

For all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They are to be mine. I am the Lord." Numbers 3:13

What is the message? There is a debt that is owed to God on every family on the face of the earth, not just the Israelites. In Isaac's case, the message to Abraham was Isaac as He and Sara's first born would die for Abraham's sins against God.

Look to the 10th plague, did God demand the life of Pharaoh? No, rather his first born is judged.

So when Isaac asks his dad- *"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Genesis 22:7*

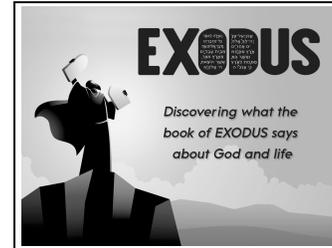
Abraham is entrusting himself completely to God's mercy and says: *"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. Genesis 22:8*

In closing the case for God's just judgment on humankind:

Notes:

Community Group Questions

1. In your heart is God justified in judging Egypt as He did?
2. Have you ever sensed guilt over your actions before God?
3. How does the story of Isaac give you hope with that guilt?



How Passover Began The story of the lamb and the firstborn sons.

God tells Moses about the last plague.

So Moses said, "This is what the Lord says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. ⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. Exodus 11:4,5

Exodus 12:1-13

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ²"This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over a fire—head, legs and inner parts. ¹⁰Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

¹²On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. ¹³The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

For Jews, the Passover meal is the central thing that makes them who they are. At the very center of biblical faith, is the bloody death of a helpless victim. In the case of Passover it is a lamb.

I. What's with the lamb?

³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family... ⁶Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Exodus 12:3,6

Slaughter the lamb to what end?

When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. Exodus 12:23

What is Yahweh doing?

1. God is judging the evil of Egypt.
2. Yahweh's judgment is an angel known as the Destroyer.

Tim Keller: *"I'm going to be protected against the ultimate force in the universe by Fluffy and Muffy, the weakest, meekest, and mildest kind of creature possible?"*

II. The story of the Lamb.

The first time we see this imagery in scripture is with Abraham and Isaac. (Abraham predates Moses by 250 years).

God says to Abraham, when Isaac is a boy,
"Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."
Genesis 22:2

The back drop to this monstrous command.

Isaac is known in scripture as the "son of promise", because he came both, late to Abraham and wife Sara, as well as being the first in line of the promise of Abraham's numberless descendants.

God had no intention of killing Isaac through his father's hand, but he did want to send both a *message and a test* to Abraham.

The *test* was to see if Abraham would trust Yahweh. The *message* was to awaken Abraham to his many sins, and to God's mercy.

The sub text to this story is the significance of the firstborn son.

This is not easily understood by modern culture, but ancient cultures understood this concept well.

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Ancient people in ancient cultures did not have aspirations for individual prominence, individual prosperity, or individual success. Rather you aspired for the success and the prominence and the prosperity of your family.

Firstborn sons held a unique position of responsibility and preeminence in ancient culture, because;

1. Family success not individual success, was the foundation of their culture.
2. If a member of the family failed or acted in a shameful manner, the entire family was responsible.

Henceforth: God in his judgement against Egypt gives Pharaoh what Pharaoh had given the Israelites; death to the male babies. And as a result of this judgement, God tells Moses later: