

SIGHTINGS

Jesus in the Old Testament

Haven't you read the sightings?" That's the question Jesus effectively asked two men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus explained to them how the Old Testament (Hebrew) Scriptures pointed to Him. We read, "Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him." (Luke 24).

Our current series looks at some of the celebrations in the calendar of ancient that point the way to Jesus. A series like this is particularly appropriate this time of the year in preparation to Easter as we remember the extreme act that Jesus went through in order for us to feast in relationship with God.

USING THE DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. This is our final week of the booklet as we approach Easter towards the end of this week. It's good to take time for increased spiritual reflection and preparation. With that in mind, the daily questions and reflections are designed to help you re-appreciate God's involvement in your life and the radical call from Jesus to live as his followers.
2. In addition to these questions, you might want to take a page of the directory to pray through each day. Over the course of this series, you would have prayed for everybody in our church community.

USING LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

Spiritual Growth best happens in community. If you're not already in a LifeGroup, contact the office to find out more. You can also go to our website and find a group at <http://www.mabc.org.nz/content/life-groups>. How about making a commitment to check it out for the duration of this 5 week series?

Monday: Passover Lamb

1. Read Exodus 12:1-16
2. Background: Passover was a night to remember. It looked back to one key night when God brought the tenth plague which was death on every firstborn human and animal throughout Egypt. The Israelites were protected when they followed God's Word about Passover. As such, that very night they were able

to flee from bondage in Egypt to begin their journey of freedom to the Promised Land.

3. Verse 2 mentions that Passover now begins the new holy calendar for the Israelites. Passover was a starting point that focused them on their identity. What is it about Passover that helped them remember their identity? How might this Easter be a resetting time for you?
4. During Passover, the best lamb was chosen and needed to live with the family for 4 days (from the tenth day to the fourteenth day). Why might this be so? What would happen during that time?
5. On the fourteenth day, the lamb was killed and eaten that night by the family. It's blood was smeared over the doorframe. Why did the people need to do this?
6. The New Testament says, "For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed..." (1 Corinthians 5:7). He was sacrificed at the very moment when the lamb was to die (Mark 15:33-37) and his bones, like the Passover Lamb, were not broken (John 19:36; cf. Exod 12:46). Why is Jesus described as our Passover Lamb?
7. Write a prayer that expresses your appreciation for Jesus taking the role of Passover Lamb so that God's wrath was satisfied in Jesus, God's firstborn (and not you).
8. Turn to page 21 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Tuesday: Leaven

1. Read Exodus 12:17- 42
2. Background: Passover led into another feast called the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread.' During this time, the people ensured that there was no yeast in their house. Their children would run through the house as part of a ritual to look for yeast in every corner. Yeast was also not to be in their diet – hence eating bread with no leaven (unleavened) which is like crackers or Indian naan bread. The reason given for this is because the Israelites left Egypt in haste and had no time to wait for the bread to rise. Changing their diet for this week reminded them about their history and identity.
3. How would reenacting this time remind the people of their identity? How might the end of the week help them appreciate life in the Promised land (think about what it's like to eat no bread and only crackers all week).
4. Throughout the Bible, yeast became a symbol of sin that, though potential was small in itself, grew to contaminate the rest of the dough. The feast of

unleavened bread was a time to identify the 'yeast' in ones life and have a moral spring clean. In this Easter week, it's appropriate to do some extra soul searching. Take time to pray what the Psalmist prays - *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* - Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV). Allow time for God to bring things to mind.

5. The apostle Paul picks up on this image and talks about dealing with sin in the church community in 1 Corinthians 7:7-8. Are there conversations you need to have with others applying grace and truth to ensure we pursue holiness as a faith community?
6. Turn to page 22 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Wednesday: Easter is coming

1. Read Mark 14:1-11
2. Background: Jesus had no anointing in his burial (the women were on their way to do this when they saw the empty tomb) but this woman prepares Jesus body for burial, without even realizing it. She is lost in the moment of worship and brings an extravagant gift.
3. What does the woman do? What do you think about this act of extravagance? What does Jesus say about it?
4. How does Judas respond? (vv 10-11). The night before his death, Judas would betray Jesus. Reflect on Mark 14:41-50.
7. Like yesterday, take time to pray what the Psalmist prays - *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* - Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV). Allow time for God to bring things to mind.
5. Turn to page 23 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Thursday: Holy (Maundy) Thursday

1. Read Mark 14:12-41
2. Background: Today we reflect on Maundy Thursday, the night Jesus was arrested before his death on Good Friday.
3. The feast that the disciples and Jesus shared was Passover. What would be going through Jesus mind as he feasted on the lamb?

4. What significance does Jesus bring to the common elements of bread and wine that were on the table?
5. Take time to thank Jesus for volunteering to be our substitute to avert impending punishment we deserved.
6. Are you going through a period of suffering? What might God say to you through the Gethsemane experience (vv. 32-40)?
7. Turn to page 24 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Friday: Good Friday

1. Read Mark 15:1-47
2. Background: Today is Good Friday. It's a strange title for it is a horrid day of suffering and death. Yet, in the very act of Jesus death, much good occurs.
3. Pause and consider what Jesus did for you as your Passover lamb.
4. There is a Good Friday Easter service at 9am at Mt Albert Baptist followed by Good Friday Easter walk around the churches in Mt Albert (beginning at Mt Albert Baptist at 10am). You might want to take the opportunity to reflect on this sacred day.
5. Turn to page 25 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

LIFE GROUPS

PASSOVER



OVERVIEW

Passover was a night to remember – a lamb, smeared blood, unleavened bread. All this helped the people to experience and re-enact what their ancestors had gone through. This event defined their identity, as it does us today.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Did you have a pet growing up? How quickly did you get attached to it? (was it a lamb?)
2. Looking back at this week's teaching, what particular point, statement or scripture caught your attention, challenged or confused you the most?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Retell the story of Passover from Exodus 12. What were the key elements? What did they represent? What was this all about?
2. Passover began a new holy calendar for the Israelites. Why might this be significant? How might this event affect their identity?
3. During Passover, the best lamb was chosen and needed to live with the family for 4 days (from the tenth day to the fourteenth day). Why might this be so? What would happen during that time?
4. The New Testament mentions that Jesus is our Passover Lamb. As a group, read and reflect on the following verses: Isaiah 53; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 7:7-8; John 19:36 (cf. Exodus 12:46). What does it mean to say that 'Jesus is our Passover lamb'?
5. Passover led into another feast called the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread.' During this time, the people ensured that there was no yeast in their house. Their children would run through the house as part of a ritual to look for yeast in every corner. Yeast was also not to be in their diet – hence eating bread with no leaven (unleavened) which is like crackers or Indian naan bread. What is the reason given for this feast?
6. Over time, the bible sees yeast as a picture of sin. How is yeast like sin? Why do we need to deal with it? (You might want to reflect on the following verses re. yeast - *Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 1Cor. 5:6-7; Gal. 5:9*).

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back at this weeks teaching, what is the one take-away for you?
2. What do you need to do to 'apply the blood on the doorposts' of your life?
3. Is there any yeast that needs to be cleared?

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

In small groups of 2-3 pray for each other. You might like to use Paul's prayer guidelines from Colossians 1:9-12?

"That God will fill the person with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

That they will live a life pleasing to God by bearing fruit in their lives.

That they will be strengthened and empowered to journey with patience, joy and endurance."