

Easter Meeting



The devotions chosen for this event came from:

The LORD of Glory, Day by Day Devotions with Your Children, by Jim Cromarty, pages 46, 628 and 70 respectively.

Sing Hymn 23: 1-3

Prayer

General Business

Read: Exodus 12:21-30 & Hebrews 9:11-22

The Passover

‘For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us’ (1Cor 5:7b).

The story of the Passover night is always exciting to read as it reminds us that God can and does save His people. Satan didn’t understand that the events of the Passover night pointed to the saving work of Jesus. He didn’t understand that Christ would die a cruel death on a cross, in the place of sinners. He didn’t understand that the use of the blood of the lamb on the Passover night pointed to the shed blood of Christ. Had he understood God’s plan of salvation he would have attempted to prevent Christ being crucified. Satan as a detective made a great blunder concerning the sacrificial death of Jesus, having failed to comprehend what we read in the New Testament: ‘without the shedding of blood there is not remission’ (Heb 9:22).

The Old Testament temple worship required the continual sacrifice of animals for sin. Blood had to be shed as that was God’s only way of salvation. This indicated that the Saviour’s death would be violent.

On the night of the Passover the lamb was killed and its blood collected by the head of the house who painted the outside section of the door posts and the wooden beam above the door so that the blood could be clearly seen by those outside. That

night the Angel of the LORD killed the eldest child in every family living in Egypt – except in those houses where the lamb’s blood had been placed on the door frame. What the people inside the house couldn’t see was visible to the Angel who passed over those homes marked with blood.

In the New Testament we are told that just as the blood of the lamb, seen by the Angel, resulted in the saving of the eldest child in each family, so also God’s only Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour, shed his blood in order to save his people. Christ was both the sacrifice for sins and the Priest to carry out the sacrifice. Because he died in the place of the elect, on the Day of Judgement the anger of God towards sinners will pass over those for whom Christ died.

Each year at the time of the Passover each Jewish family killed a lamb and ate the Passover meal. This was one wonderful opportunity for the parents to teach their children what the Passover meant. In the Christian church we don’t celebrate the Jewish Passover in order to remember our Saviour’s death for his people. His death is remembered in the Lord’s Supper.

Sing Hymn 7:2

Discussion



Read Mark 14:12-16

Preparations for the Passover Meal

'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats' (Exodus 12:5).

Australia is one of the world's greatest producers of lamb and mutton for the dining-room table. Maybe you have sat down to a meal of Australian lamb. One important food at the Passover was the cooked flesh of a lamb or kid goat. Over the years it became the custom to kill and eat a lamb.

The time had arrived for the disciples to make preparations for the Passover meal, which would be the last meal they had with Jesus before he was crucified. The lamb would have been selected on 10 Nisan ready to be killed on 14 Nisan as required by God's law. The Passover was a celebration of the last night before the children of Israel left Egypt where they had been slaves, working for Pharaoh. Moses had given them instructions, just as God had given them to him. The lamb was to be killed and its blood smeared on the doorposts and the wood above the door, so that the angel of death which was to kill the eldest child in each house, would pass over those homes where the blood could be seen.

The Passover pointed to the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus who would die for lost people. His blood would be shed like that of the Passover lamb, after all he was 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29). Paul later wrote of

our Saviour, 'For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us' (1 Cor 5:7).

When the disciples asked Christ what they were to do to prepare for the Passover, Jesus gave instructions that give us another glimpse of the divinity of our Redeemer. How could Jesus know that the disciples would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water? It would be easy for them to find this man as he was doing the work normally done by the women. How could Jesus know exactly what was going to happen when Peter and John met the man? It was because he was God and man in one Person. As God he had divine foreknowledge of what would happen.

The two disciples were shown to a furnished supper room where they made all the necessary preparations. They had to have a cooked lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, wine, cushions on which to sit, bowls for the food and anything else that was needed.

We must remember that the Passover celebrated freedom from slavery. Through Christ's shed blood we are freed from slavery to sin. Christ's atonement means forgiveness for everyone who believes in him as Lord and Saviour. The writer to the Hebrews rightly said, '...according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission' (Hebrews 9:22). May Christians always remember that they belong to Christ. Paul said, 'For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's' (1 Cor 6:20).

Sing Hymn 27:1 & 5

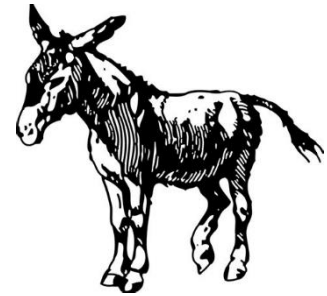
Discussion



Read Matthew 21:1-11

A king riding a donkey?

'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey' (Zechariah 9:9).



When we read of the military victories of Alexander the Great we picture him riding a great horse, because he was one of the first military leaders to make use of horses in battle. They were swift and strong and soldiers could quickly move from place to place causing great confusion among the enemy. On the other hand the greatest King of all ages, the Lord Jesus, entered his capital city in the most humble manner - he rode upon a donkey- a beast of burden.

In the midst of outlining God's judgement on some nations Zechariah devoted a short passage to the first coming of Jesus. It must have seemed unusual to those who studied the Scriptures. Sure, they expected a King to come from God, but a warrior King - riding a horse ready for battle!

After David's rule, the kings of Israel rode horses as a mark of their kingship and power, but Jesus was the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). Our Messiah rode into Jerusalem on a young, unbroken donkey. His humble entrance into the city a few days before his crucifixion gave further proof to the purpose of his life - 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45).

Jesus knew the prophecy of Zechariah and as part of his obedience to his Father had to ensure it was fulfilled. Had this event not taken place it would have shown that Jesus was not the Messiah.

It was what many call 'Palm Sunday' and Christ was about to enter Jerusalem. He sent two disciples to Bethpage where they, in a miraculous way, found a donkey for him to ride. In recording the event Matthew quoted the words found in our text as being fulfilled. The disciples sat their Lord on the donkey, and as he rode towards the city the crowds who knew who he was and were also on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover, spread their clothing and palm branches on the roadway before him.

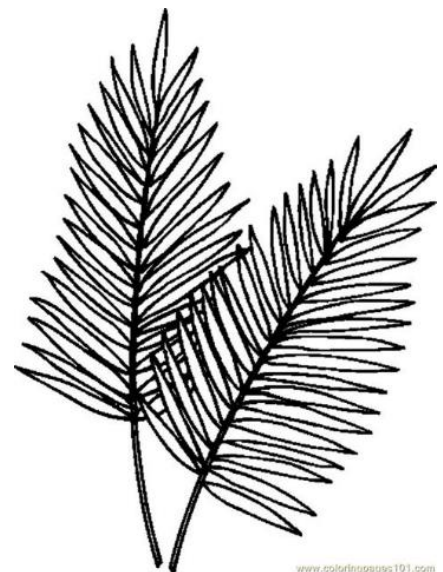
Then they cried out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest.' Portion of their cry came from Psalm 118:26. The words shouted out were a clear recognition that Jesus was the Messiah; yet a few days later the same crowd was calling out, 'Crucify! Crucify!' I trust that you are not fickle like the members of that great crowd, but rather are faithful followers of Christ the Saviour of sinners.

Sing: Ps 118:6,7

Discussion

End of meeting song: Hymn 29:1-3

Prayer



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

Devotional 1

1. What sort of lamb was needed for the Passover? (Ex 12:1-6)
2. Were these requirements the same for a sacrificial lamb/animal?
3. On what day do the Jews celebrate the Passover? Lev 23:5-6
4. What is Lent? Do we observe it? Why/why not?
5. In whose place did the Passover lamb die in Egypt?
6. Why is Jesus called 'our Passover'? (1Cor 5:7)
7. Hebrews 9:22 refers to shed blood. This text is often referred to the blood shed at **sacrifices**. Can this text also be used for the lambs slaughtered at Passover as the author did in the devotional?

Devotional 2

1. Jesus bought us with a price: his blood. What does it mean to glorify God in your body and spirit? (1 Cor 6:20). How do we do this?

Devotional 3

1. Ps 118 is one of the Hallel psalms. The Egyptian Hallel (Hebrew for 'praise', Ps 113-118) and the Great Hallel (Ps 136) continue to be recited as part of the Passover in Israel. Why is this significant that this psalm was often sung at Passover?
2. What is the meaning of 'Hosanna'?
3. Why were the scribes and chief priests sore displeased? Matt 21:15