



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

"Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus on the Passover Lamb"      TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The theme of our series of studies is "The Old Testament Anticipation of the Messiah". And our subject for today as we continue this theme is "Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus on the Passover Lamb". We've been studying the Old Testament and some of its many passages that anticipate the person and work of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have considered the fundamental messianic promise of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head in Genesis 3:15.

We've studied the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, which portrays so beautifully the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We've looked at Jacob's blessing of Judah seeing that it ultimately referred to the coming of the real lion of the tribe of Judah, David's greater son. And we just recently pondered Jacob's vision of the ladder at Bethel, a symbol referred finally by our Lord to himself in the first chapter of the Gospel of John.

These passages are all remarkable and instructive but not one of them is more instructive than the one we shall look at now. The Passover celebrated Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the Lord commanded that it be observed as a permanent ordinance, that the lamb sacrificed on the annual feast pointed forward to the

coming of the lamb of God whose sacrifice would deliver from the spiritual bondage of sin becomes plain as the word of God progressively reveals.

Isaiah speaks of the servant of Jehovah going to his death for sin as a lamb that is led to its slaughter. John the Baptist celebrates the beginning of the fulfillment by crying out as the Lord Jesus approached him, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Other passages make the connection, but it's Paul who settles the matter with his, "For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed," 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 7. The lambs of the numerous Passover feasts then were God's pedagogy instructing Israel to anticipate the appearance of the Son of God, the lamb to be slain and sacrificed for sin. One coming again to the old story of the lamb slain for sinners is inclined to think that an audience may think it monotonous to go on about the same old thing. That brings to mind an incident in the life of Adoniram Judson, the famous American missionary to Burma.

He had experienced hardships and accomplished perilous exploits for the Lord in Burma. On one occasion he returned home after thirty years of absence. He was invited to speak and a large audience came to hear him. He arose with all eyes upon him and for about fifteen minutes spoke with much feeling about Christ and his sufferings for his. He spoke of how much he owed him and then he sat down.

On the way home a friend said to him, "The people are very much disappointed and they wonder why you did not speak of something else." "What did they want?" Mr. Judson replied. "I presented to the best of my ability the most interesting subject in the whole world." "But they wanted something different. A story," his friend said. "Well, I'm sure I gave them a story, the most thrilling one that can be conceived of." But the friend replied, "They had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes". Judson replied, "Then I'm glad they have it to say that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus Christ. My business is to preach the Gospel of Christ and when I can speak

it all I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people today and remembering where I should next meet them how could I stand up and furnish food for vain curiosity, tickle their fancy with amusing stories however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the Gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge from the Lord, 'I gave you opportunity to tell them of me. You spent in describing your own adventures.'"

So like Spurgeon I have to say that if Judson could not find anything better to say to his audience after being away for thirty years, I will continue to proclaim with unabated fervor the saving power of the blood of Christ as seen by type in the Passover service and by reality in Calvary's cross.

If you have your Bibles with you I hope you will turn to Exodus chapter 12 verse 1 through verse 10. And we're going to look first at the directions for the Passover service that are described in these 10 verses. I'm going to read Exodus chapter 12 verse 1 through verse 10.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, 'This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel saying in the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. And if the house will be too little for the lamb let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls. Every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats and you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening and they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper doorposts of the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night roast with hire and unleavened bread

and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw nor soughten at all with water, but roast with fire. His head with his legs and with the pertinence thereof. And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning. And that which remaineth of it until the morning you shall burn with fire. (And perhaps I'll read the eleventh verse as well.) And thus shall you eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff and your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover."

Now, these instructions that are given by Moses are designed for the famous Passover service. And first of all he speaks about the selection and the slaying of the lamb. Notice just two or three things that are exceedingly important for it. First of all, it is said that the lamb should be a lamb without blemish. Now, of course, the reason that the lamb is to be without blemish is ultimately related to the sufferings, and the person, and the work and the sufferings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For if someone is to die for men and redeem them by substitutionary sacrifice then he must be not only a divine being and possessed of all of the power of the divine being, and that's necessary for the salvation of souls, but he also must be one of us yet himself without sin. So the Lord Jesus Christ is the lamb without blemish. He's the one who is able to say to men about him, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" And no is able to say that the Lord Jesus Christ is guilty of any sin.

The Apostle Peter writing in the very first chapter of his first epistle in the 18th and 19th verses of that first chapter gives us the interpretation of the New Testament. He says, "For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things are silver and gold from your vein conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The Passover lamb must be without blemish because it represents the sinless Son of God. It is also stated in the 6th verse that they should keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. That suggests that the lamb should be tested and approved. And in

our Lord's case as we know from the New Testament teaching for approximately 30 years the Lord Jesus was tested and approved, approved by God who said to him at his baptism, "This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased." Tested also and approved by the demons who spoke of him along those lines. Listen to one of them in verse 24 of Mark chapter 1. This, a man with an unclean spirit crying out concerning the Lord Jesus, "Let us alone. What have we to do with thee thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God."

Not only does the man with a demon approve of our Lord's character and his sinlessness, and not only does our Lord say, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased," but others also made confession of the sinlessness of Christ. Pilot said, "I find no fault in this man at all." Judas, after he has betrayed the Lord the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks of the fact that he has betrayed innocent blood. And then even the criminal hanging on the cross by the side of the Lord Jesus Christ speaks in the same way acknowledging his own sin and confessing that the Lord Jesus had committed no offense at all.

The third thing that is said about the selection and the slaying of the lamb is that it should be killed in the evening. In verse 6 Moses writes that. In other words, the lamb that was the means by which Israel was delivered from their bondage must be slain. When we think of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we also need to remember that the lamb pointed forward to him as the one who would be slain. And further, that his death was absolutely necessary. It is not the life that he lived by which we are redeemed, it is by the death that he died that we are redeemed. And so the lamb should be slain. How important it is for us to remember that fact.

There is a story concerning Pastor D.M. Sterns, a great gospel preacher of the past generation. He preached a sermon and a man came up after his sermon and said, "Mr. Sterns, I don't like your preaching. I don't care for the cross. I think that instead of preaching the death on the cross it would be far better to preach Jesus the teacher and

example." "Would you then be willing to follow him if I preached Christ the example?" Mr. Sterns said. "I would," replied the stranger. "I will follow in his steps," little realizing of course that he was making a statement that is almost precisely what Peter writes about and 1 Peter chapter 2. And then Mr. Sterns said, "Well, then let us take the first step and the first step is the clause immediately after that fact that we are following in his steps 'who did no sin'. Can you take that step?" "No, the man replied. I do sin and I acknowledge it." "Well then," said the gospel preacher, "your first need of Christ is not as an example but as a Savior." And so the fact that the lamb had to be slain was devised by the Lord God as a type of the fact that he Lord Jesus ultimately is the Savior of sinners, must accomplish atonement by his death on the cross.

There going on from the directions for the Passover service to verses 12 and 13 Moses in these two verses writes of the deliverance that he Lord provides. And in verse 12 he writes, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and best, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are. And when I see the blood I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt."

And there are two significant statements here and they parallel one another. In verse 12, Moses giving the words of the Lord says, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first born." And then in verse 13, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you live." That first statement, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt is obviously a reference to the fact that there would be judgment upon all. In fact, there will be a death in every house in the land of Egypt.

We read in verse 30 of this Exodus 12th chapter, "And Pharaoh arose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead." And so the death of the Lord

Jesus Christ represented in typical fashion, an illustrative fashion by the slain lamb, suggests the judgment of God upon sin. And the lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing the judgment for sinners. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night."

God punishes sin and he punishes sin for his own in the person of the substitute. So Christ bears the punishment for sinners. That's the thing represented by, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt." But in the 13th verse Moses continues, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are. And when I see the blood I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of the Egypt. I will pass through the land of Egypt in judgment. I will pass over you in deliverance."

If the first phrase, "I will pass through the land of Egypt and smite the first born," speaks of divine judgment upon sin, this phrase, "I will pass over you," speaks of the safe keeping and protection provided through the sacrifice of the substitute. This Hebrew verb that is translated here "pass over" is a word that suggests protection. In fact, in some places in the Old Testament it is used of a bird hovering over its young in the nest. And so the suggestion is that when the destroying angel comes through the Lord will hover over those homes that have the blood on the doorposts and protect them from the destroying angels.

Listen to the 23rd verse, "For the Lord will pass through to smite to the Egyptians. And when he seeth the blood upon the lenthil and on two side posts the Lord will pass over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." That is hover over in protection.

Now, we learn an important spiritual truth here and the important spiritual truth is simply this, that safety spiritually is dependent upon the blood that is shed by the redeeming substitute. For the children of Israel in the land of Egypt safety depended upon the blood of the slain lamb being sprinkled upon the lenthil and the two side posts of the doors of their houses. That was the background of their safety. And if that blood

was sprinkled on the side posts and on the lentil then the firstborn in the house was just as safe as a prophet or an apostle. Safety depended upon the blood.

Now, one certainty of safety depended upon ones conviction that when God speaks he speaks the truth. In other words, safety depended upon the blood that was should. Certainty of salvation depends upon the faithfulness of God to his word and the acceptance of the word of God by the believing individual.

I remember many years ago when I was first converted I had some difficult with assurance of salvation. And finally one day reflecting upon John 6 verse 37 when Jesus said that every one who comes to him will be kept by him. I remember going into my bedroom in Birmingham, Alabama, kneeling down by the side of my bed and saying to the Lord something like this, "Lord, in John 6:37 you have said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' I have been concerned over this wondering if I have truly come. But I want you to know that if I have not come to this point I am coming now and receiving the Lord Jesus as my own personal Savior." I never had any doubts after that about my salvation because I realized finally that my salvation depended upon the blood that was shed for me by Jesus Christ and my conviction given by God the Holy Spirit that God is faithful to his word.

There is a legend among the Hebrews about two sisters who on that night had with the rest of their household gone into their dwellings. One of them stood all ready to depart and began quietly eating her portion of the roast body of the lamb, a type of the soul feeding on Christ. Her mind at perfect peace and rest. The other, however, was walking about the dwelling full of terrible fear lest the destroying angel should penetrate therein. This one reproached her sister for being so careless and confident, and finally asked her how it was that she could be so sure that they were not going to lose the firstborn when the angel of death and judgment was abroad in the land that night. And the reply of the sister who was trusting the word of God and the blood on the door said, "Why sister, the blood has been sprinkled and we have God's word that when he sees the



blood he will pass over us. Now, I have no right to doubt God's word." And so consequently our safety depends upon the blood that was shed. Our assurance of safety depends upon God's faithfulness to his word. And the enjoyment of our salvation ultimately depends upon the certainty that we enjoy by reason of confidence in the faithfulness of God to his word.

If you're listening to me at the present time and you've believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross as the Passover lamb then of course according to Scripture you are safe. And if you are confident that God's word is true and that he stands behind it you have assurance of your salvation. And if you have that safety and assurance I'm sure that you enjoy the fact that you have the salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say just a word or two now about the duty of the people. In Exodus chapter 12 and verse 21 through verse 23 Moses writes concerning the duty that they were to exercise and the light of the instructions. And verse 22 we read, "And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." The application of the blood of the Passover lamb that was shed was to be made to the lintel and the two side posts. That was their duty.

Now, it's a striking fact that this is parallel with the salvation we have in Christ. Many believe in the shed blood but not in the sprinkled blood. They sometimes acknowledge that Christ has died for sinners but they have never applied that blood to their own heart. What a difference it makes when we believe not simply in the fact that Christ died for sinners but that he died for me, that we have sprinkled the blood upon our hearts in his grace.

It wasn't the lamb tied to the altar that saved. It wasn't just the blood of a slain lamb in a basin that saved. It was the blood sprinkled that saved. Then of course, they were to eat the lamb in token of fellowship with God over the sacrifice and the salvation

from the destroying angel provided by the blood of the lamb. And of course, in the New Testament parallel we enjoy the fellowship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we feed upon him. They also were to put away leaven from the houses.

Let me ask you a question. Have you sprinkled the blood? Let me illustrate the difference in a true story that was told to me by a fellow Gospel preacher. He was walking some years ago with a brother in an eastern city and as they passed a large building his fellow believer pointed to it and said, "Van, they put eight-two millions in silver bars in that building the other day." Now," he said, "that statement didn't thrill me in the least. What were eighty-two million dollars to me? Nothing at all. You see that man left out two words. If he had said, 'There are eighty-two million for you in that building,' what a thrill that would have been. If he had made it only a million for me I think I might have managed to get along with that. But he left me out all together."

You can easily see can't you as he applied the illustration what a difference there is between eighty-two million dollars and eighty-two million dollars for you. And so we ask you the question, have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ yourself? We've talked about the efficacy of the blood of the Passover lamb for the firstborn in the homes of the Israelites but the efficacy of the blood of Christ for eternal deliverance from the bondage of sin is what we preach through Christ. Have you believed in him? Have you really sprinkled the blood of the slain lamb upon your own heart through the work of the Holy Spirit? May God give you grace to do that. We invite you to faith in him and the salvation from sin that he provides.

Next week, the Lord willing, we are going to look at the subject Yom Kippur...

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