

CHRIST, THE PASSOVER LAMB
Exodus 12:1-14

Intro: The story of the Passover is one of the most familiar stories in all of the OT. It really marked the beginning of Israel as a nation. It also marked the end of God's judgment upon Egypt for her refusal to let Israel go. During the days of Joseph the Lord had taken His people down into Egypt to do what He had promised to Abraham approximately 500 years before. We read of His promise in Gen. 12:2, "And I will make of thee a great nation."

The people had become so numerous that the Egyptians were worried about having such a large group in their land. They were afraid that the Israelites might turn against them in a time of war. If they did, the Egyptians would have no chance against their enemies. And so they decided to make life hard for them. In the passage of time Joseph was forgotten along with all that he had done for Egypt. The sufferings of the people became unbearable, especially after Pharaoh decided to kill all of the boy babies.

So the people cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up Moses to deliver the people. Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses, and so the Lord brought nine devastating plagues upon the land. Finally, the Lord told the Egyptians that on a certain night He would go throughout the land and the firstborn in every family, free men and slaves, would die. And this would include the firstborn of animals as well. It was clear that the time had come when the children of Israel were to be set free -- not by Pharaoh, but by God!

But here we see evidence of the grace of God. God made a provision for His people to deliver them from judgment. It had to do with the blood of a lamb, a lamb which would be chosen by them, set aside for four days, killed, and its blood applied to the door posts of their homes. And then we have the Lord's promise in verse 13 of Exodus 12, and again in verse 23. The Lord was concerned about just one thing that night, and that was the blood of the lamb which was slain, and applied. Nothing else mattered. That was what God would look for. And the key to their deliverance was in the words, **"When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you."** It made no difference how much the people understood; the important thing was that the blood was where God said that it should be.

Now, in 1 Cor. 5:7b, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," he was pointing back to that night in Egypt when God brought judgment upon the firstborn. He was saying

that all that had to do with the lamb on that night was a picture, or a prophetic view, of what would eventually happen to Christ. But Paul was also saying that Christ met all of the qualifications that were set out for the lamb which was put to death that night. The lambs which were killed on that Passover night were types, pictures, of the coming Messiah. And, as far as the OT is concerned, this was the first detailed pictured of Christ as our Savior that we have in the OT. There were other types of Christ before this, but none as complete as this.

What I want to do tonight is to take the details of Exodus 12 and show how they were prophetic of Christ in His role as our Savior.

We need to remember that no type tells us everything. Each type has its own message to convey to us, and it is only by looking at type after type that we are able to see all that God intended for us to know before the Lord Jesus Christ came. One thing is clear: It is amazing, in view of the place that the Passover had in the annual feasts of the children of Israel, that there were so few, so very few in Israel, who were actually expecting a Savior. Many were looking for a Deliverer, a King, but not one who would deliver them from their sins. They were looking for one who would deliver them from Rome in much the same way that their ancestors had been delivered from Egypt 1500 years before.

Let us look, then, at the details given in Exodus 12 and see how each detail pointed to something about Christ and/or the salvation which He would come later to provide.

First, let us look at:

I. THE LAMB (Ex. 12:3, 4).

Among all of the animals of the world, God chose the lamb to picture Christ. The lamb is known for its gentleness, as well as for its defenselessness. What animal could better portray Him who is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29)?

John the Baptist must have had the Passover in mind when he proclaimed so powerfully and effectively to Israel in his day, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). And when we get to the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ we find that the title that is used of our Lord more than any other is the title, "the Lamb."

The Jews were familiar with animal sacrifices, and even the sacrifice of lambs, but this lamb, this passover lamb which

was killed by each family, took on significance that was not equalled by any lamb before.

So by nature the Lamb typified Christ.

But there is another thing that we need to notice about the passover lamb. The lamb was not under the sentence of death. God had said that He would kill the firstborn of all animals, but there was nothing said about this being a firstborn lamb. It had to be a lamb "of the first year," but that was all. So what can we learn from this? We learn that the lamb itself did not deserve to die. It was not under the sentence of death. Its death would mean that the firstborn son in the family would not die. And so we see that the passover lamb died in the place of the firstborn. The lamb died so that the firstborn would not have to die. The lamb was a substitute!

This is what Paul told the Corinthian believers, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed **for us.**" He took the place of His people. Christ died that we might not have to die. And we are not talking about physical death; we are talking about eternal death, which is the penalty we all were under because of our sins.

The second thing that we are told about the lamb is that it had to have a perfect physical body:

II. A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH (Ex. 12:5a).

Peter was to write much later those wonderful words we find in 1 Peter 1:18, 19,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed
with corruptible things, as silver and gold,
from your vain conversation received by tradition
from your fathers;
But with the precious blood of Christ,
as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

What does these terms, "without blemish," and "without blemish and without spot," picture concerning our Lord Jesus Christ? They tell us that if Christ were to save us, it must mean that He was not a sinner like we are. He came to earth as a Man, born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit, so that Mary could be truthfully told that her child would "be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

The reason that our Lord had to come was because no man would be able to meet that qualification. Jesus Christ is the only absolutely morally perfect Person Who has ever lived as a man upon the earth. No man who is a sinner can qualify to be our

Savior. So, if Christ cannot save us, then we have no savior! But, thank God, we know that He was without sin, He did no sin, He knew no sin. And all of this was because no sin was in Him. This Passover chapter is one chapter which should have made the Israelites realize that, while their Redeemer would have been a Man, He would be a unique Man, a Man without sin because He was also God.

But did you ever wonder why the Lord began His ministry, and continued for approximately four years before He died? Of course it was so that He could do the good that He did, and so He could teach the things which He taught. But the main reason is to be seen in the fact that the passover lamb was chosen and kept for four days! Why? To make sure that He was perfect. Our Lord during His public ministry was seen by people in every conceivable situation, and yet He could boldly ask them, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46b).

Our Lord not only did not sin, but, being the Son of God, He could not sin!

What are we told next in Exodus 12? He had to be:

III. "A MALE OF THE FIRST YEAR" (Ex. 12:5).

I believe that when the Lord told the Israelites that the Passover Lamb had to be a male, He was indicating that the true Passover Lamb would be a Man, not a woman. Mary was told that she would bear a son, not a daughter. This would help the people in identifying the Redeemer.

But being "of the first year" meant that the passover lamb would be taken and killed in the prime of his life. It was not to be an old lamb who was ready to die anyway. It was a young lamb. And we know that this was true of our Lord. Most Christians believe that our Lord was in His early thirties when He was crucified. Just when most men are getting a good start, our Lord's life was cut short by His crucifixion. And so here, again, He qualified as the Passover Lamb.

IV. THE DEATH OF THE LAMB (Ex. 12:6b).

As perfect as the lamb was, as long as it lived it really provided no protection for the firstborn. It had to die. It had to be killed!

The living Christ was a great Example. He was the greatest of all Teachers. But His perfect life without His death would have only added to our condemnation. But Paul told the Corinthians that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3).

It is by His death that we have been reconciled to God. And so here the Lord qualifies again as "our Passover." The living lamb could not spare the firstborn son at all. The Lamb had to die.

But we read of something more than just death.

V. THE BLOOD APPLIED TO THE DOOR (Ex. 12:7).

This was most important because God told them that when He saw the blood, He would deliver from judgment and remain to protect them.

There have been many arguments about the blood of Christ. Liberals have opposed such an idea in connection with God. It may have been that there were Israelites in that day who ridiculed the blood, too. But if they did, they paid for it. Their firstborn son died. And so we need to realize that salvation is what God says that it must be. If He says that He will be looking for the blood, then it better be there! It is not by our sincerity, or good works, or what we might call good character. The firstborn son was only safe if the blood were upon the doorposts of the home.

Then what was done with the body?

VI. "ROAST WITH FIRE" (Ex. 12:8).

It was not to be eaten "raw" (v. 9), nor "sodden," or boiled, in water. These were like Egyptian sacrifices, heathen sacrifices. This sacrifice was to be "roast with fire," a picture of divine judgment falling upon the substitute instead of the one who deserved to die.

When Christ died He died under the judgment of God. He took what we deserved, and He paid our penalty to the full. He was forsaken by God. This was probably the worst thing that our Lord experienced in becoming the Passover Lamb.

And then it was to be eaten!

What a picture this is of receiving Christ in us! It was not just a matter of knowing what they were supposed to do; they had to make the lamb a part of themselves. The Lord spoke about this in John 6 (eating His flesh and drinking His blood), a truth which is pictured for us every time we observe the Lord's Supper. And you can see the connection between the Passover Supper and the Lord's Supper. The Passover looked ahead to a work that would be done; we look back upon a finished work. And we eat the bread and drink the cup as a picture of our salvation -- appropriating

Christ! He dwells in us and we dwell in Him -- a vital and eternal union between the Lord and His people.

Concl: Now let me conclude by pointing out one thing that is apparent here, but which is pointed out very clearly in the NT. Please turn to Hebrews 11 and the part of the chapter which speaks of Moses. And yet the part that I want to point out to you has to do with every home where the firstborn was spared from death. I am thinking of Hebrews 11:28:

By faith he kept the passover,
and the sprinkling of blood,
lest he that destroyed the firstborn
should touch them.

The words that I want you to notice are the two words, "By faith." All that the Israelites did that night, they did just because God told them to do it. They acted in complete dependence upon the Word of God. The only hope they had that their firstborn sons would be spared was that God was in charge and that He would keep His Word to them.

They chose the lamb "by faith." They selected a perfect lamb "by faith," and watched it for four days "by faith" to make sure that it was "without blemish." They killed the lamb "by faith." They applied the blood "by faith." They ate the flesh of the lamb "by faith." And then they waited "by faith." There was no need for a moment of fear in any home that night because they were resting in the promise of God. They were trusting God to be faithful to His Word.

The type is amazingly complete, isn't it? You can see that God had His Son in mind when He gave instructions to Moses. The great difference, and it is the greatest of all differences is, as Paul stated it in Romans 8, verse 32:

He that spared not his own Son,
but delivered him up for us all,
how shall he not with him
also freely give us all things.

If God were to spare us and our sons, then He could not spare His Son. How thankful we should be! And how careful we ought to be to recognize always that our salvation is not because of what we have done for God, but because of what He has done for us in Christ, our Passover Lamb.

If you know Him, then you can praise Him. If you do not know Him, then make haste to see that the blood of Christ has been applied to your heart. The Lord told the people then when judgment would come. He hasn't told us when; He has just told us that it is coming. And judgment may fall before we

are ready unless we are ready tonight. May God speak to our hearts through this OT picture of our Savior and of the salvation He has provided for all who will trust Him.

That is true of us, too. It is "by grace ye are saved **through faith.**"