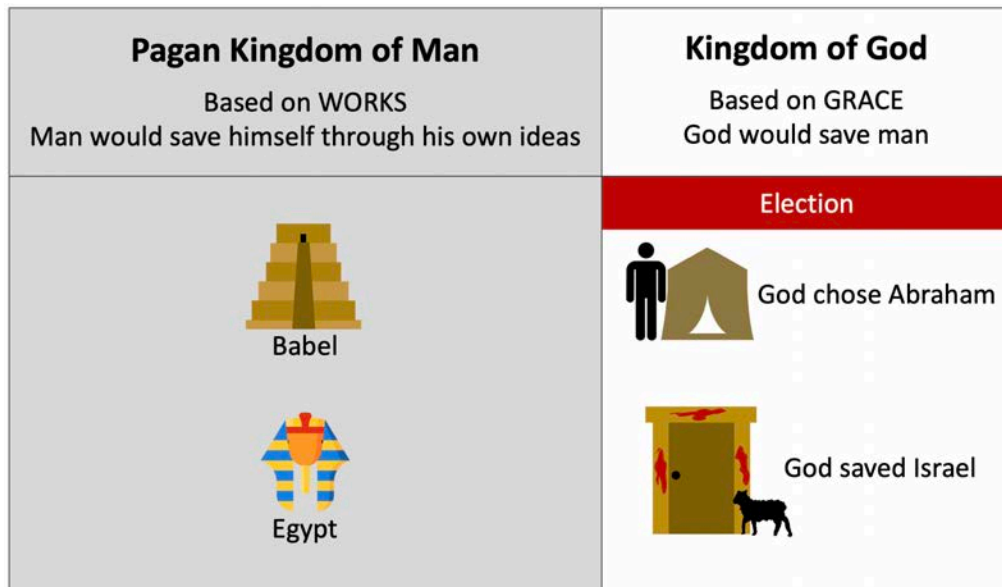


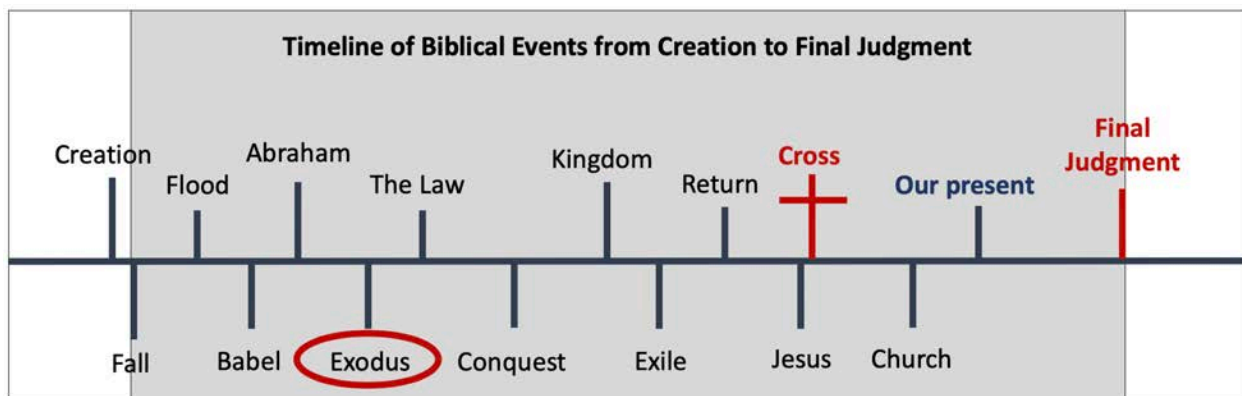
# Lesson 12: The Passover

## Previously...

God had directed Abraham's family into Egypt where for 400 years, they grew into a nation. Although they were saved from famine and were kept culturally intact by forced segregation, the Egyptians enslaved them.



So Yahweh, acting on His covenant with Abraham, sent Moses to lead the people out. God made this happen through a series of ten plagues that became part of the Exodus event. Through the Exodus, God revealed a lot about Himself. He proved to the Israelites, the Egyptians, the surrounding nations and everyone else that He alone is God. He is sovereign over all. There is no other god besides Him.



## The Tenth Plague, the Passover, is a Picture of the Saviour

The tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, is the historical event commemorated by the Jews every year as the Passover. It is the most important picture or foreshadow in the Old Testament of how God will use Jesus to save mankind.



**How God  
Judges and Saves...**

**...is a picture of...**



**...How Jesus  
Judges and Saves.**

In the beginning, Yahweh created and loved man. Then man rebelled and sinned against Him. The consequence or punishment for sin was physical death in this life and after death, eternal separation from God forever in the lake of fire. But because of God's great love for man, He wanted to make a way that man's sin could be punished without punishing man. The Passover is a picture of how God was going to do that.

The tenth and final plague of the Exodus was very precise. It was not an uncontrolled plague that killed everyone nor was it a disease that the Egyptians could not contain. It killed only the firstborn son of every family as well as the firstborn of the cattle. It was so supernatural that there was no mistaking that God was the One doing this. To the nation of Israel, Yahweh gave very specific instructions on how their firstborn sons could avoid the death-curse that was coming.

### **Exodus 12:3–7, 22, 46**

<sup>3</sup> Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household.

<sup>4</sup> If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat.

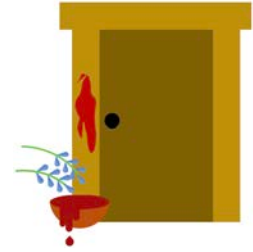
<sup>5</sup> The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects. <sup>6</sup> "Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight.



<sup>7</sup> They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal.

<sup>22</sup> Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning.

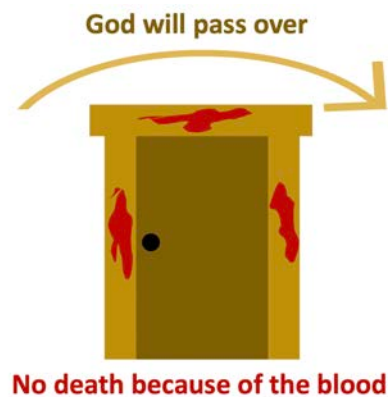
<sup>46</sup> Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones.



The only way of avoiding the death of the firstborn was to do exactly as God had instructed them. God said if He saw blood on the doorframe of their house, He would pass over that house and their firstborn son would not die.

### Exodus 12:12–13

<sup>12</sup> On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! <sup>13</sup> But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.



God's judgment was to be a death in every house: either the firstborn son would die or a lamb would die. What exactly was God teaching the Israelites?

1. God was saying that for the firstborn to live, there must be a death.
2. God would accept the death of a substitute (a lamb) in place of the firstborn.

#### God's Judgment:

Death in every house

EITHER...

OR...



the firstborn dies



a substitute dies



That night, in every household in Egypt, there was a death. In the houses where a lamb died, the firstborn did not die. This lamb sacrifice was the only way that God provided for the firstborns to escape judgment.



God used the picture of the Passover and the substitute lamb to explain how the Saviour Jesus Christ would save mankind who is under a death sentence for sin. It was all in the details.



God had given specific instructions about the animal sacrifice. They matched the exact details about how Jesus died! Why? Yahweh wanted us to know for certain that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb He had planned for all along.

Here are the details:



Passover Lamb	Jesus	Bible Passages about Jesus
1. It had to be a lamb or goat.	Jesus is called the Lamb of God and also the Passover Lamb.	<p><b>John 1:29</b> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! <u>The Lamb of God</u> who takes away the sin of the world!</p> <p><b>1 Corinthians 5:7b</b> <u>Christ, our Passover Lamb</u>, has been sacrificed for us.</p>
2. It had to be a male.	Jesus is a man.	<p><b>Matthew 1:21</b> "And she will have <u>a son</u>, and you are to name him Jesus, for <u>he</u> will save his people from their sins."</p>
3. It had to be perfect, with no defects.	Jesus never sinned once in his entire life. He is perfect.	<p><b>1 John 3:5</b> And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and <u>there is no sin in him</u>.</p>
4. It had to be killed at twilight.	Jesus died on the cross at twilight.	<p><b>Mark 15:34, 37</b> <sup>34</sup> Then at <u>three o'clock</u> Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" <sup>37</sup> Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. (In Jewish culture, twilight is the time between 3pm–5pm.)</p>
5. The lamb's blood was to be applied to the doorframe of the house.	Jesus died on the cross, shedding his blood.	<p><b>1 John 5:6</b> And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and <u>by shedding his blood on the cross</u>—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony.</p>



Passover Lamb	Jesus	Bible Passages about Jesus
6. None of the lamb's bones were to be broken.	Jesus' bones were not broken.	<b>John 19:32–33</b> <sup>32</sup> So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. <sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so <u>they didn't break his legs.</u>
7. The people were to be in the house to be saved.	People who put their trust in Jesus are saved.	<b>John 10:9</b> <u>Yes, I am the gate.</u> Those who come in through me will be <u>saved.</u>

One additional detail: Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Lamb Selection Day (10<sup>th</sup> day of the Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar) as specified in Exodus 12:3 (See John 12:12–16). While the Jews were selecting their lambs for the Passover sacrifice, Yahweh presented His perfect Lamb for everyone to see!

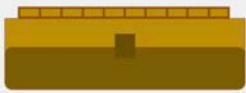


God recorded the Passover account in great detail so that we would know that Jesus is our Passover Lamb, our substitute. He would die on behalf of sinful mankind.

## Five Lessons from the Passover

Over and over, we see God directing history and using events recorded in the Bible to help explain spiritual matters.


Likewise, the same five lessons that we had learnt from the global Flood are repeated in the Passover. These lessons continue to foreshadow Jesus and His act of saving all mankind.






**Five lessons we had learnt from the Flood**

1. Grace before judgment
2. Who to save, who to judge
3. Only one way of salvation
4. Man and nature impacted
5. How to be saved: by faith

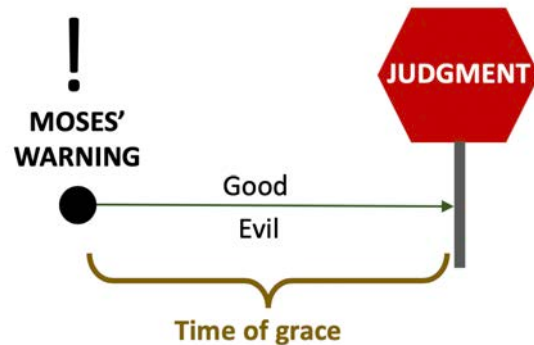
**Same five lessons repeated in the Passover**



# 1. Grace before judgment

 <b>Global Flood</b>	 <b>Exodus (Passover)</b>	 <b>When Jesus Saves</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 120 years.</li> <li>• Enoch warned.</li> <li>• Noah warned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The period of the first nine plagues leading up to the night of the Passover.</li> <li>• Moses and Aaron warned the people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The time period is our lifetime.</li> <li>• The Bible warns us.</li> <li>• Believers of Jesus warn us.</li> </ul>

Before the final judgment in the tenth plague, God gave Pharaoh many opportunities to repent. Pharaoh could have changed his mind at any time during the first nine plagues. This was a period of many months and it was a period of grace. But the Bible repeats many times that Pharaoh “hardened his heart” and would not listen nor repent. For example, in the second plague, after God removed the frogs, Pharaoh once again became stubborn.



**Exodus 8:15 (NIV)**

But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.



Following their Pharaoh’s example, most of the Egyptians also refused to believe. Despite experiencing Yahweh’s power over the course of the year, they too, hardened their hearts against the Creator-God. It was a choice they made.

But there were some who listened. For example, when God announced that in the seventh plague, He would send hail, some Egyptians believed God and acted on His words.

**Exodus 9:20–21**

<sup>20</sup> Some of Pharaoh’s officials were afraid because of what the LORD had said. They quickly brought their servants and livestock in from the fields. <sup>21</sup> But those who paid no attention to the word of the LORD left theirs out in the open.



These Egyptians took God’s word seriously and responded.

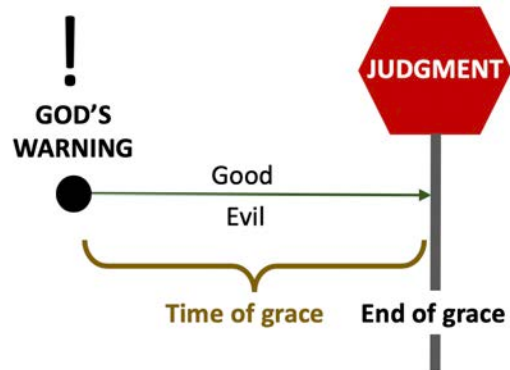
In fact, when the Israelites left Egypt, some Egyptians and other non-Israelites who believed God, also went with them.

**Exodus 12:37-38**

<sup>37</sup> That night the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men, plus all the women and children. <sup>38</sup> A rabble of non-Israelites went with them, along with great flocks and herds of livestock.

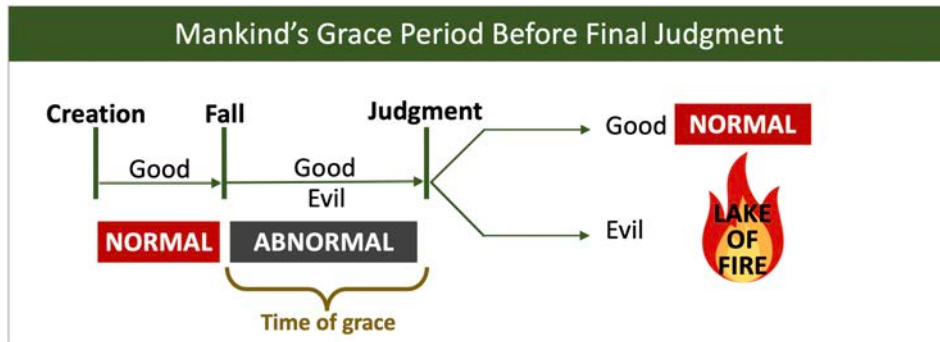
Moses warned Egypt of the coming judgment before the final plague. The many months before the tenth plague was the period of grace. It is important to understand that God's grace, His "undeserved love", is temporary. God will not tolerate evil forever. There is a limit.

A day will come when God no longer offers His grace. Instead, He will put an end to evil. For the Egyptians, the Exodus ended with the Egyptian economy destroyed, Pharaoh and the leaders dead and the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea. Grace to them had ended.

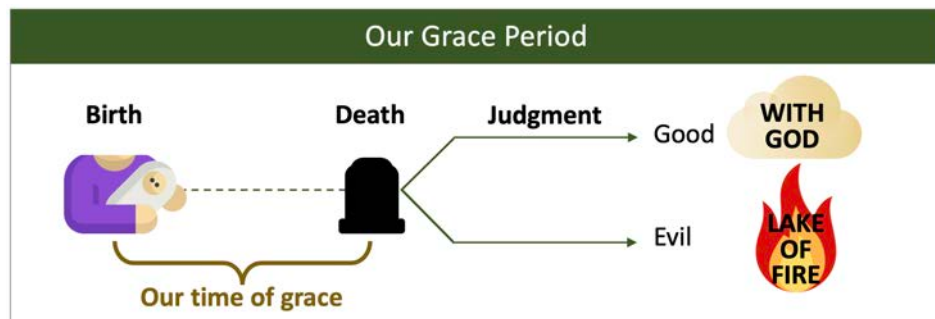


**When Jesus saves**

God did not create the world to include evil. Evil is abnormal. But God offered His grace. This is the period before the final judgment.

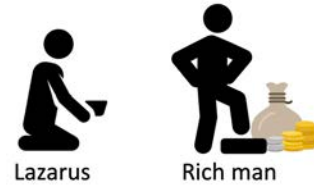


But when and how long is this grace period for us? **It is the span of our lives.** We can only accept God's offer of salvation during our lifetimes. Once we're dead, we cannot change our minds.





How do we know this? We learn this when Jesus recounted the true events of two actual people: a man named Lazarus and an unnamed rich man. It's important to remember that in this account, being poor or rich has nothing to do with salvation.



### Luke 16:19–31

<sup>19</sup> Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. <sup>20</sup> At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. <sup>21</sup> As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

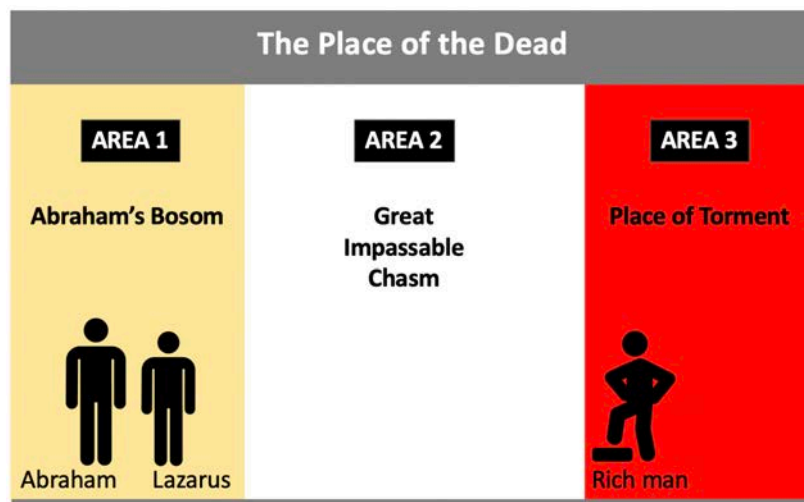
<sup>22</sup> “Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup> and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

<sup>24</sup> “The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’

<sup>25</sup> “But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup> And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’

<sup>27</sup> “Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father’s home. <sup>28</sup> For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don’t end up in this place of torment.’

<sup>29</sup> “But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’ <sup>30</sup> “The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’ <sup>31</sup> “But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”





Once the rich man and Lazarus were dead, they could not change their decisions about God's offer of salvation. Their "grace period" to decide if they believed God or not was when they were alive.

Just as it was at the time of the Flood and Passover, God provides sufficient warning of this coming judgment.

Abraham told the rich man that **God sent His Word, the Bible, to warn people** (whenever we see the phrase "Moses and the Prophets", it is referring to the Old Testament). In Jesus' time, the Old Testament was all the people had. The New Testament had not yet been written. Yet Jesus knew the truths, history and work of God could be understood from the Old Testament.



Today, God also sends **believers to give warning** and tell others of this same coming judgment as well as the Good News of God's grace and salvation.

#### **Mark 16:15–16**

<sup>15</sup> And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.

<sup>16</sup> Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Our grace period is the span of our lifetime. Each person has to use this grace period wisely to decide if they will believe the warnings about the coming judgment and if they will trust in God's solution of the Saviour.

### **The Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. But how can He harden Pharaoh's heart and then punish Pharaoh for it?**

In the account of the Exodus, the Bible says many times that Pharaoh hardened his heart, but it also says many times that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.







#### **Exodus 4:21**

And the LORD told Moses, "When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go."



What exactly is going on here? Did God "make" Pharaoh bad?

No. **God intervened** in a situation that was **already evil**, just like He did in the past.

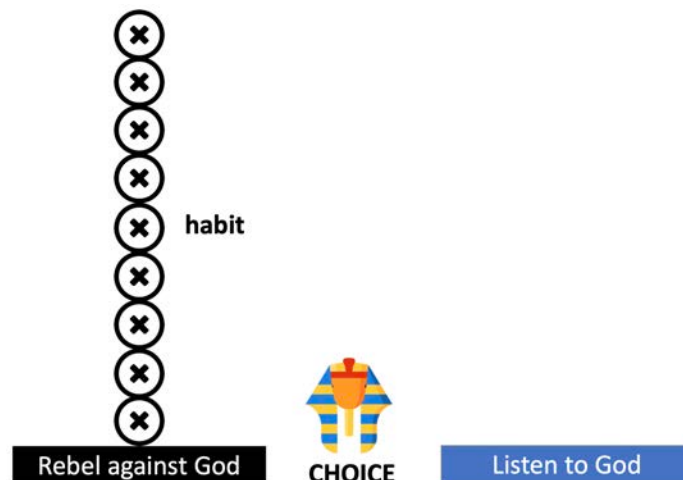
Situation was already evil	God Intervened
 <p>Sinful man refused to remember God's history and truth.</p>	 <p>So God chose Abraham and He chose to work through his family to save mankind.</p>
 <p>Abraham's descendants were dysfunctional and rebellious.</p>	 <p>So God sent them into Egypt to prevent them from getting culturally lost and losing their world mission.</p>
 <p>Pharaoh was living in rebellion against the Creator-God of the universe and had cruelly enslaved the Israelites.</p>	 <p>So God sent 10 plagues to show that He is the only true God of the universe and to force Pharaoh to release the Israelites.</p>

God did not cause "good" Pharaoh to become "bad". Pharaoh was already evil.

But when the Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, how exactly did He do that? Yahweh did that by presenting Pharaoh with **further revelation and more truth about Himself**. Every time Moses approached Pharaoh and told him what God would do if he did not let the Israelites go, Pharaoh had a choice:

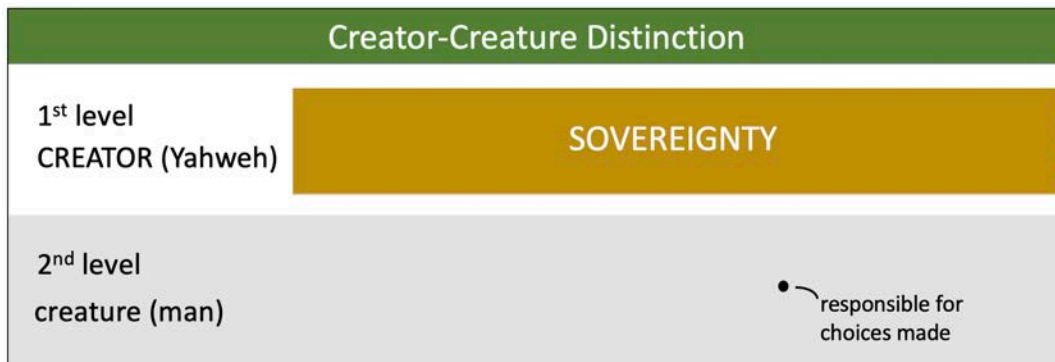


Each time Pharaoh **chose** to reject God's Word, it reinforced his rebellion against Yahweh. He made his heart even harder towards God. And the more he went against God's Word, the more it became a **habit**. He had trained himself to rebel against Yahweh.






So who was responsible for Pharaoh's reactions?

- Was Pharaoh responsible for hardening his own heart? Yes.
- Was God responsible for hardening Pharaoh's heart? Yes. Because God gave Pharaoh revelations that allowed Pharaoh to make choices that further hardened his heart.



There is a Creator-creature distinction between how created man makes decisions and how the Creator-God rules. **Mankind has human responsibility** over their free-will decisions while at the same time, **God exercises divine sovereignty** over history. We saw an example of this in the life of Joseph. We must not equate man's ability to choose as equal to God's control over the universe. They are on completely different levels.






## 2. Who to save, who to judge

 <b>Global Flood</b>	 <b>Exodus (Passover)</b>	 <b>When Jesus Saves</b>
<p><b>Saved:</b> those in the ark.</p> <p><b>Judged:</b> those outside the ark.</p>	<p><b>Saved:</b> the firstborns whose families slaughtered the lamb and applied the blood to the doorframe of the house.</p> <p><b>Judged:</b> the firstborns whose families did not slaughter the lamb and apply the blood to the doorframe of the house.</p>	<p><b>Saved:</b> those who trust in Jesus as their substitute lamb.</p> <p><b>Judged:</b> those who do not trust Jesus.</p>

When God judges, He does not make any mistakes: there are no accidents and no victims. God shows the He can choose perfectly between two groups of people.

For example:

- In the fourth plague of flies, only the Egyptians were affected (Exodus 8:22).
- In the fifth plague, all the Egyptian livestock died, but the Israelites did not lose a single animal (Exodus 9:4).
- In the seventh plague of hail, the only place without hail was Goshen (Exodus 9:23–26).
- In the ninth plague, a supernatural deep darkness covered the entire land of Egypt for three days. The darkness was so strange because no Egyptian could even light lamps or use artificial light! However, the Israelites had light (Exodus 10:22–23).
- In the tenth plague, again, a distinction was made between Egypt and Israel.

Plague	Egyptians JUDGED	Israelites SPARED
4. Flies		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Death of livestock		<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Hail		<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Darkness		<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Death of the firstborn		<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Exodus 11:4–7

<sup>4</sup> Moses had announced to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die. <sup>6</sup> Then a loud wail will rise throughout the land of Egypt, a wail like no one has heard before or will ever hear again.

<sup>7</sup> But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.



#### When Jesus saves

We have seen how at the Flood and the Exodus, God knows precisely who to save and who to judge. God’s judgment is not at all fuzzy but is laser-accurate.

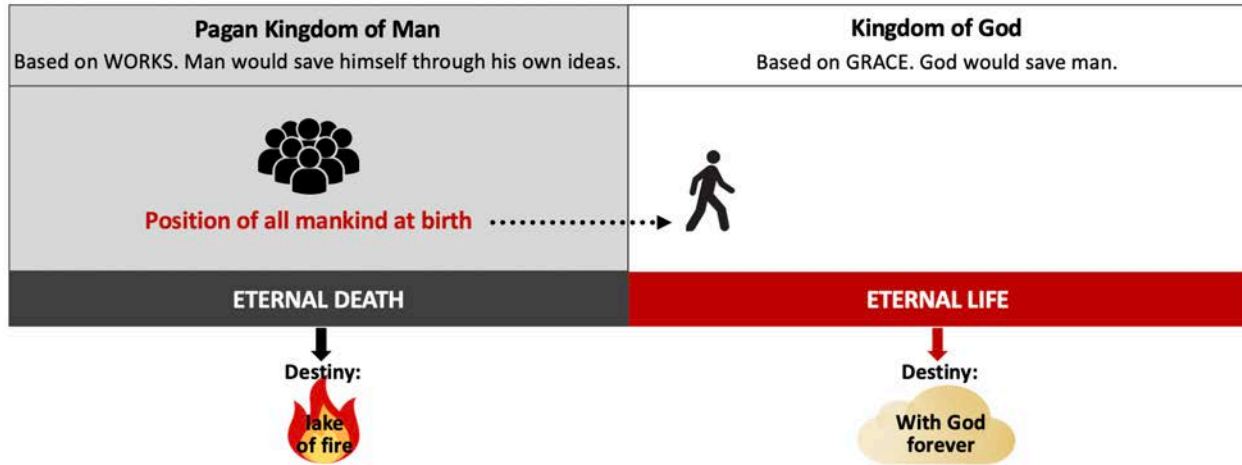
With our salvation, how will God know who to save and who to judge?

#### John 3:16–18

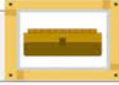


<sup>16</sup> “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

<sup>18</sup> “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son.”

By default, all people are already judged and destined for the lake of fire after they die because all mankind is sinful. But if we put our trust in Jesus, then we will move from being judged to being saved.



### 3. Only one way of salvation

	<b>Global Flood</b>		<b>Exodus (Passover)</b>		<b>When Jesus Saves</b>
Only one ark designed by God and it had only one door.		Slaughtering the substitute lamb was the only way to be saved.		Believing in the substitutionary death of Jesus is the only way.	

At the global Flood, God provided only one ark with one door. That is a visual reminder that God provides one way to be saved.

At the Passover, God again provided just one way: the innocent animal dying in the place of the firstborn. No other way was provided. And nothing else was needed. The personalities of the people in the house, how good or bad they had lived their lives, the colour of their skin or hair were totally unrelated to the Passover. The only thing that mattered was the blood on the door.

It also did not matter what others thought. In the Passover, what the Israelites did with the blood must have looked foolish to the Egyptians, the non-believers. But it was not foolish from God's perspective.

Some people think that having only one way to be saved is unfair, that there should be many different ways. While they can think what they like, this does not change the fact that Yahweh is the only Creator-God and He makes the rules. Man cannot randomly make up rules and expect God to live by them.









## When Jesus saves

For us, there is only one way to be saved—by trusting in Jesus.

### John 14:6

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

“Except through me.” That phrase tells us there’s only one way. It is the way God provided. Because He is the Creator-God and because we are sinners in His eyes, only He can provide the solution.

God’s Judgment on the Pagan Kingdom of Man	God’s Only Solution for Salvation
<p>Global Flood</p>  <p>Death of the Firstborn</p>  <p>Eternal Death</p> 	<p>The Ark</p>  <p>The Passover Lamb</p>  <p>Jesus Dying on the Cross</p> 

The solution is trusting in Jesus. But trusting what?

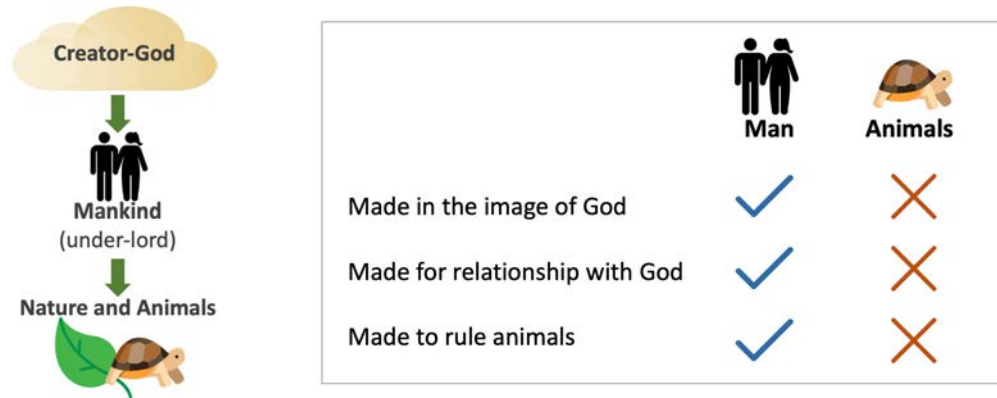
- Trusting that He is the Creator-God.
- Trusting that He died as our substitute, taking on Himself the death-curse that we deserve.
- Trusting that He rose again from the grave because He successfully took care of our sin problem. So now, we can be reconciled to Yahweh and have eternal life.

Note that as we go on in the study following the narrative of the Bible, we will be discussing every point brought up in this lesson in much greater detail.

## Is God being cruel to animals by using them for sacrifice?

Some people feel that to kill an animal, whether for sacrifice, or even for food, is evil and cruel. They believe animals should be treated in the same way as humans.

We need to remember that God does not view animals the same way He views man.



- Man was made in the image of God. Man was created to have a relationship with Him. And man was to rule animals in a responsible way, according to God's instructions.
- Animals were not created in God's image. They were not designed to have a personal relationship with Him like man was. Man and animals are not equals.

### Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

One reason animals were given to man is for food. But God gave specific instructions on how the animal was to be killed: the animal's blood had to be drained from the flesh.

### Genesis 9:3–4

<sup>3</sup> I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.

<sup>4</sup> But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

Why did God do this? Killing an animal in this way was merciful because the animal would faint quickly from the blood loss. Also, it forced mankind to recognise and respect that the animal's life had been sacrificed so that they might eat and live.

God also gave instructions for certain animals to be used as a blood sacrifice, as a substitute for man.

### Leviticus 17:11

for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.



God was saying that blood represented life. And God placed greater value on the life of a person. He allowed the animal to die in the place of the person.

At the Passover, the firstborn could live but only if the lamb died. The Israelites could certainly choose not to kill the lamb. However, it was either going to be the death of their firstborn, or the death of a lamb. The choice was theirs. There had to be a death. Which life would they value more?

**God's Judgment:**

**Death in every house**



**EITHER...**

the firstborn dies



**OR...**

a substitute dies






Would they value the life of a person in the way God values man? Or based on their own ideas, would they deem an animal of greater worth than a man?

Who is the ultimate authority? God? Or themselves?

 <b>YAHWEH Says</b>	 <b>Man Says</b>
<p><b>Mankind is more valuable than animals.</b></p>	<p><b>No! Animals should be treated the same way as man!</b></p>

#### 4. Man and nature impacted

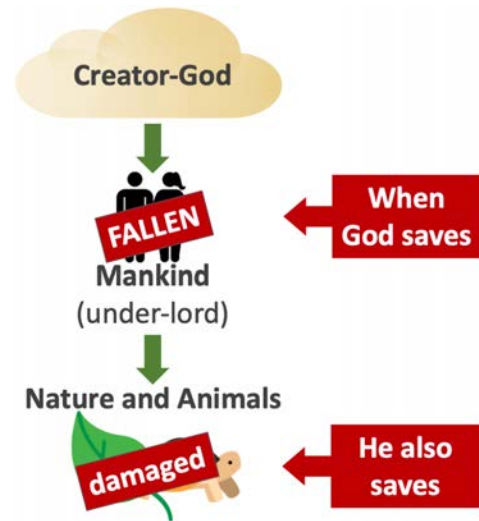
 <b>Global Flood</b>	 <b>Exodus (Passover)</b>	 <b>When Jesus Saves</b>
The global flood changed nature and the environment.	The physical environment of Egypt was destroyed.	<p><b>Physical:</b> The fire of judgment will transform the whole physical world some time in the future. We will also receive new resurrection bodies that will last for eternity.</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> Our old selves are gone, replaced by a new nature with the Holy Spirit in us.</p>

When Adam and Eve fell, God cursed the ground because of their sin. Evil damaged both man and nature.

In the Bible, when we see God saving, both man and nature are physically saved.

God's salvation is not a subjective religious experience that happens internally within us. It is not mainly a feeling. God's salvation is real, physical and tangible.

In the Flood, Noah and his family were physically saved from death. And nature changed entirely. The world before and after the Flood was totally different in terms of geography, climate, biological ecosystems, etc. How Noah and his family felt was not the most important part of God's salvation.



In the Exodus, God physically removed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. In saving them, nature was severely impacted such as:

- the waterways of Egypt (Exodus 7:9–25, 14:21–29)
- animal life (Exodus 8:2–10:20)
- crops, plants and trees (Exodus 9:18–26, 10:12–15)
- and even the weather (Exodus 9:18–34, 10:13, 19, 21–23; 14:21).

The landscape of Egypt was ruined by God's judgment. This is how it will be also with the salvation that Jesus provides.



### When Jesus saves

Our world will change in two ways. There will be (i) physical changes to the world, and (ii) spiritual and physical changes in us.

- (i) **Physical change to the world:** As part of Jesus saving the world, at some point in the future, God will get rid of this current earth and there will be a new earth.

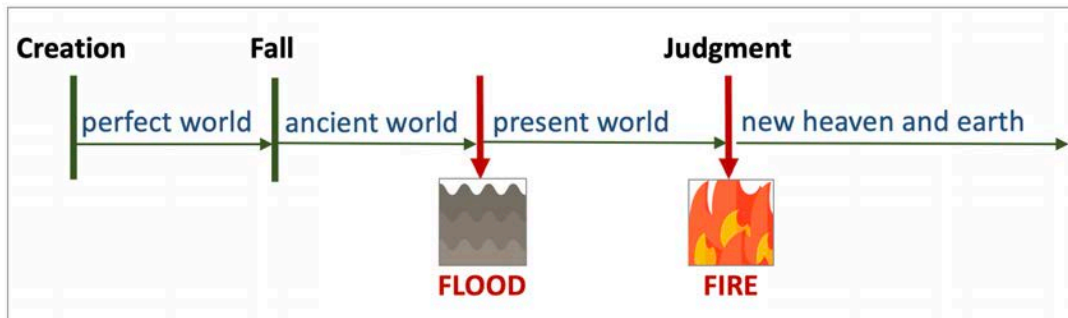
#### 2 Peter 3:5–7

<sup>5</sup> They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water.

<sup>6</sup> Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. <sup>7</sup> And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.

**Revelation 21:1–3**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.”



The whole world as we know it now will be replaced by a new heaven and earth where God Himself will live with man! There will be changes to the geography, climate, animals and more. This sin-cursed world with its diseases, natural disasters and so on, will be replaced by a perfect world, with conditions more amazing than in Eden.

- (ii) **Physical and spiritual change in us:** When Jesus saves us, we are first changed spiritually. The Bible tells us that when we trust in Jesus, we become a new creation.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

We are no longer like our old self. Something has changed. God the Holy Spirit literally comes to live in us.

**1 Corinthians 3:16**

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

**2 Corinthians 1:22**

and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.



But we will also be changed physically in the future. **Salvation is not complete until both our bodies and spirits are saved from sin and evil.**

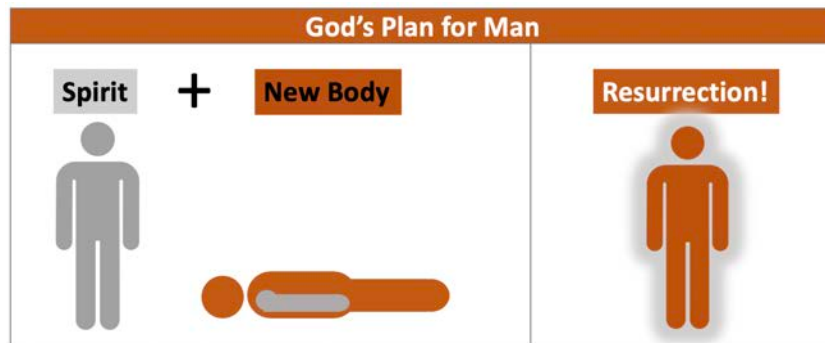
At that time, we will all have resurrection bodies like Jesus now has. Our new resurrection bodies are designed to last for eternity.

**Luke 24:39**

Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do.

**Philippians 3:21**

He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.






This new resurrection body is nothing at all like our present bodies. It has amazing capabilities and it is an immortal body. It will never die or get sick or grow old.

**1 Corinthians 15:50–53**

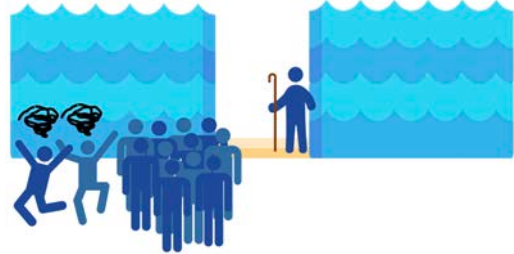
<sup>50</sup> What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. <sup>51</sup> But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! <sup>52</sup> It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. <sup>53</sup> For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

**5. How to be saved: by faith**

 <b>Global Flood</b>	 <b>Exodus (Passover)</b>	 <b>When Jesus Saves</b>
Noah believed God. He trusted God in order to be saved.	The Israelites trusted God for salvation.	People trust in Jesus for salvation.

In the Exodus, both Moses and the people showed that they had faith in God.

- Moses had to believe God would get all the Israelites safely away from Egypt despite Pharaoh's opposition and the Israelites' reluctance to leave.
- The people had to believe that the slaughter of the lamb and the blood on their doorframes would save their firstborns from death.
- At the Red Sea, each person had to have faith that God would save them. Pharaoh's army was approaching, the Israelites had no weapons in their hands, the Red Sea was in front of them. They were trapped. They had to believe that God would save them.



#### **Exodus 14:13–14**

<sup>13</sup> But Moses told the people, “Don’t be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. <sup>14</sup> The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm.”

There was nothing the Israelites could do to help themselves. This saving work had to be done entirely by God. Salvation must always be by faith.

At the Passover, the Israelites who believed God, did what He instructed with the lamb. As the angel of death went through the land, some may have been frightened, worried and uncertain. Others may have felt secure. Regardless of their feelings, when God saw the blood, He spared the life of their firstborns. God did the saving, not the Israelites.



#### **When Jesus saves**

It is the same with us. In order to be saved, Jesus asks that we have faith in Him. Jesus does the saving, not us.

What if we are unsure or frightened? What if we wake up one morning and wonder are we saved? Does it change the fact of what Jesus did for us? No, it does not. Our feelings do not change the truth of our justification.

Trusting in Jesus is like being in the ark and like hiding in the house where the blood has been applied. God is doing the saving, not us. Salvation is not based subjectively on how we feel but objectively on what Christ did.

Whenever we are afraid or confused about whether we are saved by Jesus or not, think about the Flood and the Passover. These two events will help us understand the five very important lessons on how Jesus saves us.



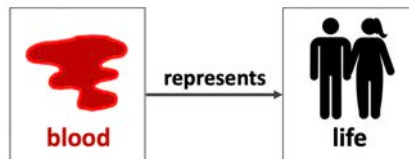
## Blood Atonement

The Passover was a very bloody affair. Some people find the whole picture very sickening. However, it is very important for us to understand the meaning of the blood. Only then can we better understand the cross of Jesus.

Firstly, blood represents life.

### Leviticus 17:14a

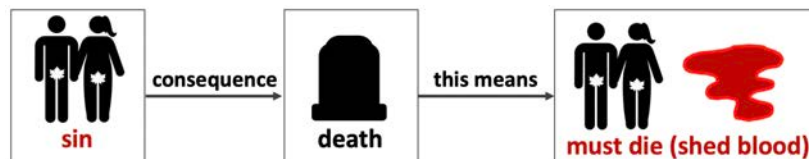
The life of every creature is in its blood.



When man sinned at the Fall, God said that the consequence is death.

### Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death,



This means that what is living and has blood in it needs to be destroyed as punishment for sin. Because man sinned, man must die to pay for that sin. (The words “shedding of blood” refer to death.)

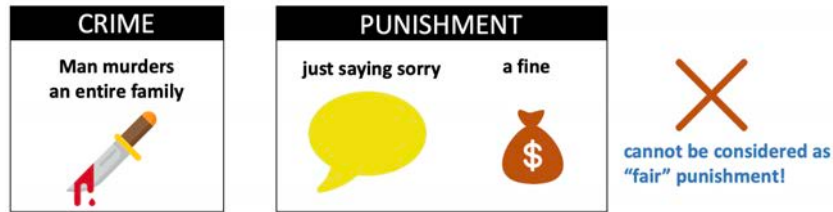
### Hebrews 9:22b

For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

But why must there be death? This is because man’s sin and rebellion against God is so terrible.



In a court of law, if a man is charged with stealing money from his neighbour, he may be asked to repay the stolen money, be given a fine and get thrown into jail for a period of time. This would be considered “fair” punishment.



However, if this man murdered an entire family including babies, parents and grandparents, a fine would be considered unfair and insufficient as a punishment. He might have to pay for his crime either by being executed or at the very least, spending the rest of his life in jail. In the same way, man’s crime against God is so evil that death is the only suitable punishment.

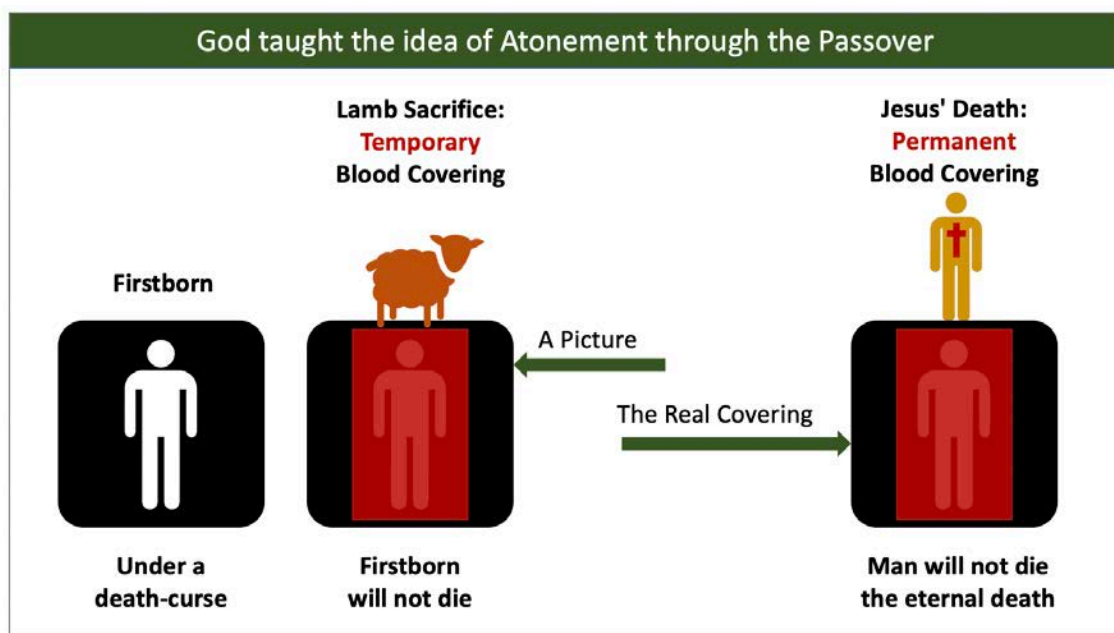
At the Passover, God showed that if there were atonement, the firstborn could be spared from the death-curse. But what is the meaning of atonement? The word “atonement” has the basic meaning of “covering”. If an innocent substitute who is not under the death-curse, sheds blood or dies in the place of the one under the death-curse, God is willing to treat the blood of the innocent as a cover for the one under the curse.

The Passover was a picture of how God would punish man’s sin but spare man from eternal death.

However, the Passover was just a “picture” of the real thing. This is because animals do not have the same value as man who is made in the image of God.

**Hebrews 10:4**

For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.





Only another man would be of equal value to man. The real covering, the death-substitute, would have to be a real man. And not just a man, but a perfectly sinless man. There has only ever been one such man: the God-man Jesus, who is fully man and fully God.



God was willing to accept the blood of the substitute animals as a **temporary covering for man's sin before Jesus came**. However, God's plan all along was that Jesus would one day be the real and final substitute. The death of the substitute lambs were tokens, reminding the people that the **real substitute that God would provide was coming**.

That is why it was so important that Jesus came as a man with blood that He could shed as a substitute for mankind. He had to share a body like ours with blood like ours. Jesus' current resurrection body is an immortal one. It cannot be used to atone for sin. This is why Jesus dying on the cross for man's sin while as a man is so important.

## Our Response to the Word of God

Often, we think that when people hear God's Word, it will soften their hearts and they will be obedient to God. But this isn't always the case. When people hear God's Word, they will react in one of two ways:

- The heart **softens** towards God.
- The heart **hardens** towards God.



There is no neutral ground.

God's Word is powerful and causes people to react. God Himself says His Word does not return to Him without some kind of impact on the hearer.

**Isaiah 55:10–11**

<sup>10</sup> “The rain and snow come down from the heavens  
and stay on the ground to water the earth.

They cause the grain to grow,  
producing seed for the farmer  
and bread for the hungry.

<sup>11</sup> It is the same with my word.  
I send it out, and it always produces fruit.  
It will accomplish all I want it to,  
and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

God’s Word will always accomplish its goals. As at Creation, where God’s Word had power to create something from nothing, God’s Word always has real power. A hearer’s heart will either soften in obedience, or harden in disobedience. A hearer’s heart will be tender towards God or will be set hard like concrete upon hearing God’s Word.

Pharaoh’s heart hardened when God gave him His words. He became more rebellious and stubborn, resulting in his destruction. But the Israelites listened to God and trusted in what God was about to do for them.

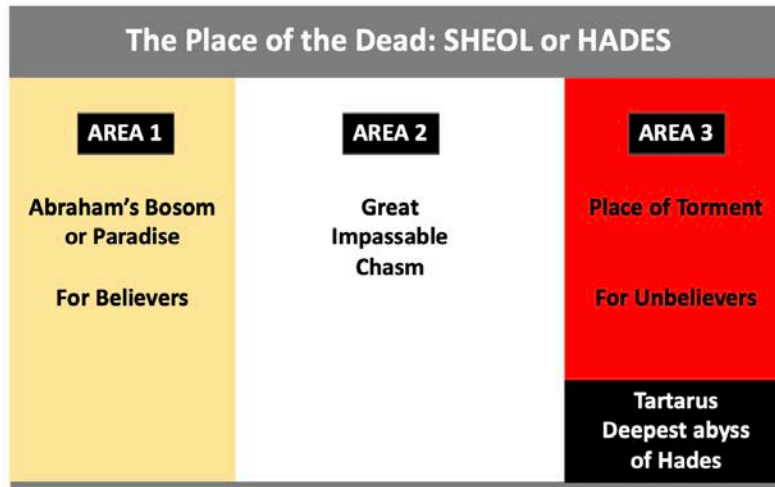
In our own lives, as we read the Word of God, what will be Scripture’s impact on our hearts? Will we soften our hearts and listen to God, obeying what He tells us? Or will we be like Pharaoh, hardening our hearts like concrete and refusing to obey? The choice is ours.

Note: The two boxes found on pages 25–31 are optional content.

## Where do people go when they die?

### 1. Before the Cross

The Bible does not have a lot of detail on where the dead go before Jesus died on the cross. This chart is a reasonable theory that pieces together the available biblical data.



**Sheol** is the Old Testament Hebrew name for the the place of the dead. This name is often translated into English as “the grave”, “realm/place of the dead”, or “the depths”. Examples: Genesis 37:35, 44:29; Psalm 9:17, 16:10, 88:3, 89:48, 139:8; Proverbs 9:18; Isaiah 5:15, 14:9; Habakkuk 2:5.

**Hades** is the New Testament Greek word for the place of the dead. Both Sheol and Hades refer to the same place. Examples: Matthew 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18, 6:8. (Note: Acts 2:27 quotes Psalm 16:10 but replaces Sheol with Hades.)

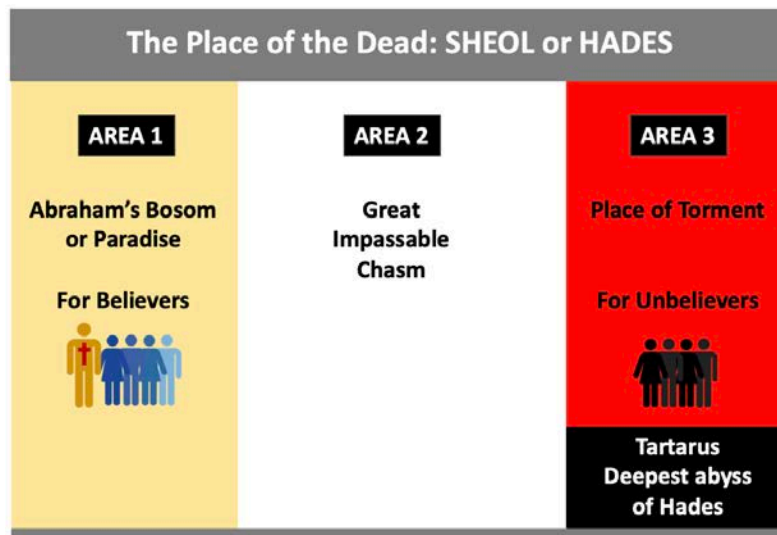
### Description of Sheol or Hades in the Bible

- Luke 16:22–26. Lazarus was at Abraham’s side (or bosom). This was where believers in God went. The rich man and other unbelievers went to the place of torment. Notice that they were both conscious and could communicate but they could not cross over to each other’s side.
- Isaiah 14:3–11. The unbelieving dead were conscious. They were able to stand and mock the arrival of the dead King of Babylon.

### Description of the Abyss or Tartarus (special deep area in Hades)

- Revelation 9:1, 11:7 mentions this abyss or bottomless pit.
- Luke 8:31. The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.
- 2 Peter 2:4. God threw angels who sinned into “hell”. In Greek, this word is “Tartarus”, which is used only here in the Bible. Tartarus is the deepest abyss of Hades.

## 2. What happened to the dead at the time of the Cross?



### When Jesus died:

- He went to the Paradise section of Hades where all believers were. This is what He said to the thief on the cross.

#### **Luke 23:43**

And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

- There, He proclaimed victory over sin and death.

#### **1 Peter 3:18–19**

<sup>18</sup> Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—

- And then He emptied out the Paradise section, taking all the Old Testament believers up to heaven with Him. We understand this from the following passages.
  - (i) King David declared that as a holy one (a believer), God will not leave him in the place of the the dead.

#### **Psalm 16:10**

For you will not leave my soul among the dead  
or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.

- (ii) Jesus ascended into heaven and is currently there.

#### **Acts 7:55**

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand.

(iii) Paul says that dead believers are now with Christ where He is.

**2 Corinthians 5:8**

Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.

These passages together suggest that all believers who died before the Cross are now in heaven, with Jesus who is at the right hand of God the Father.

Before Jesus died on the cross, believers could not go straight to heaven when they died because He had not yet provided the final sufficient atonement for their sins. Believers then were relying on the insufficient sacrifice of animals as a temporary atonement (Hebrews 9:9–10). This is why both the rich man and Lazarus were in Hades (Luke 16:19–31).

But at the cross, when Jesus cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30), the final and permanent atonement was made. So Jesus could usher all dead believers into God’s presence!

**3. Where do the dead today go?**

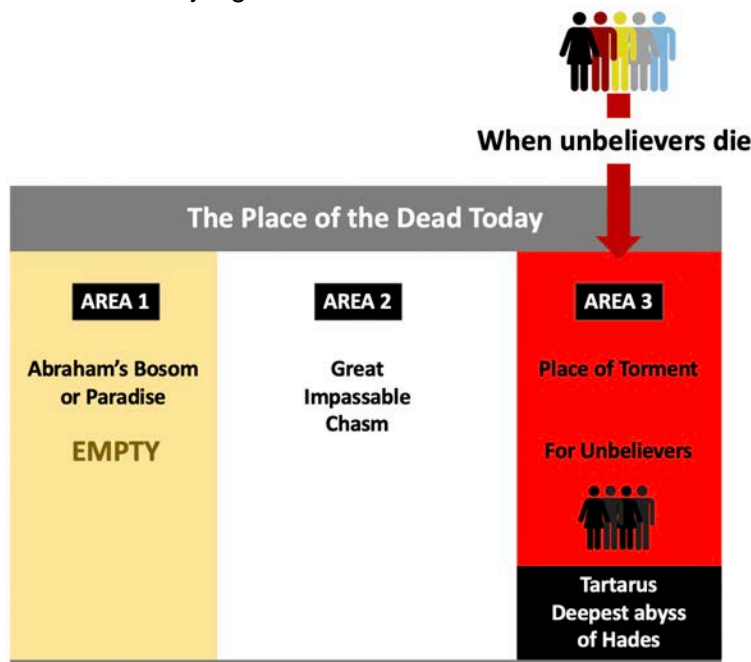
**Believers**

Today, when believers die, they go straight to heaven to be with God. However, heaven is temporary. Their final eternal destination is the new earth where all believers will live with God for eternity (Revelation 21–22).



**Unbelievers**

Today, when unbelievers die, they go to the place of the dead, the place of torment. They will be held there until the final judgment.



At the time of the final judgment, all unbelievers will be resurrected with physical bodies to be judged by Jesus. Then all of them will be sent to the lake of fire to stay there for eternity.

### **Revelation 20:11–15**

<sup>11</sup> And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. <sup>12</sup> I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup> Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.



## **Where do babies, young children or those with mental challenges go when they die?**

Since all people are born with a sin nature and are separated from God at birth, what is the eternal destiny of babies, young children and those with mental challenges who die without having an ability or chance to put their faith in Christ?

Scripture does not give a straightforward answer to this question. We don't know why, but we can speculate, which we'll do after we go through what the Bible does say.

The best we can do is to pull together some biblical data to form a partial picture of what God does in these situations. It will only be a possible deduction.

### **Mankind is sinful**

The Bible states clearly that all people—men, women and babies—are sinful. Paul talks about this in Romans.

#### **Romans 3:9–10**

<sup>9</sup> Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. <sup>10</sup> As the Scriptures say,

“No one is righteous—  
not even one.



King David mentions it quite specifically about babies in Psalm 51.

**Psalm 51:5**

For I was born a sinner—  
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.



It is also clear from another of David's psalms that God is responsible for and knows every baby from the moment they are conceived.

**Psalm 139:13**

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body  
and knit me together in my mother's womb.

**First piece of biblical data**

We note what King David says when the baby he had with Bathsheba dies (2 Samuel 12). He makes this statement:

**2 Samuel 12:23**

But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me."

David says his baby won't return to the earth but rather, when he himself dies, he will go to his son. We know David trusts God and is therefore saved (Psalm 23:6), so he is saying that after death, he will join his son in the place where believers go.

**Second piece of biblical data**

We learn more from the apostle Paul in Romans. He talks about how people everywhere, even if they have not heard the details of the gospel, have access to general revelation about God. This general revelation is found in nature and is all around us and is sufficient for people to realise that there is a Creator-God. When God judges people after they die, this general revelation about God will be used as evidence against them. People have suppressed, ignored and denied God's general revelation about Himself.

**Romans 1:20**

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.



Paul says people have no excuse. They can't stand before Yahweh and say they didn't have any knowledge about the Creator-God.

The interesting point is the phrase "they have no excuse". It could be reasonable to say that very young children and people with mental challenges **do have an excuse**. Through no fault of their own, they are unable to even grasp God's general revelation about Himself.



So when such a person stands before God after death, they can say they have an excuse: either they were too young or their human minds were simply not able to grasp the knowledge about God.

### Putting the biblical information together

Those two sets of Scripture give us a hope and a hint that God has a special way of handling babies, very young people or those who are mentally challenged, who die without ever getting a chance to understand God and His gospel.

If what we've put together is accurate, then the way God will handle them would be the same way He handles us. He would have to apply the death and resurrection of Christ onto these people in order to justify them and make them righteous before Him. God has provided no other way to be saved.

#### John 14:6

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.



### We have to trust God

Ultimately, we need to trust that because God is all-good, all-loving and all-wise, He knows how to work these situations out in a just way.

We need to rely on His character.

#### Psalm 145:17

The LORD is righteous in everything he does;  
he is filled with kindness.

And we can say along with Abraham:

#### Genesis 18:25b

Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

When Jesus comes again to judge, we will see what He will do with these precious ones. And we will nod in agreement and be glad with how He handles them.

For now, we only have a few clues as to how God will handle them.

And here's the speculation on why God chooses not to be crystal clear on what happens to babies, young children and the mentally challenged when they die: if Scripture presented clearly how such people will be saved without the need of gospel understanding and acceptance, then "loving" believers might be very tempted to kill them in order to save them for eternity!

You can imagine the perverse logic:

“If the Bible says babies, the very young and the mentally challenged are saved automatically, then why risk letting them grow up only to reject the gospel! The most loving thing would be to kill them young in order to save them for eternity!”

However, this is only a speculation as to why God has not made this issue clearer.

We feel this reasoning is the most we can say without pushing Scripture beyond what it has revealed.

### **God knows how He will save people**

When we read the Old Testament, interestingly, we see that people didn't know how Yahweh could justly punish man's sin without destroying man altogether. God told them He would do it but the exact details were a mystery to them.

But we now know that by sending the perfect Jesus as a man to die for mankind's sin, God's divine wrath and justice were satisfied and people can be saved because a sinless substitute has taken their punishment for them.

It was an amazingly creative solution that provided real justice. All we can do is marvel at God's work, thank Him for it and praise Him for what He has done.

How will God therefore resolve this other “mystery”? We don't know, but He has done it before. So we lean on what we do know: He is just and He will do what is right. We will have to trust Him for the “how”.

## **Discussion Questions**

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. The Flood and the Exodus show us that God's grace does not extend forever. How does that make you feel? How does this impact the way you think of unbelieving loved ones?
2. Salvation is a physical act that God does for those who trust Him. How does this truth affect the way we think about the assurance of our salvation?
3. God's Word can soften or harden a person's heart. So how should we approach an unbelieving friend or loved one whose heart has shown signs of hardening against God?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Exodus 15–20