

R. C. SPROUL

HOLY WEEK

THE WEEK
THAT CHANGED
THE WORLD

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R.C. SPROUL



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Holy Week: The Week That Changed the World

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Maundy Thursday

The Last Supper

Some of the most important struggles recorded in the Old Testament were the events leading up to and surrounding the exodus of the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt. We read that God heard the cries of His people and that He summoned Moses and commanded him to go to Pharaoh with this message: “Let my people go, that they may serve me” (Ex. 8:1).

We know how that struggle played out. From a human standpoint, it appeared to be an ongoing conflict between Pharaoh, who was the most powerful ruler in the world, and Moses, who was a lonely prophet from the Midianite wilderness. But the Scriptures make

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clear that this struggle was not ultimately between Moses and Pharaoh. Rather, it was between Pharaoh and the Lord God Omnipotent. And because of that, there was no doubt as to how these things would turn out in the end: with God as the Victor.

Because Pharaoh resisted and refused to allow the Jewish slaves to leave Egypt, God visited Pharaoh and the Egyptians with one plague after another. As soon as Pharaoh experienced the dire consequences of one plague, he agreed to let the Jews go. But then Pharaoh's heart was hardened so that he would rescind his permission and force the Jewish slaves to remain in Egypt.

God did this so that every Israelite rescued in the exodus would know that his freedom had been accomplished through His power. One by one, the plagues came, and with each plague, Pharaoh refused to relent. This continued until the final plague, in which God announced that He would send His avenging angel, the destroyer, to pour out His wrath on the Egyptians and on the house of Pharaoh by cursing them in an unprecedented manner: He would kill the firstborn

THE LAST SUPPER

of every Egyptian family, including their servants and their livestock.

By contrast, God told the Jews that the angel of death would not enter their homes if they took a lamb without blemish, killed it, dipped a rod of hyssop into the lamb's blood, and put that blood on the doorposts of their homes. Then when the angel of death came and saw the mark of blood on their doorposts, he would pass over them and their children would not be harmed.

This was one of the most poignant moment in Israel's history, as the people looked forward to the final redemption that would come by the Messiah. But on that evening, when the Jewish people marked their doorposts with blood, they also lost something. They had to sacrifice something of value to them. The lambs were important to their own familial economy, but God commanded them to kill those lambs, take their blood, and put it on the doorposts.

God then instituted a feast called the Passover, in which He instructed the people to roast the lamb in

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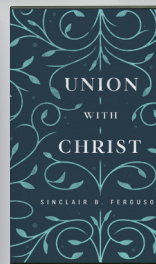
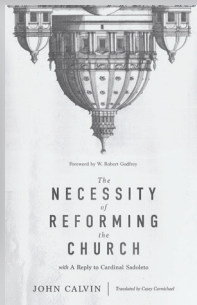
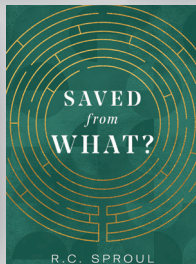
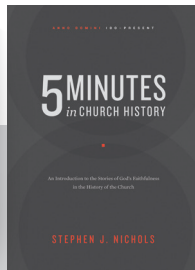
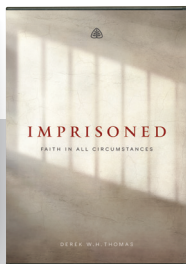
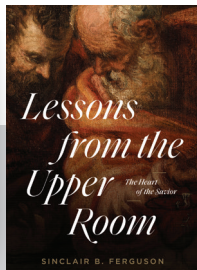
fire and divide it among everyone in the household, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. On the evening of the Passover, they were to dress with a belt tied around their waist, a staff in their hand, and sandals on their feet, ready to move in an instant when God came to set them free.

God commanded the Israelites to remember this event annually. Every year, in the first month of the year, they were to celebrate the Passover feast. When their children asked why they were celebrating, the parents were to tell them what the Lord God had done for them that night when He spared their firstborn sons from the angel of death.

So every year, for hundreds and hundreds of years, Jewish families gathered together and celebrated the Passover meal. And from the time that our Lord Jesus was a little child, He celebrated the Passover every year with His family.

As the last hours of His earthly life approached, Jesus said to His disciples, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). Preparations were made, and a room to accommodate

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