other details. See if you can link the following to these two elements. Put a. or b. next to each one:

- |                         |                        |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| i. without blemish ____ | ii. hyssop ____        | iii. one year old ____ |
| iv. circumcised ____    | v. one per family ____ | vi. roast ____         |
| vii. bitter ____        | viii. haste ____       |                        |

### c. The significance of the Passover

8. Read through Exodus 12:12-30. What reasons did God give for celebrating the Passover (vv26-27)?

---



---

9. What reason did God give for holding the feast of unleavened bread (v17)?

---

10. What else may we say? One thing that stands out is the exact nature of the instructions given. Some details are of uncertain significance (e.g. why were bones not to be broken?). But the clear overall import is that the sacrifice is something the Lord himself has provided. It is not a human attempt to find a way of satisfying (pleasing or appeasing) God; it is God's gift to his people.

This can be seen, if we consider the very detailed instruction about sacrifices (found particularly in Leviticus) or the tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex 25 - 31; 35 - 40). Note Exodus 25:40 (picked up again in Acts 7:44. and especially Heb 8:5).

Perhaps this is most forcefully expressed in Leviticus 10:1-3, the story of N\_\_\_\_\_ and A\_\_\_\_\_ who "offered unholy (AV "strange") \_\_\_\_\_ before the LORD". (Read it if you don't know the story.)

11. Even in the time before the laws concerning sacrifice were laid down there are indications of God's initiative: Genesis 15:9ff; 22:2,8,13.

The instructions have an important educational value. They teach that:

- God is holy. He will accept only what is perfect (without blemish).
- Sinful people cannot come before him. Their lives are forfeit and must be redeemed by the lamb that God provides.
- Rebellion against God or resistance to his will means certain judgement.
- The foundation of the nation is the mighty act of God. This needs to be remembered—even re-enacted—and passed on from generation to generation.

Of course it is artificial and arbitrary to divide the teaching up into points in this way, but many people find it helpful in appreciating the wonder and complexity of God's ways. Write down a word for each of the above statements that will express the whole to you.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_



**12. For Discussion**

See if you can summarise the significance of the Passover in Exodus from what you have studied above.

---



---



---

**d. “Redeemed”**

**13.** In Frame 11 above (point b) we slipped in the word “redeemed”. It also occurred in the centre of the most important passage Exodus 6:2-8. Before we finish this lesson we need to say a little more about what this means.

Actually we need to look at two Hebrew words:

**i. *ga'al*** (Ex 6:6; 15:13 - pronounced as two separate syllables: ‘ga’ and ‘al’)

This is the word used in Ruth 3-4 where Boaz redeems Naomi's land (and receives Ruth as wife into the bargain). If someone became poor and sold off his land he had the option of buying it back. It was his inheritance from the Lord (cf. Lv 27:16; Dt 12:9; Jos 11:23 etc.). A relative could also redeem the land on his behalf. So the basic meaning here is “buy back”.

In some contexts the element of ‘buying back’ has been lost. Have a look at **some** of these references and see if you can write down what you think the word refers to in general: Exodus 6:6; 15:13; Leviticus 25:25f, 48f; 27:13, 15, 19f, 27f, 31, 33; Isaiah 35:9; 43:1; 44:22f; 48:20; 52:9; 63:9; Hosea 13:14; Micah 4:10.

Modified meaning: \_\_\_\_\_



**14.** The other word partly overlaps with *ga'al* as we can see in passages where both words are used with the same meaning (e.g. Lv 27). It is:

**ii. *padah*** (Ex 13:13(x3); Dt 7:8; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 2 Sam 7:23(x2) – the ‘d’ is pronounced ‘th’ as in the English word ‘father’)

In the Hebrew Law every firstborn male, whether animal or human, belonged to the Lord. Therefore the firstlings of clean animals had to be sacrificed to the Lord; those of unclean animals either had their necks broken or were redeemed by the sacrifice of a clean animal; firstborn sons had to be redeemed by sacrifice. This, of course, was intended as a perpetual reminder of the tenth plague and the deliverance of Israel—from the plague by means of the Passover, and from Egypt.

The basic meaning of *padah* therefore is similar to that of *ga'al*: it means to “receive back by providing a substitute”. Hence the familiar translation: “ransom”.

Other occurrences are: Isaiah 29:22; 51:10f; Jeremiah 15:21; 31:11; Hosea 7:13; Micah 6:4; Zechariah 10:8.

As with *ga'al*, *padah* does not always have its full basic meaning. Write down below the basic meaning and the modified meaning, which you would deduce from the texts mentioned. In each case note at least one reference to illustrate the meaning.

Basic meaning and reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Modified meaning and reference: \_\_\_\_\_ 

- 15.** When either word is used of the Lord then obviously he does not need to **pay** anything to get his people out of trouble; and there is no appropriate being to whom he could pay anything. In this case, then, we are dealing with a metaphorical use of “redeem”. A modern parallel might be a newspaper reporting a mining accident with the headline “The cost of coal” – loss of human life is the ‘cost’, but it isn’t paid to anybody. Here is a question to have in mind when you read about redemption:

#### For Discussion

Do the words *ga'al* and *padah* retain some idea of the cost to God of redemption? Or have they become weakened so that they simply mean “deliver”? Any immediate thoughts?

---



---

- 16.** The full significance of the Exodus is not revealed in Scripture until the New Testament where we learn that we are redeemed from sin at great cost: the blood (death) of God's only Son. As the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, so we are slaves of sin.

Notice a most important point: although the Bible uses metaphorical language in explaining our salvation by means of the exodus, there is a real similarity between the events that are compared:

- Israelites and ourselves—hopeless situation
- Real deliverance—God acts in the world
- Reason for it is God's grace.

#### Typology

A term used by scholars to refer to a genuine parallel or correspondence between a person, event or institution in the OT and someone or something (which usually transcends it) in the NT. For example, Luke 9:31 refers to Jesus' ‘exodus’ that he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Luke seems to see Jesus' death and resurrection as having a real parallel with the ‘exodus’ from Egypt. The Old Testament event helps explain the significance of the New Testament one, but the New Testament one supercedes it.

**For Discussion**

Can you think of other similarities? Make sure they are genuine similarities.

---



---

**e. Review**

- 17.** Put the the two main elements of the Passover as given in Exodus as a heading in the columns below and then list the other details below each one:

--	--



- 18.** Write down:

a. the basic meaning of *ga'al*, together with one or two references which would illustrate this meaning.

---

b. the modified meaning of *ga'al*, together with one or two references which would illustrate this meaning.

---



- 19.** Write down:

a. The basic meaning of *padah* and a reference:

---

b. The modified meaning and a reference:

---



**Reflecting on this lesson**

Note down in your notebook anything from today's lesson:

- that you want to discuss in your tutorial;
- that is significant for your own personal faith;
- that is significant for explaining the Old Testament to others.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you apply what you have learnt.



**Feedback: Passover Theology: The Passover in Exodus**

**block 1  
lesson 5**

1.5.1	Your words: The rescue/redemption of Israel from their bondage in Egypt
1.5.2	The Passover (or the death of the firstborn)
1.5.3	You probably have something like this: Take on 10th day, 1st month, one animal per household or group; male lamb or kid, one year old, without blemish; keep and kill on 14th evening; put blood on doorposts and lintel; roasted (not boiled) whole; eat that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; burn what remains in morning; eat hastily dressed for flight.
1.5.4	Your words. E.g. Use hyssop for smearing blood; only circumcised to eat; not to carry any outside; not to break any bone.
1.5.5	Your answer. Discuss it in your tutorial—see a commentary before you go if possible. I should say: a. is probably true but that may not be the reason for the difference in detail; b. is true; c. is dubious (see frame 6); d. is attractive.
1.5.6	Your answer. a. seems to me to treat the historical nature of Exodus too lightly. b. seems to make sense to me – there may be some slight variations – but overall tradition would have carefully guarded the essential elements. c. is clearly wrong (otherwise you would accept everything we told you). d. The historical reliability of God's word is an important subject that we probably don't have time to deal with here but it is something you might want to continue to think about as we go through the book of Exodus – I personally think that there is a clear link between historical and theological truth.
1.5.7	I have: a. i., iii., iv., v., vi., vii., viii; b. ii.
1.5.8	It was to remember and commemorate Israel's salvation and Egypt's judgement at God's hand.
1.5.9	to commemorate their coming out of bondage in Egypt.
1.5.10	Nadab; Abihu; fire
1.5.11	Perhaps: Holy : Redeemed or Substitute : Judgement : Remembrance
1.5.13	Your words. How about “release from bondage or distress”?
1.5.14	How about: “receive back by providing a substitute” or “ransom” Ex 13:13? : “deliver from distress” 2 Sam 7:23?
1.5.17	Check with Frame 7.
1.5.18	How about: “buy back” Lv 25:25f; Ru 4:4-6? : “release from bondage or distress” Ex 6:6; 15:13?
1.5.19	Check with Frame 14.





Whatever your educational level or knowledge of the Christian faith, we have courses that can enable you to grow in your faith.

As a group you can choose the level at which you want to study. We will train your group leader how the courses work.

All our courses combine:

- ✓ **Home Study**  
using carefully designed workbooks
- ✓ **Group Meetings**  
with a trained facilitator
- ✓ **Application**  
Activities and opportunities to practice what you are learning

*"I believe the Gold courses are quite simply a gift to the church. A format which is easy to follow and yet gradually takes you deeper into the subject, challenging you to think deeply about the Christian faith and helping to develop mature, stable and spiritually strong Christians."*

### Level 1 Courses

For those who are new to the Christian faith and want an easily accessible form of study.

### Level 2 Courses

For those who want to learn what it is to follow Jesus through an in-depth study of his life and ministry.

### Level 3 Courses

For those who want to take the study of the Bible further and engage with meaning for today.

**For more information, contact:**

**The GOLD Project**

**Stockton House**

**Stockton Avenue, Fleet**

**Hampshire GU51 4NS**

**01252 614323**

**info@goldproject.org**

**www.goldproject.org**

<https://twitter.com/GOLDiscipleship>

<https://www.facebook.com/groupbasedopenlearningdiscipleship/>

The Group-based Open Learning Discipleship (GOLD) Project is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in England, registered charity no. 1166567

Learning churches... growing churches