

Life Through the Death of the Lamb

1. The *Selection* of the Lamb
2. The *Killing* of the Lamb
3. The *Remembrance* of the Lamb

As we look at this passage, it is helpful to remember what immediately precedes the events of this chapter. Nine horrific plagues had just fallen upon the Egyptians (which you can read about in Exodus 7-10) because Pharaoh, the king of the Egyptians, refused to obey God & let the Israelites go and be released from slavery. As one plague after another wreaked havoc on the entire country, the rich, thriving economy of Egypt was crippled by the mighty hand of the Lord. All the crops & entire farms & herds were wiped out, & the putrid odor of rotting flesh hung over the land. The prosperous nation of Egypt had gone from riches to rags. The state of Egypt would have been very similar to the state of Japan after tsunami hit last year in March.

But there is something very important for us to recognize about the first 9 plagues that distinguishes them from the tenth plague. The first 9 were directed only against the Egyptians. The Israelites in the land of Goshen did not experience the effects of any these plagues, but with the 10th plague, the scenario was different. This was the deadliest of all plagues, & it would be felt equally by Egyptians & Israelites alike. No distinction would be drawn between the Egyptians & Israelites when the 10th plague came (except for one special distinction which see later). In the 10th plague, the Lord demanded the death of every firstborn son not only in Egypt but also among Israelites.

The 10th plague was a sign of God's judgment against all humanity. Yes, God was punishing the Egyptians for their wickedness & cruelty against the Israelites. But God was also punishing the Israelites for their own sin. They had the same sinful hearts and were as guilty as the Egyptians. Joshua 24:12 reminds us that during the long years of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites also grew to love & worship the idol gods of the Egyptians. They were guilty of idolatry just like their oppressors were. And the same goes for us today. We too just as guilty as anyone else in the world. Our guilt is part of the sinful nature we inherit from Adam. Romans 3:9 says, "What then? Are we any better than they? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews & Gentiles alike are all under sin." And what is wages of sin? Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Everyone sitting here deserves to be killed by destroying angel. We all deserve eternal death in hell. But ... despite what deserve, despite the fact all people deserve judgment from God, God makes a distinction of grace in which He chooses to give the gift eternal life to some by providing a way of atonement. How get gift? God provides this gift through the death of the lamb. That's what we want to look at: how we can gain eternal life through the death of the Passover Lamb.

1. Selection of the Lamb

Numerous stipulations were laid out regarding the selection of the lamb. First, stipulations of quantity. The Lord told the Israelites how much lamb to cook & eat: 1 lamb per family (:3). And if the household was too small for 1 lamb, they were to share with their nearest neighbor "having taken into account the number of people" (:4). Verse 4 says, "You are to determine amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat" (:4). There were to be no left-overs & no waste. Now, why would the Lord give such specific stipulations regarding the amount of lamb to be slaughtered & roasted? Because this was a most sacred of feasts. This feast was to be celebrated with utmost care & reverence because, as we will come to see, it represented something of utmost importance.

Second, stipulations of quality. The lamb also had to be the best of the best. It had to be 1 year old because at this point, the lamb reached the prime of its life. It also had to be male because it was to take the place of the firstborn male of Israel. Finally, the lamb had to be without blemish. The head of the household had examine the lamb to ensure that it was not lame or wounded. This lamb had to be healthy, strong, and of good appearance. It had to be the best of the herd, without flaw. Why did God give such specific stipulations regarding the quality of lamb? Because this lamb pointed ahead to Christ. The purity & the unblemished state of passover lamb represented the moral purity & perfection of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. Why did Christ have to be unblemished? Because God hates all impurity; it arouses His wrath. The only thing that satisfies the holy wrath of God is perfection, 100% purity. And that's Christ was: morally pure,

sinless, the unblemished Lamb of God. John 1:29 says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

Another reason the lamb had to be perfect & unblemished was because it served to highlight the difference between the impurity of the Israelites and the purity of the lamb. The Israelites were sinful & full blemishes, just as sinful as the Egyptians.

2. Killing of the Lamb

One of the things that made the killing of the lamb such a somber^{严肃} process was that, prior to killing lamb, the family had keep "keep it" in their household for close to 5 days. After selecting the lamb from the herd, the family had to feed & care for the sheep for 5 days, & through that process, the lamb would in essence become part of the household. The family would in essence be able to say, "This is our Passover Lamb." And when the lamb was killed, the importance of the lamb as a substitute would be very evident. The family would experience a real sense of sorrow & solemnity^{郑重} as lamb killed because everyone in the house knew that this lamb was dying instead of the firstborn son of the household. As all the lambs were slaughtered simultaneously at twilight, the message that "the wages sin is death" would have been very clear. The message of death was written very clearly in the blood of the lamb.

The blood of the Lamb was the most important aspect of the killing of the lamb & the Passover Feast. The head of the household was to kill the lamb in such a way that the lamb's blood could be collected in a basin. He would then take a hyssop branch, dip it in the blood, paint the sides & tops of the doorframes of the houses with blood such that the entrance to every home was "covered with blood." Need to ask: "What's so important about blood?" Numerous things. First, the blood taught the need for blood atonement. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture consistently teaches the need for blood atonement in order for the wrath of God to be satisfied. (Genesis 3:21; Genesis 4:3-5; Leviticus 16:15-16a) The consistent message of the Bible is that anyone who wants to meet God must come to Him on the basis of the blood of the lamb He has provided. This same truth is confirmed by the New Testament. Hebrews 9:22 says, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Christ is the Lamb whose blood was shed. Christ was killed on the cross & His blood flowed from His side. 1Peter 1:18-19 says, "¹⁸You were ransomed... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." 1Corinthians 5:7 says, "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed."

The blood of the lamb also taught the Israelites that they were just as guilty as the Egyptians. They needed to know that they were no more deserving of God's love than their enemies. If they were not covered by blood, then they too would be destroyed. Exodus 9:22 says, "²²None of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning" (:22). All members of the family must remain in the house, they must be under the blood of the lamb, otherwise they would be killed by the destroyer. The blood declared that they were special recipients of God's favor by grace alone, by the blood of the lamb alone, not because of who they were in themselves. Apart from being covered by blood, they would be destroyed. Butif covered by the blood, the blood served as a sign that the Lord's destroying angel would pass over that house. Exodus 12:13 says, "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

So the blood of the lamb had a powerful effect. When the destroying angel came, he touched down upon houses of those which were not covered by blood of lamb with the touch of death. But he passed over every house covered by blood lamb & did not kill the firstborn sons in those houses. That is how we gain life through the death of the lamb. The blood of the lamb was shed in place of or instead of the blood of the guilty person. The blood of the lamb causes God's wrath^{愤怒} to pass over us because God's wrath has already been satisfied by the blood of another.

3. Remembrance of the Lamb

This passage really emphasizes the importance of remembering the death of the lamb because the command to observe the Passover is repeated 3 times.

Exodus 12:14 "“So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”"

Exodus 12:17 "“So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an

everlasting ordinance.”

Exodus 12:24 “And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.”

Why is it so important to remember the death of the lamb? Because generations to come needed to know that true freedom involves not just release from Egypt but also THE forgiveness of sins through blood the atonement of the lamb. The Passover was to be observed by the people of God throughout history, from one generation to the next so that God's people remember & never forget that the only way to have life is through death of lamb. In same way, the Lord commands us to remember the death of Christ the lamb by observing the Lord's Supper, the celebration which takes the place of the Passover Feast. In Matthew 26:26-28 Jesus says that the wine is a symbol of the blood that takes away the sins of His people and the bread is a symbol of His body that hung on the cross for sinners as endured heat of God's wrath. And in Luke 22:19 Jesus commands, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” for in so doing, we proclaim His death until He comes again. In celebrating the Lord's Supper, we remember Christ's death for us & we proclaim eternal life through His death in our place. Now that Christ died for our sins, we do not have to shed the blood of animals anymore. Now we look back to the blood and death of Christ Himself. By faith in Jesus, we are covered by His blood & spared the wrath of God.

We must tell the next generation about Christ, the precious Lamb of God. And we must tell the world about Christ, the precious Lamb of God, lest ~~免得~~they perish ~~消亡~~ in their sins. If we do not cause our sons & daughters to remember the death of the Lamb of God, the church will soon become just like the world, without any distinction at all. But if we tell the Gospel of life through the death of the lamb from one generation to the next, then the church will continue faithfully from one generation to the next & the church will have a message of good news to give to the world.

Christ is the final & the only true Passover Lamb. Christ's death as the Lamb of God stands as the greatest event in all history. But there is one final great event to come: Christ's second coming on Judgment Day when He comes to pour out God's wrath on sinful humanity. And when Christ comes again, He will come in judgment to destroy all sin & wickedness. Unless you are covered by the blood of the Lamb, you will be destroyed just like Egyptians who did not have blood on their doorposts. Are you covered by the blood of Christ by faith in His sacrifice? Are you trusting in blood of Christ to make atonement for your sins? If not, turn to Him now in faith before it is too late. This is the great love of God: that He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Passover Lamb slain in place of all who believe. Trust in the blood of Christ, and you will gain eternal life through the death of the lamb.