As we come to Exodus 12, we come to one of the most significant chapters of inspired Scripture in the entire Bible. This chapter is extremely important for the nation Israel and it is extremely important for us, who are believers in the Grace Age in the Church.

This is a critical moment in the history of Israel because this is the moment when the Passover is implemented and this is the moment when Israel is nationally delivered from Egyptian bondage. We could call this chapter “From Bondage to Freedom.”

But this chapter is also very important theologically because this is the first development of the necessity of the sacrificial lamb. This sacrificial lamb becomes central to the rest of the Bible and it is specifically illustrative of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

The entire theological development of Jesus Christ being a sacrificial lamb begins in Exodus 12. Paul would say that Jesus Christ is our Passover who was sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7). The Apostle Peter said that we were purchased with the precious blood of the unblemished and spotless Lamb, who is Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:18-19). John the Baptist would say, “behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John the Apostle would describe Jesus as the slain Lamb who is being worshipped in heaven in the great praise anthem “Worthy is the lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5:6, 12). All of these portraits of Jesus Christ start in Exodus 12. So this is a very important chapter to the entire Bible and to the potential of understanding the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a powerful series of verses that teach Israel and us profound truths. The primary point is this:

**THE KEY TO ESCAPING DEATH AND THE KEY TO DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE IS TO MAKE SURE THE **BLOOD** OF THE LAMB HAS BEEN PERSONALLY APPLIED TO YOU.**

God desires to deliver His people Israel from bondage to the Egyptians, but it will take the death of a Lamb to accomplish it. God desires to deliver us from the bondage of sin and it will take the death of the Lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ, to accomplish it.

We may notice that **verse 1** begins with the conjunction “now” that immediately takes us back to the death threat of the last plague. God would kill the firstborn. It is so ironic that the death of the firstborn would be the way to defeat for the Egyptians, but the death of the **lamb** would be the key to victory for the Israelites.

It is obvious that the death penalty was on everyone—both the Egyptians and Hebrews. The only thing that would make a difference for the Hebrews would be whether or not they applied the blood of the Lamb to their house.
Also in verse 1 it is clear that Moses and Aaron are the ones responsible for communicating the Word of God to the people about the necessity of this sacrifice. This is the first time God speaks to His people about the importance of certain days and certain months. The Hebrews had been working as slaves for the Egyptians, so calendar watching was not something they typically did. As one commentator said, when you were a slave for Pharaoh, your day was nothing but “endless repetition of wearisome toil.”

Now I want us to notice what is contextually said in verse 2, this business about the Lamb and the shed blood and the Passover is the first beginning for Israel. In other words, the national calendar of God for Israel starts when He calls them out of bondage via this blood sacrifice of the Lamb. Israel lived in the Egyptian world and all of the idolatrous festivals and feasts of that world were dated.

The actual name of this month is “Abib,” or later it was called “Nisan” which means month one. The actual time on the secular calendar when this occurs is March-April, which is certainly not month one, but months 3-4. However, God reveals secular time doesn’t count with Him. My calendar starts now with this shed blood of the Passover lamb. This is where it all begins. The clock starts. This is true for Israel and for us.

Now this world will make a big deal of your birthday. People will hold elaborate birthday parties. Back in 2011, Ellie Wilkinson did research on the most expensive birthday parties ever given and she said they ranged in price from $25,000 to just over 27 million dollars. Simon Cowell’s 50th birthday party cost 1.6 million dollars. The secular world makes a big deal out of secular birthdays. Not God.

God says the clock starts with Me on the day of a spiritual birthday. This is when the calendar of our relationship with God begins. At the moment the blood sacrifice is applied to our lives, the calendar starts and we become God’s people. This is when it started for Israel and this is when it starts for us. When a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a spiritual birthday celebration in heaven and there is rejoicing.

Notice in verse 11, this is called the “LORD’s Passover.” So what he specifically spells out in verses 3-10 is critical information and doctrine. There are two main parts to this important section:

PART #1 – The description of the _Lamb_ and the _sacrifice_. 12:3-11

There are eight facts here and we do not want to miss one of them.

Fact #1 - On a specific day, each family member was to _take_ a lamb. 12:3

Now this important instruction is addressed to the “congregation.” This is the first time this word is used in regard to Israel.
This Hebrew word (eda) will be used many more times and it includes everyone in the nation: men, women, children. The point here is this—this business about the sacrificial lamb is crucial to everyone. This is serious business for everyone.

**Fact #2** - All families were to _eat_ the lamb. 12:4

It has been observed that there are two chapters in the O.T. that present a serious focus on eating. The two chapters are Genesis 3 and Exodus 12. In Genesis 3 the subject of eating shows up 16 times in a context of what should not have been eaten and in Exodus 12 the subject of eating shows up a total of 18 times in a context of what one must eat. Why is that? Genesis 3 presents the fall by eating forbidden fruit; Exodus 12 presents salvation by eating the Lamb.

If a family were small and poor, he was to make sure that he contacted his neighbor and had access to the lamb which was necessary for surviving the death edict. It was critical that the entire lamb be eaten.

Now why is it so important that all of the animal be eaten? Why not eat some of the lamb and then have some leftovers? _The answer is because this is a sacred illustration that this Lamb is fully sufficient to eat one time._ We are saved at one moment and we are joined to God by one look at that cross. We don’t need to go to the cross one day and then the next day. One time is all it takes.

**Fact #3** - The lamb must be an _unblemished_ one-year-old male lamb. 12:5

Now the important thing here is that the blood of the authorized animal must be shed and the authorized animal was a lamb. It was to be an unblemished lamb. However, since it had to be a one-year-old lamb, it is possible someone would not have one, so in that case, they could use a one-year-old goat. The reason it had to be one-year-old is crucial.

A one-year-old lamb or goat is full-grown. It is just getting going in the prime of its life. We know that the Apostle Peter used this very verse in reference to Jesus Christ. We know this has a specific connection to Jesus Christ because the Apostle Peter said so (I Pet. 1:18-19). He was the unblemished and spotless Lamb. Again this is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. He was the unblemished Son of God and was full-grown in the prime of His life when He had to die.

**Fact #4** - The lamb must be kept _four_ days. 12:6a

We are not told exactly why this lamb was to be kept for four days. We may legitimately assume that one purpose of keeping this lamb for four days was to make certain it was unblemished. A very careful inspection could be made to make sure of this fact. This is again very illustrative of the fact that before Jesus Christ was crucified, He proved His sinlessness over a period of time. He was tested in every way and proved to be without blemish. For four days you would have to look at that lamb and ponder the upcoming sacrifice.
Fact #5 - The lamb was to be killed. 12:6b

This is a very important point; in order for people to be saved, the lamb must die. This animal death was a critical aspect of saving a nation. Before it got dark, the lamb had to die.

The word “twilight” means between the two evenings. This lamb needed to be killed before it got dark. The time of this could mean between 3-5 PM or between sunset and dark.

This lamb was to be killed out in the open for all to see. Also from a pure timing perspective, there is much, much involved in the slaying and skinning and cleaning and roasting of an animal. It was to be done before dark.

Fact #6 - The lamb’s blood was to be put on the door frames of each house. 12:7

It is specifically stated that the blood must be applied to the sides of the door and the top of the door (the lintel). This point is further discussed in verse 13 and verses 22-23.

Now this point of applying blood to an object or person is critical to the picture of salvation. In the consecration rite for new priests, blood was placed on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand and the big toe of the right foot (Ex. 29:20). The same procedure was to be followed in the cleansing of one with a serious skin infection (Lev. 14:14-17, 25-28).

The common denominator of this is that in order to have a relationship with God, the blood must be applied to the individual and family.

Fact #7 - The lamb was to be roasted over open fire and eaten. 12:8-10

All of this could be done in minimal time with minimal effort. Unleavened bread was quickly prepared and baked and you do not have to wait for the dough to rise.

Bitter herbs were the easiest to find and harvest and could be eaten as a side dish, either raw or seared. The bitter herb would certainly suggest that the sacrifice had a bitter aspect to it. The sacrifice that Jesus Christ experienced was not just a wonderful, sweet experience.

Nothing was to be left. Even the entrails were to be completely burned in the fire.

The reason why it is so important to God to eat everything is because it illustrates that the lamb sacrifice is complete. It is all they needed. From that point, God would provide for them.

Fact #8 - The lamb was to be eaten by people who were dressed and ready to go. 12:11

God did not intend for His people to stay in Egyptian bondage once they had partaken of the sacrificial lamb. He was going to immediately take them out of their situation.
PART #2 – The description of God’s deliverance by the blood of the Lamb. 12:12-13

We come now to one of the most significant pictures of God’s calculation and justification that you will ever see in the Scriptures.

There are two passes that God makes in these verses:

Pass #1 - God would pass through Egypt. 12:12

The death sentence was on all in Egypt. It simply came down to this substitution point. Either the lamb dies or the firstborn dies. The death sentence is on all. Either the death of the lamb covers you or the death of the firstborn strikes you. There is no negotiating on this point. There is no in between. It is one or the other. God’s death judgment was issued and either the death of the Lamb saved you or death itself would hit you.

Pass #2 - God would pass over the Israelite. 12:13

The very same death penalty was on the Israelite, but if God saw that the blood had been applied to the door, He would pass over you and the death plague would not touch you.

If God sees the blood of His Son has been applied to the door of your heart, you do not have to worry about the eternal death penalty.

Now I must admit that the way I was taught this and the way we sing about this was in a context that would go something like this:

“God would come to each house and would see whether or not the blood had been applied to the door and if He saw the blood was applied to the door, He would leap over that house and go on to the next house to check that one.”

But I don’t think this is what is actually meant by this word “pass over.” This Hebrew word is used in many places. In fact, the same word is used right here in this chapter in Exodus 12:23 and notice what it says–God “will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.”

So the point of this is that when God sees the applied blood, He not only will spare the person the death sentence, He will hover over the person and protect the people so that they never can receive the death sentence. The application of the blood to the individual or family meant that God would see to it that they were protected from the death penalty judgment that was on all humanity.

Apparently, this is exactly what the Apostle Peter thought because in I Peter 1:5, he says we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation and then just a few verses later he brings up this lamb, Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
Do you understand this point? Anyone with the applied blood is protected by God from ever experiencing eternal death. God actually hovers over one with the applied blood so that the destroyer cannot ever pull His property away from Him.

Now consider this point: It is not the Lamb alone that saves. It is not the sacrifice the Lamb made that saves. It is not the shed blood of the sacrifice that saves. **It is the Lamb’s blood personally applied to the sinner that saves him.**

Jesus Christ died on that cross and shed His blood, but just having knowledge of that fact will not save anyone. That blood must be personally applied to you and the moment it is, you are forever protected from eternal death.

Now let us consider the statement God makes and the theological significance of the fact that when He sees the blood He will pass over the sinner.

The key to salvation was the objective reality of blood on the doorposts. From God’s perspective, this is the objective fact that determined life or death. It was whether or not He saw that blood applied to the doorpost.

Now the reason why this is so important is that people are very confused about what saves them. Some suggest in order to be saved we must feel like we are saved. Some suggest in order to be saved we must have experiences that prove we are saved. Some suggest in order to be saved we must have a certain amount of faith. Some suggest in order to be saved we must make Jesus Lord of our lives. Some suggest in order to be saved we must purpose to be a disciple and follow Jesus. None of that saves. **What actually saves is the objective existence of the blood applied and appropriated to the individual.** When God sees the blood of His Son applied to the individual, that person is saved and given life instead of death.

God did not say when I see your feelings I will pass over you. God did not say when I see your works I will pass over you. God did not say when I see your level of faith I will pass over you. God did not say when I see your commitment to follow My Son I will pass over you. **God said, when I see the blood I will pass over you.**

Years ago, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson told the story of an old Bible teacher who was preaching on the blood of Jesus Christ and the importance of it.
After he was done speaking, a man came to him and said we don’t need to hear so much about the blood of Christ, we need to hear about the fact that He was a great example and teacher and we need to follow Him. The preacher said, so if I preach about you following Jesus Christ would you do it? The man said yes. He said alright, Jesus taught we should not sin. Have you ever sinned? The man said yes. The minister said then you really have not fully followed the teachings of Jesus Christ.

You don’t need to hear truth about Him being your teacher; you need to hear truth about Him being your Savior. You cannot be saved by following His teachings; but you may be saved by applying His shed blood.

The key to salvation is an objective analysis of God that looks for His Son’s blood applied to the doors of your heart. If God sees that blood, you never have to worry about eternal death because God will hover over you and never allow your soul to be taken anywhere near death.

There is one other thing worth pointing out here. God is the one who makes the statement in verse 13 that when He sees the blood He will pass over you. **So safety depends on the blood, but the certainty or security of the safety depends on the Word of God.**

Certainty is not essential to safety. If one has believed on Jesus Christ, that blood has been applied and God sees it and the person is secure. It does not matter if they know it or feel it. They are secure.

It is the Word of God that produces the security, but it is the applied blood that saves.

The key to getting out of bondage and getting out from under the death sentence is to personally apply the shed blood of the Lamb to your heart. That blood needs to be put on the doorposts of your heart.