

Jesus Died For Me (2): Passover

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Date: 13 June 2021

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[0 : 0 0] turn with me to Exodus chapter 12 we didn't read the whole passage in the interest of time this is the account of the Jewish celebration of Passover Jews even today celebrate the Passover it corresponds to the holiday they called Pesach translated Passover and yet the vast majority of Jewish people although during this holiday they they remember how God redeemed them from their slavery in Egypt by the death of a lamb do not draw the natural link between the Passover lamb of the Exodus and the lamb of God Jesus Christ who came to take away the sins of the world for the vast majority of Jewish people the lamb is a lamb for Christians the lamb of Exodus 12 is Jesus it is hard to overestimate the impact of the Passover festival upon what Christians believe and how Christians live our practices for example of the Lord's Supper and baptism are heavily dependent upon the imagery of the Passover more importantly our understanding of how far God in his love is willing to go to save his people from their slavery to sin and death is drawn from the language of the Passover our theology of salvation as a Christian church depends upon the function of the the Passover lamb in Exodus 12 in other words if you're a Christian today or if you want to know more about what it means to be a Christian you need to understand the fundamentals of our faith and understand the Passover if you really want to grapple with the gospel you need to get with Exodus 12 now I've introduced this subject from a technical perspective but let me bring this discussion right back down to earth and into your daily life as a Christian who bought your salvation and with what did he buy your salvation it was Jesus Christ the lamb without spot or without blemish and he bought it with his own blood shed on the cross for what purpose did he die he died so that we might live in the freedom of the gospel free from guilt free from condemnation free from judgment free from slavery what then should our reaction be thankfulness faith dependence obedience love holiness if Christ has died to make you free don't willingly go back into captivity again rather choose to live in the light and the joy of the gospel which gives life not death light not darkness freedom not slavery so over the course of this summer we're working our way through passages in the first five books of the bible which speak of of big words coming up here the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ in other words

Jesus died for me Jesus died in my place Jesus bore the punishment I deserved Jesus paid the penalty of my sins last week we began by looking at how God provided a sacrifice to take the place of Isaac upon the altar the sacrifice being his own son but this week we want to go straight to the heart of Old Testament teaching on this wonderful doctrine namely the Passover lamb in Exodus 12 this passage is central not just in Exodus not just in Christian doctrine not just in the Bible but in the whole experience of the gospel and our salvation such that we can say if there was no Passover there'd be no Jesus if there was no Passover there'd be no gospel if there's no Passover there would be no salvation by the way parenthesis brackets on at the beginning of October Philip Amos remember the Christian witness to his international mission to Jewish people's representative we heard last year he'll be visiting us to do a Passover demonstration in this church brackets back on as we go through this study today I want you to experience for yourself the joy and the assurance of knowing for a fact that Jesus had paid the price for your sin and resolve to live in a determination that I shall not return to the captivity of sin but rather I shall live in the liberty of the children of God let's learn two things from this passage today first of all Christ the Passover lamb and secondly Christ the slain lamb Christ first of all the Passover lamb Christ the Passover lamb as I said earlier you know the life of Jesus of Nazareth cannot really be understood unless it's read against the background of the Exodus every step he walked in the Gospels is dominated by the imagery of Exodus for example his baptism in the River Jordan is an Exodus image of the passing of the children of Israel through the Red Sea remember with Pharaoh's army at their back again his temptations in the wilderness mirror his successful victory over the very same sins which

brought the children of Israel down to their ruin during their 40 year wilderness journey the feeding of the 5,000 the only medical recorded in all four Gospels is an image of God's provision for his people with manna in the desert but then we have the most famous words of John the Baptist the greatest forerunner of Jesus Christ himself when he pointed to Jesus and said of him behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world this is one of the cries of the historic Orthodox Church lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world have mercy upon a sagnes day qui tole peccata mundi miserere nobis when they heard what John the Baptist called Jesus his listeners were automatically to think of the Messiah with the Passover lamb

Exodus 12 and then we have the timings in the Gospels of Christ passion and death it all took place it Passover time time again in the Gospels the writers stress the crucial seasons of Passover and the sufferings of our Lord Matthew 26 17 Mark 14 12 Luke 22 1 John 13 1 in a Christian's mind these two great events in the Bible are to coalesce the Exodus Passover and the passion of Jesus the Exodus Passover fills the passion of Jesus with theological meaning and the passion of Jesus ultimately fulfills the Exodus Passover we could go on but let me just draw one more direct link between Christ and the Passover lamb traditionally with good biblical reason the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is seen as the fulfillment of the Passover meal the lamb of the Passover is the lamb of God

Jesus himself given for his people at the Passover time but then in this passage you see there is unleavened bread that same bread Jesus used in the institution of the Lord's Supper on the night of his betrayal likewise throughout the Gospels by virtue of Jesus using the Passover meal as his opportunity to institute the Lord's Supper we're learning that every time the Christian church celebrates the Holy Communion we are engaging in the fulfillment of Exodus 12 imagery and so again I say the life and the ministry and the mission of Jesus cannot be understood unless it's read against the background of Exodus 12 let me zone in just a little bit a little bit more detail upon Christ as the Passover lamb not just Christ and the Exodus but Christ as the lamb in the first few verses of Exodus 12 we learn two things about Passover lambs the first is they acted as substitutes or representatives for households and secondly that they were to be pure so in the first instance we learn that these lambs were to act as substitutes or representatives for the corresponding households each household was to take a lamb each family was to take a lamb a big lamb for a big family a small lamb for a small family they were to take however much was enough for all of them what is crucial for us to understand is that by this action the lamb became the representative of the family whatever was to subsequently happen the lamb would act as the substitute for the family the lamb would stand in their place as their representative and so when we hear the voice of John the Baptist calling out behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world we are to immediately think of Jesus as this world's representative this world's substitute that whatever was to subsequently happen to Jesus would be happening to Jesus as the representative the substitute for this sinful world in this sense we can say of Jesus he was the Passover lamb but then in the second instance from Exodus 12 5 we learn that these lambs were to be without blemish they were to be innocent blameless without spot entirely free from any imperfection strong at the prime of their lives pure and undefiled and then we read in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 18 and 19

[11 : 37] Peter saying you were ransomed you were redeemed not with perishable things such as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ like as a lamb without blemish or spot and again our minds are drawn to that wonderful passage in Hebrews 9 verses 13 and 14 these incredibly important words if the blood of bulls and goats and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer we'll look at that in a few weeks time sanctify for the purifying of the flesh how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purify our consciences from dead works to serve the living God and again when we hear John the Baptist cry behold the lamb of God we are to understand Christ in all the purity of his love and his righteousness

Christ the sinless one who stands as representative and substitute for a sinful world for there are no stains on Christ's character there is no defilement in his holy heart there is no sin in his sanctified mouth we call this the act of righteousness of Christ his perfect obedience to and fulfillment of the law of God we have as our representative before God today a lamb without spot or blemish the holy innocent lamb of God who stands in our place it's all here in the Passover imagery of Exodus 12 the backdrop against which we understand the life the ministry and the mission of Jesus Christ okay let me apply this right down into our lives and into our beliefs who stands before God in heaven for you

today who stands before God on your behalf who is your representative in heaven who is your substitute well perhaps you don't think you need one you're perfectly capable of making your own case to God of explaining away your sins and iniquities of persuading an infinite infinitely righteous God of your own righteousness perhaps you don't think you need a representative but pity you if you think that way you're in for a shock when you truly appreciate the perfect demands of the law of God and the radiant glory of his holiness you'll be left speechless by contrast you know that you need one that you stand without excuses before a holy God wrapped in the chains of your sin and bondage to death and you desperately need someone to appeal to God on your behalf and Jesus is your choice for only he is the lamb of God who can take away the sin of the world only he is pure enough and righteous enough to act as your representative in heaven only he is perfect enough to be your substitute in heaven's courts you know you need a representative there and Jesus Jesus is your choice well that's good but now is the time to even further to choose him for yourself to by faith reach out the hand of your heart and lay your case in his capable hands Christ the Passover lamb well second and more brief Christ the slain lamb the slain lamb this chapter makes hard reading I would argue that its central teaching is founded in verse 13 that's why we read up that far this 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt now you will know the context the last of the ten plagues

God sent upon Egypt was to be the most serious involving the death of the firstborn that on account of their sins and stubbornness saw the firstborn in Egypt would be struck by the angel of the Lord a night of judgment and then weeping in the morning for all the firstborn of Egypt will be dead but how shall the Israelites among them be distinguished such that the angel of God's judgment shall not strike them it shall be as they put their representative lamb that perfect lamb they chose to death and then paint its blood upon the doorposts and lintels of their houses let me read you a few verses from Exodus 12 21 following then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans and kill the Passover lamb take a bunch of hyssop dip it in the blood that's in the basin and touch the lintel on the two doorposts with the blood that's in the basin none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning for the [17:34] Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you so picture the scene the lamb is slaughtered and its blood is drained into a basin hyssop is a bushy plant and its branches used to paint some of that blood onto the doorposts and the lintel of Israel's houses interestingly enough from this time on hyssop is always associated with the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifice the most famous reference of course being in Psalm 51 verse 7 we sing these words very often purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean it's as if a guilty King David in that Psalm wants God to apply the blood of the Passover lamb to his sinful heart to cleanse him from all his sin and guilt hyssop was also used in the tabernacle and in the temple and most tellingly the sour vinegar which a dying

Jesus was given to drink was lifted up to him on the branch of a hyssop but what makes Exodus 12 such hard reading for us today all of us I would guess isn't so much the slaughter of the lambs for that's the price of sin and guilt nor even is it the death of the firstborn of Egypt as tragic and as horrific as that was what makes Exodus 12 such hard reading for us is meeting the God who really is this is the real God face to face a God who takes our sins very seriously indeed and will go to the greatest of lengths to rescue us from our slavery and our captivity I guess the question resolves down into this what's the need for this lamb why was this lamb slain why was its blood painted on the doorposts and lintels of the

Israelite houses why did this blood cause the avenging angel to pass over these houses and what does this tell us about the cross on which Jesus died well remember what we said earlier this lamb is the representative of the family it takes the place of an Israelite family it is their substitute that lamb is slain on behalf of the firstborn of the Israelite families it dies so that the firstborn of Israel will not die God was to judge the whole nation of Egypt but he was to judge the nation of Israel as well he judged Israel also but the judgment of God was satisfied by the blood of the Passover lamb painted in the doorposts and the lintels of the Israelites houses he saw the blood and he turned his judgment away from them he literally passed over that house he passed over that family the firstborn of Israel were rescued from the judgment of God by the death of a substitute who died on their behalf in their place and when the Israelites saw that blood of the doorposts and the lintels of

their houses they could rest secure in the knowledge that for all that the avenging angel might destroy his enemies it would pass over them it would pass over them in 1st Corinthians 5 verse 7 1st Corinthians 5 verse 7 we read these very important words for Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed so we ask the question what precisely was it that happened 2000 years ago at Passover time in Judea just outside Jerusalem Jesus the lamb of God was taking away the sins of the world by himself dying in our place our Passover lamb was being slaughtered and his blood painted over the doorposts and lintels of our hearts the avenging judgment of God was being exacted on him so that we might go free for all it's fancy terminology that's the doctrine of substitutionary atonement in summary Jesus paid the price of our freedom from divine judgment

Jesus died in our place on our behalf to put it even more bluntly and more personally such that everyone here I hope can say this Jesus died for me that he the perfect lamb of God was slaughtered and his blood painted on the doorposts and lintels of our hearts the cross of Jesus fulfills the Passover in every respect earlier on I made reference to how the Lord's supper is the fulfillment of the Passover the bread of the supper corresponds to the unleavened bread the Israelites were to eat that Passover night except with this one new feature Jesus now says this is my body which is for you the wine of the supper corresponds to the the blood of the lambs shed on that

[23 : 47] Passover night except with this one new feature Jesus says this cup poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood the bread of the Passover is fulfilled in Christ given for us the blood of the Passover is fulfilled in the blood of Christ shed for us as we take that bread and wine into our mouths we become expositors of this doctrine as together we confess Jesus my Passover lamb was slain for me so as we close today let me apply this in a couple of directions first if you have not yet put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ can I ask you once again who is your representative in the courts of heaven who pleads your cause who will pay the price of your sin debt and when the avenging angel comes to exact judgment shall you be like the

Egyptians who paid the price of their own sin by the death of their own first born shall you when the blood of Jesus is offered to you at no charge without price and without cost shall you when Jesus offers to appear as your representative in the courts of heaven bating your blood before the father on his blood before the father on your account and arguing that he has already paid your price shall you continue to try to represent yourself how then can what Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago become yours through faith in him through choosing him as your Passover lamb and placing your trust in him to be your representative before God he the perfect lamb shall shall shall pay your sin even as you believe in him as lord and saviour and that is what you must do right here right now the Egyptians had no sign of when the avenging angel would come in judgment and nor do you and nor do I so this is what you must do right here and right now choose Christ as your Passover lamb but then second and finally if you are a Christian look at the blood of Jesus your Passover lamb and keep looking at that blood don't ever take your eyes off that blood because everything about you and your salvation is connected to that blood it is through that blood you are justified and sanctified it's through that blood you're empowered and encouraged it is from that blood you have joy and peace in believing you can love others the way that God the Father loves you live in the freedom of the blood of

Christ the Passover lamb freely shed on the cross for you and do not fall captive to the deceitfulness of sin and shame ever again look at that blood and keep looking even as God the Father in heaven looks on the blood of his son in heaven and accepts you in him you know one day and this is an amazing thought we'll all see our Passover lamb in Revelation 5 verse 6 we're given a glimpse into what heaven will be like and between the throne and the four living creatures among the elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain we'll stand before our Passover lamb singing our songs of worship and praise and glory our spotless

Passover lamb once slain now reigning in triumph and all through those long ages our hearts will be filled with wonder when we say to ourselves Christ my Passover lamb died for me let us pray for reign our