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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Bo – Common Passover Questions

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Bo, which is Hebrew for “Come,” and it goes from Exodus 10:1 to Exodus 13:16.

This parashah tells the story of the last three plagues that God sent upon Egypt.

It tells the story of the first Passover when Israel put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts to be spared from the last plague—the death of the firstborn.

We also read about the Exodus from Egypt.

The parashah concludes with God giving instructions for Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the consecration of the firstborn.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going going to explore some common questions about Passover.

In our Torah Portion this week, instructions are given regarding the first Passover, a memorial meal commemorating Israel’s deliverance:

Exodus 12:14

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

The instructions found in this chapter raise some common questions among believers who have taken an interest in how the Torah and feast days apply to us today. What is going on in Exodus 12, and how does it relate to how we observe the Passover today?

The first question that often comes up concerns Moses’ instructions about selecting a lamb and

slaughtering it ourselves. Is this something we should be doing today? Should we be slaughtering lambs in our backyards every year?

What many people might not realize is that Exodus 12 has specific instructions that apply only to the first Passover event in Egypt. Slaughtering the lamb at home, putting the blood on the doorposts, and eating it “in haste” with “your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand” (Exodus 12:11) were instructions that applied only to those Israelites in Egypt.

After this Passover, the lamb was only to be slaughtered at the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. How do we know that? Well, because the Torah says so:

Deuteronomy 16:1-2, 5-7

Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the Lord [YHWH] your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord [YHWH] your God brought you out of Egypt by night. And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord [YHWH] your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the Lord [YHWH] will choose, to make his name dwell there [...] You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord [YHWH] your God is giving you, but at the place that the Lord [YHWH] your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord [YHWH] your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.

Since there is no Temple and functioning priesthood in Jerusalem today, we cannot apply this instruction to slaughter the lamb at the place where YHWH chose to make His name dwell. What that means is that we cannot actually have “the Passover” today, since the lamb itself is the Passover. That’s the reason many Jews traditionally don’t serve lamb at their seders.

There are other aspects of the feast that we *can* observe, such as having the memorial meal with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. But as far as the actual Passover is concerned, we simply have to wait until Messiah returns and reestablishes the priesthood in Jerusalem before we can enjoy Passover in all its fullness.

Another issue that often comes up is regarding circumcision. Exodus 12:48 says that the only way a non-Israelite was allowed to eat of the Passover was if they became circumcised. Does this mean that physically uncircumcised believers aren’t allowed to join a Passover seder? Should people who host Passover seders at their homes and congregations be asking to check people at the door?

Technically, since the Passover in this context refers specifically to the sacrifice—the lamb—itsself, *nobody* is able to eat the Passover today. Again, the only way to offer the Passover sacrifice is to do it at the Tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem. Since there is no way to even have a Passover, there is no way to apply the restrictions upon uncircumcised men eating it. There is no restriction upon uncircumcised men partaking in a seder and observing the days of unleavened bread.

Now, circumcision is still a commandment that we keep out of obedience as a result of our faith in Messiah. And it will certainly be relevant again in regard to Passover when the temple and priesthood are restored in the millennial kingdom. If you want more information on that topic, please see our two part series, [Circumcision: The Eternal Sign](#) and **How to Circumcise Your Heart**.

However, as far as our observance of Passover today is concerned, there doesn’t appear to be any reason

to make sure that your seder participants are physically circumcised!

We hope some of these insights were helpful.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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