

**Remember the Passover**  
**Exodus 12:14–28**  
**March 8, 2026**

Today’s sermon is about remembering. And maybe you *won’t* mind me repeating something I said a couple years ago. We were in Hebrews 8, considering how the author of *that* letter thought about the tabernacle—and, in particular, what the tabernacle pictured. In fact, if you were to ask me which text in Hebrews affected *me* the most, it would be *that* one. And it is because of what I’m about to repeat, something I think is vital *both* for understanding Hebrews *and* for understanding Exodus.<sup>1</sup>

It’s to ask two basic questions of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> The first question is this: from Genesis to Revelation, what story is the Bible telling? What’s the one thing *all* the other things are about? It’s not a trick question. The entirety of the Bible is about a Man from Nazareth named Jesus. Every paragraph is about Him—from Exodus to Esther to Elijah to Ezra to Ecclesiastes to the Epistles to the Eschaton.

But the *second* question is this: *how* does the Bible tell that story? *How*? Well, first, the story *develops*. Today, if we were to hit rewind and go *back* to the burning bush in Exodus 3, we’d know there is *so much* ahead.

And if we’re considering *how* the Bible tells this story, it often *develops* via imagery. Metaphors and symbols abound. In fact, *as* the story develops, there are *even* people, places, events, and institutions that intend to *picture* people, places, events, or institutions to come. In Genesis a man appears named Melchizedek. Hebrews tell us it wasn’t an accident. He pictured Someone to come. In Exodus, a tabernacle will be built. Hebrews says that *too* previews something ahead. In Leviticus, a scapegoat is sent off into the wilderness. There’s manna. There’s a veil. We could go on. Thing after thing—person after person—pictures, foreshadows, and anticipates something the story develops. And shadows *eventually* make their way to substance.

There’s a particular story the Bible intends to tell us. And then there is a *way* the Bible tells us that story.

To address this theologically—*if* we’re convinced that the point of human history is for God to reveal Himself to His people, and if we are *also* convinced that the God aiming to do so is sovereign—over every person, second, and event—*then* we should have *little* trouble believing He can reveal Himself in countless ways.

Once we’re convinced of *those* truths, the Bible can open up for us. Meaning, we can *then* affirm that it’s with a Christ-oriented focus that we’re introduced to priests, laws, tabernacles, veils, Melchizedeks—and further, Passovers, unleavened bread, firstborn sons, lambs, and blood.

That’s all big-picture. But it does prepare us for our text today, a text largely about remembering.

**1. Remember (v. 14)**

I’ve preached on “remembering” quite a number of times over the years—from the Psalms, from Ecclesiastes, and from the New Testament. It seems to keep on coming up in the Bible. One of my favorite quotes on the topic is Augustine’s question in *The City of God*, “Why is it that we remember with difficulty, and without difficulty forget?”<sup>3</sup> I appreciate as well how Lewis incorporates memory

---

<sup>1</sup> Fair warning: when we get to the tabernacle, I might say it again.

<sup>2</sup> Both of these are taken from Mitchell Chase’s helpful *40 Questions about Typology and Allegory*.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, accessed here; <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XXII.22.html>

in *The Silver Chair* when Aslan tells Jill: “Remember, remember, remember the signs.”<sup>4</sup> But I read something this week that captured Christian remembrance in a way I hadn’t considered prior. Church historian Clair David wrote this, “The Christian life is a combination of amnesia and déjà vu, as in, ‘I know I’ve forgotten this before.’”<sup>5</sup>

Of course, *none* of this is news to the Lord. It’s *because* we keep forgetting that God keeps instructing us to remember.

And that’s some of what He’s doing in verse 14: **Now this day will be a memorial to you.** What *day* does this refer to? It’s the day we’ve considered for the past couple weeks, the day the final plague fell upon Egypt, the day the final plague would *not* fall upon those in Israel that trusted Yahweh. It was the fourteenth day of the first month of the year. It’s *this* day—the day of Passover—that was to be **a memorial to you.**

The word translated “memorial” does not *merely* mean something that’s to be remembered. It is, instead, something *set up* to prompt the mind.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of it is to bring about remembrance. That’s *some* of the reason the details are so extensive, concerning the *when*, the *how*, and the *what* of Passover. And maybe today we can add a *why*. Why would the people of God need to remember what was about to occur? Because what is not carefully remembered by a community is very quickly forgotten.<sup>7</sup>

Verse 14 goes on: **Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.** Certain dates, certain places, certain songs, or certain words can prompt our memory. Here, God sets up a meal in order to do so. That’s what we’ll consider next.

## 2. Remember with a Feast (vv. 1–13; vv. 14–20)

We talked about this in some detail last week. The Passover is an *event* the LORD brings about. But, going forward, it’s a *meal* the people of God observe together. The lamb was killed at twilight. It was roasted intact over a fire, served with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (12:8–9). That *first* year they were to eat it in haste, sandals on and staff in hand (v. 11).

In the future, the Passover meal would *begin* what was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now, if you’re wanting to distinguish these *sharply*, you should know that—functionally—they go together. Some would say that *either* term can be used to refer to the whole celebration.<sup>8</sup> So, though they’re not *exactly* the same, they overlap in significant ways. In the years ahead, the Passover meal would, in one sense, “kick-off” the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Verse 6 of *last* week’s text indicated that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, they were to kill a lamb at twilight and eat the Passover meal. Verse 18 of *this* week’s text reads: **In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month at evening.**

They started on the same day, but the feast lasted a week. Verse 15 begins: **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.** Then verse 16 begins: **On the first you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone shall be prepared by you. You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

---

<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, in *The Complete Chronicles of Narnia*, 383.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Phil Ryken, *Exodus*, 335.

<sup>6</sup> Alec Motyer, *Exodus*, BST, 133.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, 282.

<sup>8</sup> Ryken, 337.

As we said last week, God reoriented time. And He reoriented time based on His saving acts. For the Hebrews the Passover was to be a new beginning. And in the years ahead, *every* year they were to *begin* the year both remembering and commemorating what God had done.

The LORD gave His people something to do that would remind them of what *He'd* done. And, in mercy, He's done the same with us. The Lord's Day gathering is an example. The Lord's Supper is as well. If Passover was the shadow, Communion is the substance. Though it's *more* than mere memorial, it's certainly *not* less than.

A similar truth can be said about baptism. That is, like the Supper brings a past saving event into the present, in the baptistry we physically re-enact the drama of the story.<sup>9</sup> As we watch, we're reminded what Christ did. As the person participates in it, we see what He did in his or her life. And—also—as we watch we ought to be reminded—*we* remember—what He did in our own.

Which is foreshadowed in our passage today. Verses 7 and 12 of *last* week's text gave Moses instruction that *he* was to give the congregation of Israel. In verse 21 he does just that: **Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb."**

### 3. Remember Our Deliverance (vv. 21–23)

This is why we ought not separate the Feast of Unleavened Bread from the Passover. They're intermingled on purpose, *for* a purpose. There was a meal *because* there was *first* a death.

Verse 21 reiterates much of what we discussed last week. Each family was to pick out a lamb to represent their family, in particular their firstborn. The lamb was to be unblemished (v. 5). And with this unblemished lamb they were to do that which verse 21 instructs: **slay the Passover lamb.**

Verse 22 then gives a few more details than last week's text did: **You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.** Added to last week's text is the idea of a basin for the blood, as well as the hyssop that was to be the tool for applying it. Finally, they're instructed *not* to go outside during the night ahead.

Keep in mind: The house represented the household within.<sup>10</sup> The doorway, in *one* sense, stood for the house. And on that doorway, blood would be applied. Why? Verse 23: **For the LORD would pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.**

Every once in a while, the broader church decides to debate something we call Penal Substitutionary Atonement. That's a big set of three words, but simply it speaks to Christ *substituting* Himself for us, taking upon Himself our *penal*-ty, and by that making *atonement* for our sins.

You say, "People disagree with that?" Absolutely they do. And though I think it's obvious and clear from the New Testament, whether we consider Galatians 3:10–14, 1 Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3, or whatever other long list of texts, *today* I bring it up because of how clearly the Old Testament teaches it.

Exodus 12 pictures it twice. Verse 13 read: **when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you.** By the way, I didn't mention this last week, but the term we translate "pass over" actually includes *within* it the idea of protection.<sup>11</sup> That's made *more* explicit in our text

---

<sup>9</sup> See Tim Chester, *Truth We Can Touch*, 113.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 70.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Leonard, *Exodus 1:1–15:21*, 312.

today, in verse 23: **the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in.**

Does He not allow it because there was no penalty for sin? Does He pass over them *merely* because they were Israel? No, the Hebrews actually have a bigger problem than being in Egypt. If they were to escape judgement—and *live*—blood meant that something had to die in their place. If not, their firstborn would. That night, the lamb bore it.

If I might return to the *beginning* of this sermon, though the Old and New Testaments are part of a singular united story, it's one that's told in a particular way. Leviticus will *continue* to show that for God to dwell among an unholy people, there must be blood in their place. There would be a Day of Atonement. Blood would be spilt so that they might be spared. And it was not *only* that day. A vast and detailed sacrificial system would be woven into the warp and woof of their life as God's people. Lamb after lamb. Offering after offering. And into *that* world, promises would be made—that One would come who would be crushed for our iniquity. The chastisement that brings us peace would be *upon* Him. And by His wounds we would be healed (Is. 53).

This thread runs throughout the entire Old Testament. It's not hidden. It's obvious, explicitly so, right in front of the face of *any* reader.

And *then*, in the first chapter of John's Gospel, a man in camel's hair sees his Cousin walking toward him, and says *this*: **Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** (Jn. 1:29). And then, *during* the Passover, that Man eats the Passover with His disciples, *breaks* bread, and tells them, **this is my body** (Mt. 26:26). A few hours later, while on a cross, John says they put wine on a branch of *hyssop* and brought it to His mouth. Then, right before He dies, He cries out, **It is finished** (Jn. 19:30). Then, John writes that they didn't break His bones, in fulfillment of Exodus 12 (Jn. 19:36).

Why bring all this up? Because it's one story, told in a particular way. What Exodus 12 is showing us is a God that puts a substitute in the place of undeserving sinners. He gave them, and us, categories to understand what was to come—via priests, lambs, offerings, and temples.

And then He came and put Himself where the lamb was.

Which is what He wants His people to remember. Because once a community stops remembering, it's quickly forgotten.

Remember. We remember with a feast. And we remember our deliverance—the Son of God, *the* unblemished Lamb's blood—in our place.

#### 4. Remember that We are a Delivered People (vv. 14–20)

We get this, primarily, from what the unleavened bread in this meal symbolizes. The first night the absence of leaven was practical. They couldn't *wait* for the dough to rise. But, *after* that, it intended to picture something about their *ongoing* life. That is, when they remembered the Passover/Exodus itself—what God had done—they were to then live *in* the reality of that past deliverance.

Note, first, verse 15: **on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.** Then verse 19: **Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses.**

Have I mentioned that the Bible develops—that things introduced *earlier* in the Scriptures are explained further later on? Well, in the Gospels Jesus speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees (Mt. 16:6). It's an apt image, knowing what we know about leaven. In our day, the lump of dough with leaven in it is called the “starter.” And once the “starter” is added, it *starts*. By morning, the transformation is obvious.

Leaven *affects* everything around it. That's why the Hebrews were to remove it from their houses. When we get to 1 Corinthians 5, the lesson is similar. Paul is giving instruction to the church

in Corinth—a church permitting sin in their midst. And Paul uses the imagery of Exodus 12 to make his point: **Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast.**

1 Corinthians explains Exodus 12 further. But the message was still clear in every memorial meal. They were to remember who they *were*, and who they were *now*. The last thing the LORD wanted the Hebrews to do once they left Egypt was to forget their distinctiveness. They were *not* to—as it were—take a lump of dough from Egypt. Though it's been said by many, He not *only* wanted to get His people *out* of Egypt, He aimed to get *Egypt* out of His people.<sup>12</sup>

The Exodus was a new beginning. It was a new beginning for a people that were to be *new*. In one sense, raised to walk in newness of life.

I'm fairly confident Lottie is the first person I've baptized that I *also* held as a newborn. She was born; and she's been born again. And I remind us all: it's the *second* birth that defines us. It's a re-birth that we're to live in light of, a new beginning.

They didn't put away leaven *in order* to be delivered. In the years ahead, he or she did so *because* they'd been delivered.<sup>13</sup> And in remembering their deliverance, they could be delivered once again—from fear, from pride, from anxiety, and from despondency. Go read Psalm 77. The Psalmist is a mess. And then he calls to mind the Exodus. Because the Exodus—the one in the Old Testament *and* the one in the New—calls for an *ongoing* departure, for a continual forsaking of our former exile.<sup>14</sup>

Remember. Remember with a feast. Remember our deliverance. Remember that we *are* a delivered people. And finally,

##### 5. Remember Again (vv. 24–28)

Verse 24: **And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite.**

They were to remember. *Then* they were to remember *again*. *Even* when they entered the land, they were to continue observing this event. They were *never* to move past their deliverance. The past was to be brought into the present—again and again. Even into the future, as verse 26 describes: **And when your children say to you, “What does this rite mean to you?”**

I listened to a brother this week express how grateful he was that the Lord “bakes into” these events—the Passover, the Supper, and baptism—the curiosity of children. They're going to watch the plate go by, watch someone go under the water, and ask a question.

A question parents gladly answer. When children ask, “What does this rite mean to you?” verse 27 makes clear: **you shall say, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians but spared our homes.”**

In the future, the past was brought into the present—and, don't miss this, the historical was made personal. In the years to come, they would say, “*our* homes.”

And remembering that event—the good news of it—had particular effects. Verse 27b: **And the people bowed low and worshiped.** They worshipped the One that delivered them. Further,

---

<sup>12</sup> Ryken, 341.

<sup>13</sup> A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, 94.

<sup>14</sup> Morales, 72.

the instructions He gave, they followed. Verse 28: **Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.**

## **Conclusion**

Next week, the actual events of the Passover unfold. And it happens *precisely* as the LORD said it would. And then, in the years ahead, the people of God would observe this meal. It would function as a memorial for them—to remind them of what the LORD had done in Egypt.

And it did so for a purpose. From generation to generation, the truths of an unblemished lamb, of blood spilt in their place, and of deliverance from slavery, were passed down. Categories were established. And then, shadow became Substance.

And now this good news has come to us, that we *too* might remember.

This morning, we remember the Lamb. We remember *His* blood. We remember that His blood *delivers*. And we worship.