

Romans 15:4

(4) For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that through patient endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

A Faithful Version

Within its scope, this verse includes God's work with Israel and with other nations and peoples over the entire Old Testament. This should teach us that the scope of God's salvation activities is far vaster than it appears on the surface.

[II Peter 3:9](#) confirms this: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to [repentance](#)." In [I Timothy 2:3-4](#), the apostle Paul echoes Peter's statement: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of [God](#) our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

God is preparing us for what is to come. He has caused these examples and principles to be recorded and preserved so that we would be equipped with the guidance to conduct our life in the right way. The scope of what God is working out in our lives is awesome! If we are to discern [Passover](#) and its costs rightly, this has to be considered deeply. When properly understood, every bit of what God is doing is out of love. We will not be able to observe Passover properly unless we can see its importance in its broadest sense.

What a moment in time it was on that Passover in ^{AD} 31! God must have been filled with excitement about what was taking place. It was an awesome step toward what He is working out with us.

We must consider [Romans 15:4](#) in light of the historical witness that God is making in our lives. Meditate on this: How many people have lived and died in the vast sweep of the history of each nation to prove a very important point—that there is *no way* but God's way that will produce the environment that man greatly desires but has never achieved? We need to consider this before taking the next Passover because it is important to our thinking that we look at things from God's point of view.

It is not necessary to recount everything, but from Abraham on, how many Israelites have lived and died without ever being offered spiritual salvation? The numbers become staggering as we expand our meditation further back in time. How many people were obliterated from existence at Sodom and Gomorrah? How many people lost their lives in the Flood?

How many people died in Egypt over and above the firstborn? That land was so devastated that it took generations to recover—and may never have truly regained its former glory! In the days of Ezekiel, God prophesied that Egypt would "be the lowliest of kingdoms" until the Millennium ([Ezekiel 29:15](#)), when He will raise it up to be one of three major nations with Israel and Assyria ([Isaiah 19:23-25](#)). Egypt must have been an awesome nation, a wonderful people, with plenty of ability, as their remaining architectural monuments testify. Yet, God decimated them to provide an object lesson for us! He can do that—He is God, and it is His purpose being worked out. He perhaps did not *have* to do it, but He did it to help us to understand and appreciate Passover more fully. God thinks so big that it is beyond our comprehension.

God's Old Testament record of His dealings with them continued to be written right on through Malachi. Even among the Israelites, few seemed to have been called to conversion. From the days of Abraham to [Jesus](#), how many lived and died just as the wilderness generation did so that this record could exist for our edification? What a costly operation!

When we take the Passover, we need to weigh these things so that they make a deeper impression on our minds than they did before. Even so, the cost of the Father and Son's love, as shown by Passover, does not end here. It goes on.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Awesome Cost of Love](#)

Related Topics:

[Awesome Cost of Love](#)

[Awesome Cost of Salvation](#)

[Cost of Salvation](#)

[Egypt as Major Nation](#)

[Egyptian Firstborn](#)

[God's Longsuffering](#)

[God's Work](#)

[Passover](#)

[Salvation](#)

[Salvation as the Work of God](#)