

Salvation and Education

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn now together to Exodus chapter 12. I'd like us to consider the words we find in verses 13 and 27, in particular looking at them in the context of Exodus 12.

Exodus 12, verses 13 and 27. 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

And then verse 27. You shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel and Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.

Well, as you know, I'm sure the Passover and Exodus, because they're always combined, the Passover, the Exodus, it's really the great event of the Old Testament.

And we can say that because although there are many other important and great events, this is the one especially that the Lord constantly brought to mind when the people of Israel were passing through on their way to Canaan, but also after having been established in Canaan, and even afterwards when he was threatening them with exile, with dispersion because of their disobedience, he, through the prophets, very often brought their minds back to consider what the Lord had done in the Exodus and why that was significant for the people as a people of God.

[1 : 3 5] It's frequently mentioned throughout the Old Testament. It's alluded to. It's also mentioned or alluded to in the New Testament, always in relation to some aspect of redemption or other, because that's really what it portrays.

More than any other event of its kind in the Old Testament, it portrays God's redemption of people through the blood of a sacrifice that was given in their place.

And as we come to these verses today, we can see that they are clearly illustrative and prophetic of Jesus, of the death that he died, as the Lamb of God, as the substitute of his people, as he died on the cross.

And in anticipation of the Lord's Supper, which we, God willing, will observe or participate in next Lord's Day, I'd like to look at these verses that are so appropriate and so particular to that event of the Lord's death and indeed of the Lord's Supper too, as illustrative of what we remember.

Now the death of the Lamb, of course, is the central feature of this passage. It was the central feature of the event of the Exodus. It was in relation to the Lamb and the blood of the Lamb that the people were actually to think about what was happening in the whole of the land of Egypt.

[2 : 5 9] And that the angel of death, the death that came into every home in Egypt, even affecting their animals as well, was not actually going to invade their households because they were sheltered or protected.

They had the security of that sacrificial blood. And as we look at that, we can see a number of things that are very much to do with the Lord's death as he fulfilled these details that were given in prophecy and type about him.

There's, first of all, the selection of the Lamb. And then there's, secondly, the blood of the Lamb. And thirdly, the eating of the Lamb. The Lamb is the central feature, but in relation to the Lamb, first of all, you have the selection of the Lamb, verses 3 to 6.

The blood of the Lamb, as it's mentioned specifically in verses 7, 13, and 22. And then the eating of the Lamb, which you find mentioned as God specifies how they were to actually eat of it in verses 8 to verse 10.

The selection of the Lamb. Why is that important? How does that have a bearing upon what we think about in remembering the Lord's death in the Lord's Supper or the death that Jesus died at any other time?

[4 : 22] Well, you notice here that the Lamb, the selection of the Lamb was actually specified by God himself. The Lord said to Moses, And Aaron, this month shall be the first of months for you.

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day, every man shall take a Lamb according to their father's houses. A Lamb for a household. Yes, Moses and Aaron were to communicate this message to the people.

But it was the Lord who actually made the specification as to what the Lamb was going to be like or what kind of characteristics it should have.

But it's important to notice that the selection of the Lamb was actually specified by God himself. He gave Moses this command. He gave Moses this instruction, this revelation indeed of himself.

And that applies to Jesus as well. And again, you find it in the Old Testament in prophecy, Psalm 89 sings about the one that has been chosen by God.

[5 : 23] And that's a reference to King David. But David, of course, is a type or anticipation of Jesus as the king of his people. You find it like of Isaiah 42.

Behold, my servant. This is the Lord speaking through the prophet. Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him.

He will bring forth justice to the nations and so on. And should there be any doubt that that refers prophetically to Jesus, the New Testament in the likes of Matthew, chapter 12, verse 18, picks up these very words and applies them to Jesus himself.

Of course, you go into the likes of Peter's first epistle that we looked at and went through not so long ago. And you remember chapter 1, verses 18 to 20, specifies this kind of language in relation to Jesus.

You were redeemed not with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. as of a lamb without blemish, without spot.

[6 : 30] Clearly picking up the specification of the Passover lamb. So it's specified by God. And that's so important for us when we remember the Lord's death, when we remember who came, who died, and why he came, and who sent him, and who set the specifications as to the kind of death that he must die, and everything that ran up to it and followed it, the Lord has done that.

It's all of God. It's not a human invention. Don't listen to the people who say this is just something that the church invented over the process of time, or that people who don't believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead will say, well, his disciples decided that in order to keep the memory of Jesus fresh, they would go and take these things that were in the Old Testament times illustrative, and they would just keep his memory alive.

The Lord specified to take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of himself. And that's remembrance of a Lord who died this death, but is now alive and at God's right hand in glory.

And one of the most precious and wonderful things in human experience is that when you come to the Lord's Supper in anticipation of blessing, with a desire in your heart to do this in remembrance of Jesus, you can very rightly anticipate, you have a warrant from God to anticipate that Christ himself is there, that through the Holy Spirit and through the mystery of God blessing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, ways that we cannot specify or explain, but nevertheless we know that God himself is present with his people, including when they come to take communion.

God has specified the lamb and the special features of it are also mentioned that are important because you see, he says here in verse 5 that your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old.

[8 : 46] You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. In other words, they were to take a male, in other words, that represented or signified vigor and strength and you can see how that applies to Jesus, to the strength of the Savior in overcoming death and dealing with sin and bearing guilt of our sin and bearing all our sin and the sin of his people in its entirety and how also it has to be without blemish, a lamb without blemish, no imperfections to be seen on that animal.

That's why Peter picks up these words, a lamb without blemish and without spot. The perfection of Jesus is hugely significant as we remember him in his death.

The fact that he took the sin of his people, the fact that he died the death that involved him being made a curse, the curse that God himself specifies in Galatians, the fact that he died the death due to us for our sin, the fact that the sin of his people is imputed to him, that he willingly came to bear that, it did not mean at all that he himself in person became spotted, corrupted, blemished, imperfect.

And Hebrews chapter 7 verses 26 and 27 picks up that emphasis on the perfection of the Lord. that such a high priest was fitting for us or became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and now made higher than the heavens.

This is the kind of high priest we needed. This is the kind of high priest that came. This is the kind of person who came. This is the kind of death he died. But he died as the spotless lamb of God yet at the same time in a way that again we can't explain.

[10 : 53] The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was regarded as the accursed thing because of the sin imputed to him. But always bear in mind that this is about a perfect person and indeed in one of his books in his writings, Professor John Murray, when he's writing on the atonement and writing on the cross itself and on the death that Jesus died and on his person in relation to that.

That this was, he says, a perfect atonement that secured salvation for God's people and it is the perfection of Christ himself that ensures its security, that it's secured.

You have a perfect saviour. You have a saviour who's unblemished and yet you have a saviour who took all your sin in its filth and its degradation but himself remained the spotless son of God.

The selection of the lamb and that's so vital for us too when we remember his death in the Lord's Supper. We remember one who is perfect and whose perfection guarantees our acceptance with God.

Secondly, you find the blood of the lamb mentioned, verses 7, 13 and 22. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

[12 : 24] Verse 13, that we're looking at 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. Of course, the life of Jesus is significant.

He lived a perfect life and his life itself is really significant in the eyes of God as well. But we are not saved by Jesus merely by his perfect life.

To actually atone for sin, to pay the price, to pay our debt, to actually give to God what God demanded in respect to the broken law of God and our part and to answer for our sin which we could ourselves not do, that is what Jesus did by his death.

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for us. Without the shedding of his blood is actual death. That's so important that we bear that in mind as well.

It's not just the perfection of his life though that's important. It's not even life poured out as it were in death. It is the actual death he died and the nature of that death.

[13 : 36] The death that is the wages of sin. The death that you and I deserve. We were singing about that great point in one of the Psalms today as we sang Psalm 103 that the Lord forgives our sin.

Or Psalm 130 he does not mark out iniquity against us. It doesn't mean that the Lord has forgotten about sin. That he no longer sees sin important or significant. That he treats it lightly.

That you and I can afford to say well Jesus died so therefore sin is really dealt with and it's not all that significant. We can forget about it. What it's saying to us is that the shedding of Christ's blood, the death of Jesus, it's God's provision against our sin, against our sinfulness, against our liability to death, to hell, to the pains of hell forever.

That is what Jesus died. That's the damnation that he himself experienced and if you like fulfilled in his own death on the cross so that it would not come to invade the lives of his people.

Just like in the Old Testament here with the death of the firstborn because of the lamb and the shedding of the blood of the lamb, the death of the lamb, the death of the sacrifice, the death which was invading all the homes of the Egyptians was locked out of the homes of the people of Israel.

[15 : 06] But it was because of another death that was found in each of the houses of the Israelites or at least in the way that they were gathered because they were to take a lamb for each family if it was too small, they were to gather together with neighbors, whatever.

But there was a death in each of these homes. and it was the death of the sacrificial lamb, the blood of the lamb and the application of that blood that actually signified their security and gave them security from the death that was coming upon all the Egyptians.

And it's also thereby a substitute. It's clearly substitutionary. When you look at this passage, it's one of the ways in which we can apply scripture to the death of Christ from the Old Testament and find that it's actually so specific and so clear cut.

A lot of people nowadays would not agree that the death of Jesus was a substitute and that somehow or other that really would, we could rightly accuse God of cruelty and of abuse.

If this was his own son, indeed, that he gave him to the death of the cross and that that was a substitutionary death in place of others, well, people will argue, even Christians will argue nowadays, that's no longer acceptable, surely.

[16 : 28] Well, why did he die then? Why was there a death at all in his experience? If it wasn't as a substitute for us and the death we deserved?

You can see how it is here. 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.

The lamb there was the substitute for themselves and for the death that they deserved. And that's how it is as you apply it to the cross of Christ as well.

Go again to 1 Peter. Remember, as we went through there, chapter 3 and verse 18, it specifies the just for the unjust, the righteous in the place of the unrighteous.

or in the great words of 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, where you find there's an imputation in a substitutionary way.

[17 : 30] Our sin is imputed to him, his righteousness imputed to us. We come to trust in the Lord. There's an exchange, but it's an exchange involving substitution.

He took our place. we take his righteousness. And it's just of God all the way through to do so.

And as the writer put it, bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood.

Hallelujah! What a Savior! What a Savior indeed. There is no other Savior. but he. The shedding of the blood then is important.

The fact that there is a death. The fact that there is this specific death. This substitutionary death. That's what you remember too when you come to remember the Lord and the death he died in the Lord's Supper.

[18 : 31] And then there's the effect of the blood in verses 7 and 13 as we've just read as well. The blood shall be a sign for you and when I see the blood.

You see, the Lord is specifying there how the people were to see the blood as they lived in their homes, as they anticipated the coming of the death in the land of Egypt that was going to apply.

You, this shall be for you, a sign. They were to regard the blood as significant and they were to look at it as a sign. It was something that spoke to them. Something that signified their security.

Something that eloquently set forth that they were protected from the death that was happening outside. But then you see, God says, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

He's not just saying, when you see the blood, you can be assured that you're safe. It's not because they are seeing the blood that they're safe. It's not in how they actually come to regard the blood that ensures their security.

[19 : 36] God is saying, when I see the blood, when my eye lights upon that blood, when that blood is in my eyesight, when I see it, when I take account of it, when I consider what it means, I will pass over you.

And when we remember the death of Jesus, remember that the death of Jesus operates first and foremost towards God. Before you can think of it as operating toward us for the forgiveness of our sins, for our being established as righteous, justified, all of that.

And it's from the blood of Christ that all of that comes to be applied to us, the benefits of his death. That's what's applied to us by the Holy Spirit. As you remember very well, I'm sure those of you who know your catechism, that we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

And it goes on to ask, what is effectual calling? You see, the logical progression in the catechism of all of these foundational, important facts suffer redemption.

[21 : 05] This is not theory, this is factual. And it's saying, reminding us that the effect of Christ's blood of his death is first and foremost towards God.

God's wrath against sin before it's forgiven requires to be propitiated, pacified, not in a pagan type of way, but in God himself in love, providing the way by which his wrath comes to be propitiated.

The love which set up the cross is the same love in the same God that provided against and came to meet the terms of his own wrath.

wrath. What a wonderful God. What an amazing transaction between God the Father and God the Son when God is providing in his love a substitute that meets the demands of his own wrath, of his own being.

So there you have it. There is the effect of Christ's blood towards God. And then it comes to be beneficial to us as it's applied to us.

[22 : 27] the redemption that it achieved is applied to us. And these things, I know they're theological. I know that's not popular nowadays. We can't, however, come to just deal with practicalities and leave aside the theological.

The theological is foundational. And we need to know these things about the death of Jesus and how the death of Jesus is portrayed in these types and in these representations in the Old Testament.

Because the whole Bible really, wherever you begin, in some way or other, you have to make that route towards the cross. Central. This is the substance of the gospel.

Jesus Christ, his death on the cross, his resurrection. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. His passing over them began with seeing the blood.

When you're at the Lord's table, remember that. God, as you're remembering the Lord and his death. Think of these words as God, as it were, still speaks toward you.

[23 : 32] And that's very real. And in the way that you think of God looking down upon his gathered people at the Lord's supper, remembering the Lord and his death, you can still picture God, if you like, saying, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

You're coming to the Lord's table, and when you take your place at the Lord's table, you can actually see that God is reaffirming for you the effect of that blood, of that death that you're remembering.

Death, apart from the physical element of it, will never invade your human experience again. There is no condemnation now to those who are in Christ Jesus.

When I see the blood, I will pass over you. I will take the blood that I see in your place. Are you coming to the Lord's table?

Are you coming to remember him in his death? Do you have the desire in your heart today, but haven't yet come to do this in remembrance of him?

[24 : 49] Well, remember this please. The Lord is not looking primarily at you when he sets out to reaffirm where your security lies.

You don't need to be troubled about your own inadequacy, about your imperfection, when you think about coming to the Lord's Supper. supper. You shouldn't say of yourself, who am I compared to others?

Who am I compared to those who have gone before? Who am I compared to others that I see now coming to take the Lord's Supper? I'm not as good as them. You shouldn't say about yourself, I'm not worthy that I should come, that I should come and take the Lord's Supper and take this bread and take this cup in my hands.

Of course you're not worthy. of course you're not good enough. If you're aware, Jesus wouldn't have died. But the fact that he has, and the fact that God is emphasizing for you today, when I see the blood, he's not looking to your imperfection or perfection in order to guarantee your security.

He's looking at the blood. And if you can find today, an imperfection in the death of Christ, then stay away from the Lord's table. If you can find something in the death of Christ that isn't right, that is a blemish, then you can rightly say, this is not for me.

[26 : 29] But I guarantee you you will not find that. The perfection of the Lamb, the perfection of his offering, the perfection of his obedience, the perfection of his willingness, his sinless life, his giving of himself to the death of the cross, that's your security, that's your assurance, that's what you look to, God's God's looking at.

Who am I to say, that's not enough for me? When I see the blood, I will pass by, I will pass over you.

Dear friends, if this is in your heart to do, and you know that you're secure, that you're in Christ, that you're trusting in him, even imperfectly, but nevertheless really, while your place is at the Lord's Supper, and God is assuring you from this, that that place belongs to you, because he sees the blood, and guarantees your acceptance.

Do this in remembrance of him. And then there's the eating of the lamb, thirdly, more briefly, the eating of the lamb, because they participate in this, verse 7, onwards, they shall eat the flesh that night roasted in the fire, on the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

And I'm not going to go into the details of what's there, but just the fact that they were participating in that physical way of this supper. And the actions of the Lord's Supper are themselves still significant for us, because the Lord did say, take, eat, this is my body.

[28 : 25] The Lord did say, take this cup. And drink this cup. Do this in remembrance of me. And as you find yourself physically involved in eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, so that itself is spiritually significant as representing something that's happening in your soul as a believer in Christ.

You are feeding upon, as our confession of faith puts it so eloquently, Christ crucified, and the benefits of his death. That's what worthy recipients, and by worthy it means they're people who are regarded by God as sufficiently qualified in Christ to take this.

They eat upon Christ crucified, they feed upon Christ crucified, and the benefits of his death. Spiritual feeding. The same Christ that you feed on through the gospel, through the word preached, but in a different fashion as God himself and his wisdom has given to us.

James Montgomery, he was a hymn writer, he was born in Ayrshire, and went to Ireland, and wrote many hymns, among them a hymn called Communion of My Saviour's Blood.

And there he writes, to feed by faith on Christ my bread, his body broken on the tree, to live in him my living head, who died and rose again for me.

[29 : 54] This be my joy and comfort here, this pledge of future glory mine. Jesus, in spirit, now appear, break the bread and pour the wine.

From thy dear hand, may I receive the tokens of thy dying love. While I feast on earth, believe that I shall feast with thee above.

This do in remembrance of him, till he come. Until he come. This is their privilege. And they were to eat it prepared to trammel.

You see, they were to eat it with your belts fastened and their shoes on their feet, ready to actually go out, their staff in their hand, and eating it in haste. It's the Lord's Passover.

They were to associate it with their journey. And all the way through their journey in the wilderness for 40 years annually, they kept the Passover. It was a memorial to them of their redemption from Egypt.

[30 : 55] And now that that's been replaced in the New Testament age by the Lord's Supper, it's nonetheless a memorial. It reflects back, however often we do it, it reflects back upon the very ground of our acceptance with God in the death of Jesus.

And it reflects also the fact that we are journeying, that we're on a pilgrimage, that we're heading homewards, that we've been strengthened for the journey by the provision God has made for us in the Word and in the sacraments baptism and the Lord's Supper.

They're all part of the journey. They're all necessary for our journey. Think of the Lord's Supper as a means of strengthening your faith. If you're saying, well, my faith is so weak, I do believe, I do trust in Christ, I accept His Word, but I don't think I'm fit to come to the Lord's table.

Well, if you want to come to the Lord's table, be at the Lord's table, because you might complain about the weakness of your faith, but that's where it receives strengthening. That's where the Lord acts in a confirmatory way towards His people.

You may feel little difference after coming from the Lord's Supper. Don't expect anything spectacular. Don't discount it either. You never know. But it is a means of grace.

[32 : 24] Before it is a means of witness, the Lord has given it to us to strengthen us on the journey. And if we should be there and we're not, we're leaving out what God and His wisdom has given us for strengthening us.

We can bewail our lack of faith. We can repent of our lack of faith, our lack of love, our imperfections. But we shouldn't do it to the extent of denying that we're believers, or denying that our place is with the Lord's people at His table, ready to travel further steps towards home.

And then, just briefly, but it's very important, not only is there participation in eating the lamb and preparation further for the journey, there's also education.

Verses 26 and 27. You see, the Lord is saying to the people that He expects their children to ask them the meaning of the Passover.

Verse 26, when your children say to you, what do you mean by the service? You shall say, it's the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. The children were expected to ask. The parents were to be ready, expecting that children would ask about this.

[33 : 47] And so it should be for us too. Are we leaving it to the church to educate our children about what the Lord's Supper means, about what the death of Jesus is about?

That's primarily the practice and the responsibility and the privilege of the home, where we actually educate children in what this means. And that's why I said earlier to the children themselves how important it is for them, and I say to all the young folks here too, and to everybody else, that it's important to actually see the Lord's Supper and see what's happening in the Lord's Supper.

And to actually then put to yourself what you're seeing in relation to your own life, even if you're not going to be sitting at the table yourself this time. But for the children it's so important, and it's important that you encourage them to ask, that you encourage them to ask questions about this, and what it means, and why it's significant, and why you're doing it yourselves, and that they too, even the younger ones, can be present to see it.

And it's good that for some time now we've been having children coming to the service where the Lord's Supper celebrated. Take the children. If you have to go out with them sometimes, that doesn't matter.

The important thing is that they're established in the ways of the Lord, including knowing about the Lord's Supper and what it means. Because the symbolism of the Supper itself makes it relatively easy, doesn't it, to explain to them what this means.

[35 : 23] Eating bread, drinking a cup, and how that is so illustrative of Jesus' death, and Jesus' death coming to benefit us spiritually.

Selection of the lamb, the blood of the lamb, the eating of the lamb. Do this, says Jesus, in remembrance of me. May he bless this word to us.

Let's conclude by singing to his praise. And our final singing is Psalm 118, and verse 24.

That's page 399. Sing to a tune Argyle, verses 24 to the end. This is the day God made. In it will joy triumphantly.

Save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray. Send now prosperity. The day of God's provision of salvation, the day of redemption, the day that includes and has at its center the stone that's made the head cornerstone, which builders to despise, and that of course is Jesus.

[36 : 31] So verse 24, through to the end of the psalm, to God's praise. Amen. This is the day God made in it will join triumphantly.

Christ, I pray save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray send now prosperity.

blessed is he in God's great name that cometh us to sin.

We from the hearts which to the Lord pertains you blessed God is the Lord who unto us hath made light to arise by thee unto the altar's horns with cords the sacrifice thou art my God I'll thee extol my

God I will thee praise if that to God for thee is good his mercy lasts always if you allow me to get to the main door please after the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be our portion now and evermore Amen Jesus to through my understand you God Right now and evermore because I too you ha to swear thehovah God so him here year

[39 : 36] God