



Links Players

KING OF TWO CROWNS: JESUS' DEATH

“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you.” (Exodus 12:13, NIV)

SOME DAYS IT’S ALL ABOUT YOUR DRAW. In match play, I have won contests I should not have won. I didn’t play well enough to win nine days out of ten, but on this day I was given a reprieve from an opponent whose play was somehow worse than mine. I wound up with something I did not deserve: victory.

In understanding our faith and the gospel that defines it, we each come to a place of wonder that we will not receive from God what we deserve. Our sins have made us unfit for his holy presence, but a way to victory has been made for us in Jesus.

Long ago, far before the Jewish people had reason to look for the coming of a Messiah, God was revealing through types and shadows in the Old Testament the idea that our sins would be covered by blood. Adam and Eve attempted to mask their own sin with fig leaves, but God “made garments of skin” for them. While God may have done this by way of his supernatural hand, just as Jesus turned water to wine, we know that in the natural order skin comes only by way of an animal’s death.

Then in Exodus 12, as God prepared to move his people out from under their slavery in Egypt, he told his people to sacrifice lambs and spread their blood on the doorposts of their houses. Why? So that he would see their act of faith and pass over their households, keeping them from the judgment of death he was bringing upon those firstborn in the houses of the Egyptians.

God later ordained the commemoration of this “passover” with an annual feast to start each year on the Jewish calendar. Here was the celebration of a new beginning.

Then we might even leap forward to the night of Jesus’ betrayal when he took the cup of wine and said to his disciples, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

When Jesus went to the cross, it may still have been a surprise to his often clueless disciples, but it was no surprise to his Father, as this atoning death had been announced, per se, for millennia. The crown of thorns Jesus wore there—indicative of the ancient curse he was taking upon himself—was the first of two crowns he would wear. It was the crown of his death, but that death led to our eternal life.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study can be found at <https://youtu.be/qNxrMEILxTQ>

Opening questions Tell the story of a favorite golf match you have played, either as an individual or as part of a team. • Do you take time to prepare spiritually for holidays like Good Friday or Easter?

READING Exodus 12:12-13; Isaiah 53:4-6; Hebrews 9:11-28

Judgment and mercy (Exodus 12)

What was the target of God’s judgment on the night of the Passover? What idols need to be put to death in your life by his great power? What allows God to forgive these sins?

Our dying Savior (Isaiah 53)

When you consider what Jesus went through on our behalf, what do you conclude about his strength? his mercy? his love?

The difference in Jesus’ blood (Hebrews 9)

How was the sacrifice of Jesus different than the sacrifices of the priests?

What was the purpose of Jesus’ death (vv. 26-28)? What is your response to what he has done for you?
