

Today's Sermon

The Passover, Part 1: Behold the Lamb! (Exodus 11:1-12:14)

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, January 1, 2023

Please join me if you would in my favorite book for this New Year, the book of Exodus.

- Turn to **Ex 12** and I'm excited to look at new and fresh truths in this old familiar story.
- All around the world people have been feasting over the holidays (some of us too much),
- many have had time off work (in Ex 12 we'll see time off work for the Israelites, too)
- many of us have family traditions this time of year, probably including gifts.
- Maybe there's special bread you eat or things you cook, bake or stay up late to midnight

Today our study in Exodus comes to the Jewish holiday (aka holy day) of **Passover**.

- This day celebrates a birth, the birth of Israel out of the labor pain of Egypt.
- It remembers the day gifts were given to Israel of gold and jewelry.
- Jewish families all around the world have celebrated this day longer than any other nation's holiday, with long-standing traditions, Passover is celebrated to this year, 2023.

**We dress differently on Christmas,
Jews dressed differently this 1st Passover (girded, sandals)**

For 1000s of years since Ex 12 Jewish families gathered around a table for this special holiday.

- For us, Christmas is big with children, in Jewish culture, Passover is big with the kids.
- There's no Christmas ham for Jews, they ate a Passover lamb, roasting on an open fire.
- **Pasach** starts a Feast for a week with special bread (**v.14-18**).

As big as Christmas-New Year week, Israel's calendar and life revolved around Passover week.

Today we'll read about the Jewish New Year event and holiday of Passover

Exodus 12:1 *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,*² **"This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.**

- This is the Jewish calendar where Passover falls March-April
 - o and that would mark and start their new year.¹
- Today our Roman calendar marks January as the first month of a new year,
 - o and some stay up to midnight to mark the big occasion.

In **Ex 12** something big happened at midnight on this occasion, but it wasn't a party for Egypt.

²⁹ *At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...*

- From Pharaoh's firstborn son on down, there's sorrowing not celebrating,
- but there's salvation for those who were covered by the blood of the Passover lamb.
- God tells His people in v. 13: *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...*

Title: The Passover, Part 1: Behold the Lamb!

- 1. The Context**
- 2. The Passover**
- 3. Behold the Lamb!**

1st the Context in 11:1 *The LORD said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. ² Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.” ³ And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.*

Remember the context, Israel had been slaves, not paid,

- but now there will be serious payment of gold and silver.

God is punishing Egypt, His people are plundering Egypt who will willingly give their riches to the Israelites in **ch 12**.

- And God gives Israel favor in the sight of their former enemies,
 - o it says Moses is now seen as very great by Egypt even by Pharaoh’s officials
- Pharaoh hasn’t been seen in a good light by Egypt,
 - o but Moses is seen as greater than him, as ‘very great’

Israel will leave with ‘great possessions’ just like God promised in Gen 15:14

In v. 8 Moses tells Pharaoh his officials will bow: *And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.”*

Every knee will bow. Even Pharaoh will soon beg Israel to leave and to bless him as they go.

- Even Egypt’s dogs won’t oppose. 11:7 says not even an Egyptian dog would growl
- literally not move a tongue against Israel. Dogs not barking in the night is a miracle!

v. 5 *‘every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. ⁶ There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.’*

- From the highest crown prince to the lowest level of society, and sacred cows will die.
- ‘great cry’ is same verb for Israel’s ‘cry’ to Pharaoh in **ch 5 (v. 15)** but he didn’t listen.
 - o Now God will make Egypt greatly cry like never before or since.

Pharaoh had fair warning in Ex 4:22 *‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’ ”*

Firstborn=power. **Ps 78:51** *‘He struck down every firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of their strength...’*

- This is justice on Pharaoh who had ordered the killing of all Israel’s sons in **ch 1**
- God said in **ch 3** He had heard their cry (**v. 7**, same verb now for Egypt’s cry).
- Now the firstborn of Pharaoh and Egypt is going to die in judgment,
- and God judicially hardens Pharaoh again to multiply His wonders in the end of **ch 11**.
- That’s the context, but it’s not just judgment, there’s mercy in the final plague.

Ps 136: *‘To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn, For His mercy endures forever; And brought out Israel from among them, For His mercy endures forever...And rescued us from*

our enemies, For **His mercy endures forever...** [what's the application?] Oh, **give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.**²

The broader context calls all to give thanks for this event, for mercy, steadfast lovingkindness.

'Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, redeemed through His infinite mercy'³

2. The Passover. I read **12:1-2 earlier**, let's pickup **v. 3: Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.**

⁴ *And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb.*

'Lamb' – associated with sacrifice from times of Abraham, Isaac asks where it is in Gen 22
'All the congregation' – 1st time this word is used, 'congregation' is a whole community of faith

- God wanted family worship and corporate worship, not individualized religion of today
- 'Household'** – it was to be a communal meal in homes, all Jews in commonality and solidarity
- Neighbors or those without much family would gather to share meal together this holiday

A lamb taken *on the 10th day* – why 10th? Maybe for 10th plague? Time for lamb to live in home

⁵ *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats...*

- That's what Moses would later prescribe for the Day of Atonement sacrifice
- Notice *'without blemish,'* the leader would examine it to see if perfect or any flaw found
- *'a male a year old'* isn't a baby, but younger than when they usually die, in prime of life

⁶ *and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.* ⁷ *"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts*

- *'Twilight'* is literally 'between the evenings.' Jews counted a day evening to evening, like starting sunset last night and daylight hours till sunset tonight is how they counted a day
- Israelites would keep the lamb in the house a few days, imagine kids growing close to it
- Kids won't want Fluffy to die, but dad explains if Fluffy doesn't die, older brother will
- Then imagine as a kid seeing the pure white fur turn to blood, throat slit, pours in a bowl
- Then imagine watching your dad smear it on the sides of your door and the top, the lintel

⁸ *They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.*

- Jewish Rabbis said 'bitter herbs' is to remind them of bitter slavery God delivered from
- **Ex 1:14** said Egypt *'made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as*

slaves.' They got to remember how bitter and bad it was in their old life by the bad taste in their mouth every Passover

- Unleavened bread is without yeast, made quickly (fire roasted meat also quickest way)

⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. [not just most healthy, but this is holy and they're in a hurry] ¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.

- Ultimately this isn't Israel's, this is the Lord's. This isn't their supper, it's the Lord's
- Normally they would eat supper with staff and outer garment at door (like jacket today)
- They would take sandals off their feet and relax (ideally wash them, like in upper room)
- The NT talks about shoes strapped for battle (Eph 6), girding up the loins, ready to go
- This is fast food. It's in haste, in faith that they're about to be delivered that very night
- Bridges burned and crumbs, no leftovers, nothing left behind, staff in hand, bags packed

Egypt's world behind me, no turning back, no turning back

¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...

- Notice 'all the firstborn in the land,' not just Egyptians (Israel too, unless blood covers)
- I read earlier v. 13, the blood is a sign, God sees blood and His judgment will pass over
- **v. 14** "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD..."

Memorial to eat and drink this in remembrance of the Lord's redemption

All that takes us from the Passover to our

3rd and final application: Behold the Lamb!

Behold=see, set your attention on, consider, contemplate, starting with what Moses already said

- He wrote in **Gen 22** a story of Father Abraham these Jews would've all heard growing up
- Abraham's son was to die, he didn't know, he asks '*behold the fire...where is the lamb?*'
- Abraham tells Isaac '*God will provide for Himself the lamb...my son*' (**v. 7-8 NASB**)
- Before the death blows falls on the firstborn of Abraham and Sarah, mercy intervenes

¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and **behold**, behind him a ram [he doesn't behold a lamb, he beholds a ram this time and it dies as a substitute, it says] *in the place of his son.* ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place **The LORD Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "*In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.*"

- Yahweh will provide (future tense) and later Jews said He would provide on His mount.
- He didn't provide a lamb in Gen 22
 - o He provided a substitute ram to die in place of the son.
- Now the God of Abraham and Isaac provides a substitute lamb to die in place of the son.
- Jehovah-Jireh, Yahweh provides, and will provide more to atone at Israel's Temple Mt.

- The wages of sin is death since Genesis but God provides blood to cover and take it away

Turn to the gospel of John and the first chapter

Centuries later, Jews from all over traveled to Jerusalem for Passover ('next year in Jerusalem')

- 10th day of the month, lambs are herded into Jerusalem, selected, sold, taken into homes
- To make sure the law was followed, leaders would examine to be sure there's no blemish
- The lamb would dwell among them, they see it till the 14th day where it dies for Passover

Jn 1:14 says Jesus '*became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen...*'

Look at Jn 1, v. 29, where John the Baptist first helped the disciples see Passover's fulfillment:

²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**"...*

- Abraham's son asked 'behold...where is the lamb?'
 - o John says 'behold the Lamb of God!'
 - o God did provide a Lamb, His Son!
 - o He didn't spare His Son, He delivered Him up for us all to save!

**'Behold the Lamb of God! On Calvary's altar slain,
For worthy is the Lamb, forevermore to reign
His precious blood for us was shed, for full atonement Christ has bled,
Behold the Lamb of God!'⁴**

In the 1800s **Charles Spurgeon** preached to over 23,000 without a microphone

- The Sacramento Kings arena seats 19,000
- Spurgeon's voice without any amp reached more than that to the rafters.
- He wanted to test the acoustics in the building.
 - o He quoted 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'
- There was a man working back in the building that day
 - o as he heard those words, he felt a herald from heaven was calling him
 - to behold the Lamb of God, to believe in the blood of Jesus to save him.
 - o Days later the man came to Spurgeon to tell him those words God used
 - So he would behold Jesus in faith as the Lamb of God who took away his sin

May God help us to behold and be heralds of this Lamb!

A lamb isn't mighty and majestic looking, it's meek and lowly.

- It's a little furry cuddler, not the fighter-conqueror most Jews looked for in Messiah. Lambs can't defend themselves, who would've thought a lamb could rescue the souls of men?

v. 35 *The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God!**" [we need to keep beholding Him, v. 45] Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found **him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth...***

The prophet Isaiah said Messiah would be '*led like a lamb to the slaughter...silent*' (53:7)

Did they know Moses also wrote of a Lamb of God to take away the sin of all who'd believe?

- Moses wrote of the Lord turning water to blood,
- in Jn 2 the Lord Jesus now turns water to wine.

2:13 *The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and **sheep** and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep... [the true Lamb turns the tables on them]...²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem **at the Passover Feast**, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.*

Jn 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

- that's the NT equivalent of a rare OT phrase in Gen 22 for Abraham giving his 'only son'
 - o he believed God would provide a lamb
- At Passover, whoever didn't believe and apply the Lamb's blood saw their son perish,
 - o but God gave His Son so whoever believes won't perish!

We're about to sing 'Behold the Lamb who takes our sin away, slain for us, and we remember'⁵

Jn 6 is another Passover week, maybe a year later. **6:4** says 'Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.' Look at 6:56: 'Whoever **feeds on my flesh** and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.'

- At a Passover Feast Jews drained blood and ate the flesh of the lamb
- Jesus says 'I'm the Lamb'

Now turn to ch 12 and this would be the week of the last supper and 1st Communion

12:1 *Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany... ¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna!" [Palm Sunday, 5 days till Passover, Thursday sunset till Friday sunset]*

- The 10th of the month as lambs come into the Jerusalem Temple, the Lamb of God comes
- Like **Ex 12** says, He's a male, in the prime of life, younger than when you'd expect to die
- He lives with them from the 10th-14th day, and leaders examine Him to try to find a fault
- The Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, priests and Pilate can find no blemish, He's innocent
- The Lamb in the flesh dwells among them, then dies on Passover as a perfect sacrifice

Spotless Lamb of God was He: Full atonement!-- can it be? Hallelujah! what a Savior!⁴

Moses wrote on the mount of the Lord the Lamb would be provided, John wrote in Revelation: 'I looked, and **behold, a Lamb** standing on Mount Zion...' [John also saw] **behold, in the midst of the throne... a Lamb** as though it had been slain... [but He reigns and they sing to the Lamb] You...**have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...** [then John beholds before the Lamb all] saying with a loud voice: "**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain** To receive power and riches and

wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"...After these things I looked, and **behold**, a great multitude ...**before the Lamb**...crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God..." the **Lamb** who is in the midst of the throne will **shepherd** them and lead them...God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
...Satan...the accuser of the brethren...has been cast down. And they overcame Him by the **blood of the Lamb**.⁶

A hymn says

**'When Satan tempts, and doubts and fears assail, Look to the Lamb of God;
You in His strength shall over all prevail, Look to the Lamb of God.
Are you weary, does the way seem long? Look to the Lamb of God;
His love will cheer and fill your heart with song, Look to the Lamb of God.
Fear not when shadows on your pathway fall, Look to the Lamb of God;
In joy or sorrow Christ is all in all, Look to the Lamb of God.'**¹⁰

Now turn to **Lk 22** and let's look and behold the Lamb more. **22:7** *Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.* ⁸ *So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."*

- That would include bitter herbs to remind them of their bitter old life before redemption.
- Jesus here is about to bring a greater redemption.
- The Puritan Thomas Watson said 'till sin is bitter, Christ is not sweet.'
- When you know how bitter sin is, you can taste and see the Lord is better, sweeter.
- The world behind me, no turning back.

Don't look back to past sin or last year, this is a new year, with mercies new every morning

Behold the Lamb of God more this year. ¹⁵ *And he said to them, "I have **earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**..."* ¹⁹ *And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he **broke it** and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* ²⁰ *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my **blood**..."* Mt 26 adds 'take, eat...drink of it, **all of you...this is my blood...poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**'

No better way to start this New Year than beholding the Lamb of Passover in communion

The Lord's Supper was instituted during the Lord's Passover.

- **Ex 12** was a memorial supper and so is communion
- a community fellowship for a whole congregation of believers to remember redemption
- One loaf of bread broken and shared with all reminds us of a shared unity as His body
 - o and how precious that is, and Jesus is the bread of life.
- We drink the cup to remember blood that Jesus was about to pour out,
- like the blood of a little sheep at Passover gushes out its veins, to put on doorframes.
- Jesus earlier said 'I am the door...' Here He says 'this is my blood'

Behold the Passover Lamb of God Jesus who goes from this Seder to suffer to take away sin

He died and rose so I can behold Him there the risen Lamb, my perfect spotless righteousness.⁷

- We deserve to die for our sin
- but God looks down from heaven and sees blood on the wood of the cross

- from His Son's head at the top and from the bloody hands on each side.
- God will pass over the sins of all who in repentant faith behold the Lamb of God
 - as their Lord and Savior

How do you come? 'without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me...

O Lamb of God I come

...to rid my soul of [sin's] dark blot, to Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot...

O Lamb of God I come

...as I am, poor, wretched, blind...Yea, all I need in Thee to find...

O Lamb of God I come

...welcome, pardon, cleanse relieve, because Your promise I believe,

O Lamb of God I come, I come!⁹

Peter who prepared that Passover later wrote to believers: *gird up the loins of your mind* [just like they girded loins at the 1st Passover, 1 Pet 1 goes on]...*knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*' In ch 2 Peter tells us to behold the Lamb in suffering: 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree...'⁸

Behold the Lamb and be changed in how you think and speak, look to Christ's example

¹ Jewish writer Dennis Prager notes 'The Jewish calendar has two different first months. One is Tishrei, the autumn month that includes Rosh Hashannah (New Year)...The other is this month of Nisan, the spring month...celebrated as a time of rebirth, renewal, and the beginning of the Jewish nation. Virtually every nation celebrates both the beginning of the New Year and the beginning of its country. In the Torah they are both New Years.' *Exodus: God Slavery and Freedom* (Regnery Faith Publishing), p. 128.

² v. 10-11, 24-26 NKJV.

³ Fanny Crosby, "Redeemed."

⁴ William S. Pinkston, "Behold the Lamb of God."

⁵ Getty Music, "Behold The Lamb (Communion Hymn)."

⁶ Revelation 14:1, 5:6, 9, 12, 7:9-10, 15, 17, 12:10-11 NKJV.

⁷ Charitie Lees Bancroft, "Before the Throne of God Above."

⁸ 1 Peter 1:13, 18-19, 2:21-24 NKJV.