

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

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## Exodus 12:3-13      “The Passover”

Intro. What a series of events! For the previous several weeks nine awesome plagues came upon the land of Egypt. They went from being a nuisance, to being destructive and even deadly. God demonstrated that the gods of Egypt were powerless before Him. Yet, Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the people of Israel go free. Would Israel ever be free from his power? Would they remain in better bondage? God was not through. He announced that one final plague would break Pharaoh & his people, and they would finally let them go.

The time had come for the last plague. The Israelites made preparation, for God said that His death angel would come throughout the land at midnight. Every firstborn of both man & beast would die, from the firstborn of mighty Pharaoh, to the firstborn of the lowest servant. Israel gathered in their homes that night as the sun set, and the land grew dark. After their meal they waited with anticipation. The oil lamps may have begun to grow dim when it happened. An Egyptian mother was heard down the street screaming to the top of her lungs. Her beloved firstborn son was found dead. Then another scream was heard. As more and more Egyptian parents discovered the lifeless bodies of their firstborn, cries were uttered throughout the land. It was an terrifying night for the Egyptians, and an eerie night for the Israelites.

Pharaoh lost his firstborn son as well, and he was quite ready for the Israelite to leave, lest something even worse happen next. So through this last plague Israel was set free. They became a new nation. God had won the victory.

What about the firstborn of the people of Israel? God said in v.12 of our text, “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...” (cf. 11:4-5). Both Egyptians & Israelites were subject to this sentence of death, for “there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:22-23). Rom. 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” And God made no distinction between rich or poor, Jew or Gentile. The death angel would strike every firstborn. How many of you are firstborn? Well if you were living back then, you would have died that night.

Was there any hope for the first born? Was death inevitable? Well God says in Ezek. 18:32, “For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies....” The apostle Peter said that God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). So God provided a way for the firstborn of every Israelite home to be saved. That is what we are going to focus on this morning. This event in Israel’s history was so important, that God commanded them to repeat the Passover ritual every year for generations to come. It became the basis of the Lord’s Supper, which we continue to observe as a ritual of remembrance to this day. So this morning I want to use the Passover observance as a basis of our preparation of observing the Lord's Supper together.

Now in the mercy and grace of God, we see first of all:

### I. THE PROVISION FOR A LAMB

As I said, the Israelites certainly needed a lamb that first Passover night. So in v.3 God made provision that a lamb could die in the place of the firstborn. He said, “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a

lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.” God made it clear that each household was to have a lamb for the sake of the firstborn. He even made provision for those households that were too poor or too small. He said in v.4, “And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb.”

Notice in v.11 that this provision of a lamb is called “the LORD’S Passover.” That means that the Lamb was provided by the Lord. Likewise, in v.27 we read, “It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD.” Again we see that God provided the lamb as a sacrifice. Salvation is of the Lord. He is the One who makes salvation possible.

This reminds me of Genesis 22:8. God had told Abraham to offer his only son up as a sacrifice upon Mt. Moriah. There Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb . . . .” Sure enough, God showed Abraham a ram caught in the thicket, and Abraham was able to sacrifice the ram in place of his son. Even so, once again God provided for Himself a lamb, to satisfy His justice, to magnify His holiness, but also to magnify His love and grace.

Now the Passover ritual served as a prophecy of the true Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. When John the Baptist saw Him one day, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:19). If you need more proof, consider the fact that Jesus actually died on Passover! He instituted the first Lord’s Supper in association with the Passover observance. Furthermore, 1 Cor. 5:7 explicitly says, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” Finally, the book of Revelation describes Jesus as the lamb slain before the foundation of the world (5:5-6; 13:8). God certainly knew back in the time of Moses that Jesus was to die as a sacrificial lamb upon the cross. Yes, God has provided a sacrificial lamb, and His name is Jesus.

Oh, let us respond with praise and thanksgiving. We don’t have to die in our sins. God has provided the Lamb. Alleluia, praise the Lamb!

Do you need more evidence that Jesus is the Lamb of God? Well consider next:

## II. THE PRESCRIPTION CONCERNING THE LAMB

God gave some clear instructions for the Passover Lamb. These instructions point to Jesus as well. You see, not just any lamb would do. The Passover lamb had to be:

A. Without Blemish – V.5 says, “Your lamb shall be without blemish. . . .” Later, when God gave the Law of sacrifice to Israel, He required that other sacrifices be without blemish. Why was that? It was because of what the lamb pictured.

You see, the apostle Peter referred to Christ “as a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19). Why was this important? Christ had to be spotless, without moral blemish. Otherwise, He would have died only for His own sin. Was Jesus sinless? Indeed He was. The Heavenly Father testified at His baptism, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17). Jesus even challenged His enemies saying in John 8:46, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” Jesus did not die for any sin He had committed. He died for the sins of others. He was indeed an acceptable sacrifice. He fulfilled the first requirement of the Passover Lamb.

Obtaining a lamb without blemish was not enough to save the firstborn. Another requirement was:

B. Its Blood *Must* Be Shed – We read in v.6, “Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” The lamb had to die in order for the firstborn to be

saved. But it wasn't enough that the lamb die by any means. The lamb had to die as a sacrifice, with its blood shed. In v.22 we see that they were to catch the blood with a basin, and not spill it upon the ground. The blood of the lamb was precious. Its blood was caught in a basin.

Why was the blood important? Heb. 9:22 says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." And notice in v.7 that they were to "take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses." In v.13 we read, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you." God's eye was not upon the house, but upon the blood. When the executioner of God's judgment saw the blood upon the houses of the Israelites, he entered not. He passed over that house. Why? Because death had already done its work there! To punish twice for the same crime would be unjust. The Israelites were not saved because they were the seed of Abraham, or because they were circumcised. If the Egyptians had obeyed God's command, they, too, would have been saved. No one was saved because he was doing the best he could, or because he was honest, or because he was a good person. God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." It didn't matter how wealthy or poor the household was. All that mattered was the blood.

Of course, Jesus fulfilled this requirement as well. He shed His blood on the cross and died for our sins. Jesus is indeed the Lamb of God! He shed His precious blood on the cross as a sacrifice of sin. Remember, God directed that the blood be applied on the lintel and the 2 side posts of the door. It has often been pointed out that such placement would be the locations for the ends of a cross. Only through the cross of Christ are we saved.

C. The Lamb Was to Be Roasted - V.8 says that the lamb was to be "roasted in fire." Likewise, v.9 says, "Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails." Perhaps the main reason the lamb was to be roasted was so it would remain whole. V.46 says, "...you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones." Christ fulfilled this requirement as well. Since the Passover lamb pointed to Jesus, it's body and bones were not to be broken apart. When Jesus suffered on the cross, His bones were not broken (John 19:36). That may not seem like a big deal until you consider the fact that the other 2 men who were crucified with him had their legs broken to speed up death.

On the other hand, the fact that the lamb was to be roasted with fire had another purpose. Notice in v.10 that anything that was left over was to be burned with fire, totally consumed as a burnt offering. Fire speaks of judgment. There must be judgment of sin. Once again, Christ fulfilled this aspect of the prophecy. If you reflect on all that Christ suffered, you will certainly conclude that Christ certainly suffered enough to atone for our sin. It was a complete satisfaction of the wrath of God against sin. After all, Jesus not only suffered physically, but He endured hell on the cross. Isa. 53:10 says that God made His soul an offering for sin. These instructions were given to point to the fact that Christ would bear upon Himself the fire of God's judgment against sin.

You've probably never heard of Enyon Hawkins. Enyon was a Welsh miner, born in 1920 and he died in Wales in 2001. During WWII, Enyon was an able seaman aboard the British navy vessel British Dominion. On January 10, 1943, German U-boats fired three torpedoes into the British Dominion. The ship exploded into flames and was burning furiously. Many of the crew jumped into the sea, to escape with their lives. However, even that was fraught with danger, for oil from the ship's fuel tanks had spread across the water and threatened to set even the ocean ablaze.

Enyon Hawkins was one of those crewmen who jumped into the ocean. He was also a very strong swimmer, and, keeping his wits about him, organized most of the sailors into a group and led them away to safety. It was his example and encouragement, especially to the weaker swimmers,

that kept them going until they were rescued by the British Navy. On two occasions, Enyon turned back into the blazing oil-covered waters to save still others. Though he escaped, he suffered extensive burns on his face. However it was made worthwhile by the lives of those he saved. After the war he received recognition that without his actions many more men from the British Dominion would have lost their lives.

Just as Enyon gave himself to save others, so Christ gave Himself to save humanity. Where Enyon experienced the pain and suffering of fiery waters, Christ experienced the pain and suffering of a fiery crucifixion. Where fellow sailors could see evidence of Enyon's love for them in his scarred face, we see evidence of Christ's great love for us in His scarred hands.<sup>1</sup>

I believe with all my heart that Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb that God provided to save us from our sins. He was without blemish. He shed His blood on the Cross. He suffered the fire of the wrath of God against sin in our place. However, just because God provided the Lamb is not enough. Let's consider my last main point. We must:

### III. PERSONALLY APPROPRIATE THE LAMB

We see this truth in the original Passover. It wasn't enough to select a lamb without blemish. Isn't wasn't even enough to shed the blood of the lamb. There was one more step that was required in order for the firstborn to be saved: They had to personally appropriate the lamb. And they were to do so in several different ways:

A. By Applying the Blood – As we have read in v.7, the blood had to be applied to the doorposts. This was the sign that the occupants of that house had placed themselves under God's protection. Otherwise, the death angel would have entered the home and slain the first-born, just like any other home in Egypt.

Even so, just because Jesus has shed His blood & died for the sins of the whole world does not mean everyone is saved. It is not until the converted sinner *applies* the blood that it avails for him. A Savior provided is not sufficient: He must be received. If you do not receive Christ as your Savior, His sacrificial death will do you no good. So it isn't sufficient simply to know that Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). We must appropriate that sacrifice for ourselves.

How do we apply the blood of Christ? We cannot do so literally but by faith. Rom. 3:25 speaks of “faith in His blood.” Unless you accept God's provision of salvation, you will die in your sin.

Imagine that you were living in Egypt on this first Passover night. It is late in the afternoon. The sun is about to set. But in the late afternoon light you notice something as you walk the streets of Egypt. Most of the Israelite homes had the blood on the doors but the Egyptian homes did not. Blood applied from the lamb is what made the distinction between the people of God, and the people of the world. The same thing is true today. The great point of difference between the children of God and the children of the devil is this: only the true children of God have placed their faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. All others are either trusting in their religion, or their good works. The Egyptians were a religious people. They believed in the afterlife. They were careful to practice their religion. But their religion could not save their firstborn. Only faith in the blood saved the firstborn!

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Verse A Week Club, [www.wcoc-ohio.org](http://www.wcoc-ohio.org), Pulpit Helps, page 28, September 2006.

Have you personally believed in Jesus? Have you come to place in your life that you have placed your faith in the shed blood of Jesus? Listen, when you stand before God some day, it will not matter if your name is on a church roll. It will not matter if you have done many good deeds. All that is going to matter is this: Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life? (Rev. 20:15; 21:27). Are you trusting in the shed blood of Christ for your salvation? Friend, you may be religious, but if you are not trusting in the blood of the Lamb, you are not saved! I advise you to place your faith in Jesus, and what He did at the cross. And that leads to the second way we personally appropriate the Lamb:

B. By Believing God's Word - Who was saved that night? It was those who believed God. Even an Egyptian who believed God was saved. But intellectual faith was not enough. They had to believe enough to follow the directions that God had given them regarding the lamb & the blood. You see, as James said, "Faith without works is dead." As we have discussed, it wasn't enough to kill the lamb. If they did not apply the blood to the doorpost, the firstborn of that household would have died. Well, the Israelites did in fact believe God's Word enough to obey. We read in v.28, "Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did."

Do you believe what God says? He tells us that the shed blood of Christ will save and nothing else will. And just as faith was followed by obedience, even so true faith will be followed by obedience. If you have true faith you will repent of your sin. If you have true faith you will confess your faith publicly. If you have true faith, you will follow the Lord in baptism & church membership. Is your faith is genuine? Have you demonstrated your faith with obedience in the areas I have just talked about?

Now those who believed God would take the next step. We appropriate the Lamb:

C. By Being Nourished by the Lamb - Not only were they to kill the Lamb and apply its blood, but they were instructed to eat the Lamb as well. That which had become their salvation now became their sustenance.

Even so, we trust Christ that we might be saved from our sins by His sacrifice, but we must also feed on Christ in order to have strength for our daily pilgrim journey. We must live each day out of the spiritual life of the Lord. Paul said in Gal. 2:20, "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Don't try to live the Christian life in your own strength, but in the strength that Christ provides. God not only provides for our initial salvation, but He also provides strength for living the victorious Christian life.

There were detailed instructions about eating the lamb. These details are instructive about living the Christian life:<sup>2</sup>

1. Receive the Lamb with Unleavened Bread, as stated in v.8. In fact, there are 13 references to leaven in 8 different verses of this chapter (vv. 8, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 34, 39). Leaven speaks of sin. Like leaven, it is hidden within, and it spreads. Unleavened bread speaks of Christ as the One we are to feed upon, who was without sin. This also points to the fact that we are to avoid sin in our lives. Indeed, when you come to Christ, you must be willing to repent of your sin.

2. Receive the Lamb Bitter Herbs, as stated in v.8. By this means they were to be mindful of the bitter bondage from which they were now free. In fact, back in 1:14 we read, "And they made their lives bitter [*marar*] with hard bondage." [The same Hebrew root is used]. However, the Israelites failed to remember. When they got into the harsh conditions of the wilderness, they

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<sup>2</sup> If time is short, leave out these details.

forgot their bitter bondage and only remembered the good things of their Egyptian life, such as the variety of foods they enjoyed (16:3; 17:1-3; Num. 11:1-9; 14:1-5).

Let us not make the same mistake. Whenever we are tempted to go back into the path of sin, we should always remember the bitter bondage of sin. Don't ever forget how bad sin is, lest you be tempted to go back. I never want to go back to the life of sin. There may be pleasure in sin for a season, but the end thereof is bitterness and even death. I have lived on both sides of salvation, and I don't ever want to go back to the old, sinful life.

3. Receive the Lamb Always Prepared to Go – V.11 says, “And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste.” What was the belt for? In those days men wore robes, like some Middle Eastern men do today. The long flowing robes would hinder someone from running or walking quickly. So they would gird their loins. They would stuff the long portion of the robe in their belt. So the Lord gives a picture of the Israelites being ready to go on a moment's notice.

Even so, we must always be ready to serve the Lord with loins girded so to speak (Luke 12:35; 1 Pet. 1:13), our feet shod, and our hands on our pilgrim staff. Someday our earthly work will be over, and we shall sit down together at the Lord's table in heaven. But for now, we must spiritually feed on the Lord and His Word. We must always be ready to serve. And as the Israelites were to be ready to leave Egypt, even so, when we accept Christ, we must be willing to leave the sins of the world behind.

Conclusion: The voice of God has thundered down through time: “The soul that sins shall die.” “The wages of sin is death.” The death angel is about to strike. You need a Lamb. I have good news. God has provided the sacrificial Lamb, and His name is Jesus. He was without blemish. He shed His blood. He suffered the wrath of God in our place. But as we have seen, it is not enough that God has provide the Lamb. You must personally appropriate the Lamb by placing your faith in Him. If you have not done so, why not today?

But make sure your faith is real. Real faith is followed by action. If you have not professed Christ as your Savior and followed Him in baptism, then consider this: The Israelites made no secret of the sacrifice. They did not make the distinctive mark upon the wall of some inner chamber, or in some place where they could cover it with hangings, but they put the blood on the front doorposts. All that passed by could easily identify them as believing Israelites. We today should not be ashamed of the blood of Christ. We should profess Him openly, and gladly tell others of the blood by which we are saved. Won't you make your profession today?

I imagine that there may have been at least a few Israelite homes that did not believe. They did not give heed to the warning and slay the lamb and apply its blood. As a result, their firstborn died along with those of the Egyptians. Their cry of sorrow joined those cries of the Egyptians. When you slip off into eternity, or when Jesus comes again, I hope you will not be among those who face God without having applied the precious blood of Christ!

Most of you have already trusted in Christ as your Savior. One way we believers apply the Passover is by regular observance of the Lord's Supper. The Gospel writers closely associate the Last Supper with the Passover. As the Passover was to be a lasting ritualistic representation of God's deliverance of Israel from bondage, the Last Supper is to be a lasting reminder of God's final act of deliverance from a bondage more terrible than slavery to a human despot. So in just a moment, we will invite you to partake of the Table of the Lord. As we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are celebrating our redemption through Christ and the glory that awaits us.

Sources: Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); Stephen Felker, [\*Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible\*](#) (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2007; Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 1 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1981); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972); Charles H. Spurgeon, *12 Sermons to Young People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973 reprint), 99-103 only; Warren Wiersbe, *Be Delivered: Exodus* (Colorado Spring: Chariot Victor Books Publishing, 1998). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

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