

The Tenth Plague: Passover

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[0 : 0 0] God adds his blessing to that reading from his holy word as we focus particularly on the passage that we read there and especially the last verse that we'll read again. The blood shall be a sign for you in 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. Three aspects to consider from this passage even from this verse. As you see there in the slide the sacrificial lamb, the lamb that was sacrificed on behalf of the Israelites. The sign, the sign that was given of the blood and the doorposts and the lintels and the sight of that blood that God saw.

Yesterday evening Jewish people from around the world they began their Passover celebrations. They had a meal called a seder and in that seder or during that seder the head of the household would recount and did recount the events of Exodus 12. These are events that speak of the deliverance of the Israelites from oppression into freedom. That Jewish Passover it's a week that's going to take place and it's going to continue until next Sunday. And we grieve.

We grieve that for those of the Jewish faith who don't know the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah, the promised Christ, for those who don't know Jesus as a Savior, as Deliverer, then all the Passover celebrations that are going to take place this week will really be an emptiness, a vacuum.

Because there'll be one thing missing and that one thing, that one thing missing will be the person of the Lord Jesus. We'll be faith in the Lord Jesus, in Jesus, the Lamb of God, the sacrificial lamb that that Passover points to. Because it's Jesus alone who brings true freedom from the slavery of sin.

It's Jesus alone who saves and delivers and rescues all who are his by faith. And so when we come to this section of the account of the Exodus from Egypt, then let's be clear that when we read here of the Lamb, when we see here mentioned the Lamb of the Exodus, that this is pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God.

[2 : 4 4] Jesus given for us and slain for us so that you might have eternal life in him. Well, let's think then of the context of this passage before we actually look at the headings.

Let's remind ourselves of where we've reached. Because the time has come for the Israelites to leave Egypt. They've been in Egypt for 400 years.

They've lived there and they've been oppressed. They've been under slavery. Cruel pharaohs have treated them so cruelly. And in God's perfect timing, God sends Moses.

He sends Moses from the wilderness back to Egypt, back to where Moses had spent his first 40 years of his life. And Moses goes to the Egyptian palace where the pharaoh is.

And there's Moses with his brother Aaron. And there they are appearing before Pharaoh, giving God's word to Pharaoh to let God's people go. And of course, Pharaoh at first refuses, not just at first, but nine times.

[3 : 5 4] Pharaoh refuses, nine plagues. God has sent in Egypt, but nine times. Israelites go.

But as God announces to Moses, there'll be one more plague. The tenth plague. That plague, that strike upon the firstborn of the people there in Egypt.

God would save his people even in that act of judgment. But there still have to be demands obeyed. The people of Israel would have to obey the commands that God gave them to ensure that they would be saved.

And these commands that involve the slaughter of the lamb, and the use of the lamb's blood, and the way that the lamb was actually eaten. And of course, as I said, you have to see these events in the wider context as they point forward to the Lord Jesus.

The one true sacrificial lamb. The one who truly delivers his people from the slavery of sin. And so, we do have to see in what we're reading here, the wonderful truth of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus, given for us, sacrificed for us, offering himself up.

[5 : 16] It's that sacrificial lamb, and it's the sacrificial lamb that we see here when God commands the Israelites what they're to do. Why were they to give that protection in their homes?

And notice the very careful description of what the sacrificial lamb is. As we read there in verse 5, it's to be carefully chosen.

It had to be a year-old male. It had to be a lamb without any defect in its physique. It's got to be one per household, or if the household's too small, then one lamb shared between different households.

It's a lamb that was going to be particularly cared for. As we read there, four days. It would be very, very carefully cared for.

These four days before the time when that lamb's life was taken. Four days when the people would tend it, care for it, and realize that something very special was happening.

[6 : 17] This lamb that was so precious to them. A lamb that they looked after, they looked after with so much affection. But now the same lamb was to be offered up.

That lamb that was so precious. But that was the price for their salvation. And after four days of caring for that lamb, then the lamb slaughtered.

And, you know, you can just picture that, I mean, the size of the Israelite population then, many estimates vary, but probably several millions. So thousands of lambs being slaughtered.

But notice the lamb was slaughtered at the one time, exactly the same time at twilight. We'll come back to that in a moment. In other words, just before it became completely dark there at that evening hour.

And so the people acting together, these countless numbers of people acting together as if one lamb was being slaughtered. And then what do we read?

[7 : 18] The blood of the lamb has been daubed in the doorposts and the lentils. And the meat of the lamb completely eaten. Anything left over burned the next morning.

The meal eaten in haste because the people were to be ready to leave Egypt very, very quickly. Now, what do we learn here? What do we learn for ourselves?

What do we learn of God? What do we learn even for our application here? Four things I would suggest. The first thing is obedience. God gave particular instructions to the people.

And these instructions began with the lamb itself. The very choosing of the lamb. In the very timescale for the slaughter of the lamb. The very daubing of the blood and the lentils in the doorposts had to be obeyed absolutely precisely.

So there was not going to be any shortcuts, any deviation from God's command. There weren't to be any kind of half-hearted obedience to the command of God.

[8 : 24] God was giving his commands and his sovereign power and authority. But the people had to obey. And think of the commands of God that God gives to you even today by his word.

But none of you are to ignore these commands or treat them in some kind of half-hearted way. Especially when God, the Lord, calls you to himself.

When he calls you to come to him and to trust him for all things. And obey that command. Obey his word and obey it with all your heart.

And when God declares that there's salvation and no one else except Jesus alone, and it's to him alone that you come for salvation. Then come. The Lord commands you to come to him and to no one else.

And just as God there provided the lambs for the sacrifice, well, remember, God has provided the one lamb, the Lord Jesus, the one and only Son of God.

[9 : 30] Believe in him. Put your faith in him. Trust in him. And submit to him with all your heart. Obey his word. But then, secondly, we touched on this a moment ago.

Second thing I think we can apply here or see here is unity. The Israelites had to slaughter the lamb, or all the lambs, at exactly the same time. And that time was twilight.

Just as the light, the last light of the day was receding. Just as darkness was about to cover the land. And so at twilight, the people had to act as one.

As one. So here's this action by the community, by the people. Israel acting as one, slaughtering the lamb. It was as if only one lamb was being slaughtered.

Of course, it was only by the death of one, the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. Only by his sacrifice are the many saved because of the one, because of the Lord Jesus.

[10 : 35] Jesus. Unity. But then, thirdly we see purity. Look at the lamb itself that was chosen. It was to be a lamb without defect.

In other words, it was to be the best of the flock. It was only the best that could be offered to God in sacrifice. Again, that brings you to see, with rejoicing, the Lord Jesus, him who is the Lamb of God.

Jesus and his perfection. Remember when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he exclaimed, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And John recognized who Jesus is in all his purity, in all his perfection, in all his goodness. Because John said of Jesus, that, well, of himself, that one was unworthy to untie even.

Jesus' shoelaces. Peter himself, who knew the Lord Jesus as Savior, Peter would later write of Jesus as a lamb without blemish or defect.

[11 : 42] Paul referred to Jesus as the Passover lamb. And yes, the physical lamb at the time of the Exodus, the lamb was perfect in its physical sense.

But of course, Jesus is utter perfection in all his purity, all his sinlessness, all his holiness. A year when the death and resurrection of Jesus is, well, is particularly remembered across the churches, even in our world.

Well, yes, use this opportunity not just to remember the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God, but tell others of Jesus as the Lamb of God. Point others to the one who knew no sin and yet was made sin for us because there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.

Jesus in all his purity and then fourthly, Jesus in all his innocence because notice, the lamb was taken from the flock, the lamb from, whether it was the flock of sheep or goats, but that lamb had done, we might say, nothing to deserve its slaughter.

It was chosen to be slaughter because it was certainly physically perfect because it satisfied God's perfect demands. Remember what Isaiah wrote of Jesus, prophetically of Jesus in Isaiah 53.

[13 : 12] He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And you see, Jesus being described as the Lamb of God is, well, he is so innocent.

He'd done nothing wrong. He'd done nothing to deserve the punishment you and I have committed and do commit, the world has committed.

Yet Jesus was the one chosen to be the sacrificial lamb because of his innocence, because of his sinlessness, because of his righteousness. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, the Lamb of God, Jesus satisfied God's perfect demands for the sacrificial lamb.

He is innocent. We are guilty. And yet, he took your sins upon himself so that you can be declared not guilty before God because Jesus took your punishment.

He took it as the innocent Lamb of God. And as someone's written so beautifully, really, of the result of the innocent Christ's obedience unto death, as he said, what kind of love is this that died in Calvary?

[14 : 28] I am the guilty one yet I go free. All because of the sacrificial Lamb of God who set you who are in him, set you free.

set you free from the power of sin. Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb. But then secondly, the sign of blood because the sacrificial Lamb was slaughtered for its blood.

There could be no blood without the life of the Lamb being taken. That blood there that was put on the lintels, the doorposts, that was utterly crucial for the salvation of the Israelites.

Without the blood, there would be no salvation. It was the blood that distinguished between the Israelites and the Egyptians. Now, if you've gone back all these many thousands of years ago to these houses there in Egypt, you couldn't really tell whether this was an Egyptian house or an Israelite house.

The homes would have been very, very similar. but only the blood would distinguish. Only the blood would identify those who were protected, protected against God's wrath.

[15 : 43] So when the Israelites put the blood there, the blood of the Lamb on their doorposts, they would see it. They would see it as a sign that they were safe, that their firstborn were safe.

So it was a sign that pointed to their having obeyed God's command. But remember, too, it was a sign to God. It was a sign that those who had obeyed His command had done so and that God would pass over the houses where the blood had been placed.

So the blood pointed to the fact that sacrifice had been made. Sacrifice by the Lamb. That blood pointed to the fact that the life of the Lamb had been taken.

So no more life needs to be taken. The Lamb that was the substitute for the firstborn. That Lamb's blood, as it were, that guaranteed the life of the firstborn in that house.

Without the blood in the doorpost, it would tell that no sacrifice had been made. And you see what's happening here. The blood of the Lamb, that blood there showed that, well, that death had happened on behalf of another.

[16 : 57] that Lamb had been slaughtered so that life would be preserved. When you think of the blood of the Lord Jesus, that blood that was shed on the cross, don't you see fully and clearly the meaning of that sign there in Egypt?

Jesus came to do what, as it were, fully what the blood of the Lamb's there in Egypt pointed to. Jesus came to give His life as our substitute. His blood shed to cover your sins, to protect you for whom Jesus died.

Jesus gave His life for you so that you might have eternal life. And come to Him and believe that, yes, His blood was shed for you and have that absolute guarantee that, yes, your sins are covered by that blood and that God will not pour His wrath upon you.

But what if you're not protected by the blood of Jesus? What if you haven't given your life to the Savior? Where's that protection in your life?

When God sees you, does He see the sign of blood on you and does He pass over you in judgment? Or does He see you without the covering blood of Christ?

[18 : 22] You see, without the blood of Jesus, there's no escape from God's judgment. Just as there was the Egyptians without the blood being on their homes.

And if you've not yet known the Lord Jesus as Savior, not knowing that protection of His blood, then I plead with you, come to Him. Give your life to the One who gave His life for you.

Remember, in your place, condemned, He stood. He shed His blood for sinners such as me and sinners such as you.

The sign of blood. But then thirdly and finally, the sight of blood. Remember the words, 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 in the previous plagues, many of the previous plagues, God had already made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians.

[19 : 27] When so many of the calamities that struck Egypt were felt by the Egyptians, the Israelites were spared. But now there's going to be one final distinction.

That in the tenth plague, when that plague strikes Egypt. And this time there'll be a distinction. And a distinction based on blood. The blood of the lamb.

And it's that distinction, that difference that God would recognize when he saw the blood on the doorposts of the homes. And in seeing, God would act and God would spare.

But at the same time, God would judge those for whom no blood was evident. God seeing, God acting, God sparing, and God judging. And you see, God's making it absolutely clear here as to, well, his definite acts of mercy and judgment.

Mercy to those who obeyed his word, but judgment on those who hadn't heeded his word. The word of God here to the people, it shows that, well, it actually shows that the Israelites themselves were liable to the death of the firstborn if they didn't do as God commanded them to do.

[20 : 48] Sin has to be punished irrespective of those who are before God, who failed to heed God's command. And surely then this reminds us, reminds each one of us, of the reality that Passover points to.

because Passover, the passing over of God's angel of death over the homes of the Israelites, Passover points to the mercy of God, that mercy and passing over all for whom the blood of Jesus is given and received.

But at the same time, judgment against all who will have nothing to do with the Lamb of God, who will have nothing to do with the Lord Jesus. You see, the ceremonies of Passover this week, these ceremonies won't save.

And yes, the celebration of Easter this weekend in and of itself, that won't save. But only those for whom the blood of Jesus was shed, you'll know that mercy, the mercy of God.

Only you who've received Jesus by faith, only you who've trusted in Him as the once for all sacrifice for sin, only you who are covered by the blood of Jesus, you'll know that great salvation, that saving from the judgment of God and saving into His marvelous kingdom.

[22 : 26] God would save the firstborn, firstborn of all who are protected by the blood, the blood of the Lamb. God would strike the land of Egypt and strike it with one final terrible plague, that striking down of the firstborn.

But you who know the Lord Jesus, you have an eternal relationship with a firstborn. Yes, He was the firstborn of Mary, that's true.

But as Paul tells us in Romans 8, 29, when he tells of Jesus as the firstborn among many brothers. In other words, Jesus is that firstborn, the one who's supreme, the one who's our elder brother, the one who's gone before us, the one who's established that bond of love within the family of God.

Why? Because of His death for you, because He shed His blood for you, so that you might be brought into the eternal family of God and know that eternal relationship with the Lord Jesus, your Savior, your Redeemer, your Friend, your Elder Brother.

If you're His this morning, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Elder Brother, as that firstborn, if you know that God has spared you for Himself, then rejoice.

[23 : 52] If you don't yet know the Lord Jesus, if you don't know the Lamb, the Lamb of God as your Savior, if you don't know Him Elder Brother, well, I call upon you to turn your eyes to Jesus and see Him, see Him who had no sin, who has made sin for you, so that you might be delivered from the consequences of sin's power.

You might have that freedom in Christ, that freedom from the dominion of sin, and that freedom that's only possible because of the blood of the Lamb that was shed on the cross.

Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, as you direct us, as you draw us to see the Lord Jesus in all His beauty, as the Lamb of God, may we truly rejoice to see Him, to know that He is the Lamb slain for us, even now the Lamb, the very right hand of your Heavenly Father, even our Savior, who died for us.

Lord, may you give those who are here this morning eyes to see, eyes to see the Savior, eyes to see the One who gave Himself for us, so that we might have that life, life eternal.

Lord, bless then, we pray this time of worship. May you bless and give the increase in all that has already happened this morning. And we pray, Lord, these things in Jesus' name.

[25 : 36] Amen.