

Open your Bibles to Exodus 12:1-13.

- We're continuing our study of Exodus.
- This morning we'll be looking at God's commands concerning the first Passover.
- And our theme is God's Grace in Providing a Sacrifice.

All Scripture is ultimately about Jesus. In some way, everything points to Him.

- People, places, offices, rituals, promises, and other things in the OT foreshadow Him.
- And our text today gives us one of the clearest OT pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ: God provided salvation for Israel through the shed blood of a lamb.
- You can already hear the Gospel themes.
- The text before us is 100-proof Gospel.
- So that's what I intend to preach this morning: The Gospel in the Passover.

Today, I hope to drive home, to you who believe on Christ, that your salvation is all of grace.

- You are saved because God has been gracious to you and provided the necessary, perfect sacrifice to spare you from His wrath.
- In other words, CHRIST IS ALL.

With God's help, our love for Him will be inflamed as we consider Christ, our Passover Lamb.

- And we'll be humbled in our hearts as we remember that salvation is all of grace.
- So may God bless the preaching of His Word.

If you would, and are able, please stand with me for the reading of the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.

Exodus 12:1-13

[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.

[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.

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

[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 and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

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

[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.

[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.

[12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.

[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, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

(PRAY)

Our gracious God,

•We thank you for your Word because it shows us your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

•We want to see Him more clearly. We need to see Him.

•So we ask that you would open our minds and hearts by your Holy Spirit and help us to understand and believe the Scriptures, that we might see.

•Increase our love for you. And cause us to pour contempt on all our pride as we remember that we deserve your hatred, but you've loved us in Christ.

•Work in our hearts for your glory and our good.

•We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.

•Amen.

1.) Before we walk through this text, I think some introductory remarks are in order.

- First, we read these commands and ask, “Why are they here?”
- Remember that God had threatened to strike Egypt with the Tenth Plague: The Death of the Firstborn.
- But God had also said that when He judged Egypt, He’d make a distinction. He’d save Israel, even as He judged Egypt.
- And our text is the record of how God saved them.
- And there are weighty, spiritual truths these things were meant to teach them about themselves, the LORD, and salvation.

Second, these instructions must have been given to Moses prior to his announcement of the Plague in chapter 11.

- The Plague was to occur at midnight after Moses announced it.
- But these instructions took four days to obey.
- So this must be a record of commands that God gave Moses before his speech in chapter 11.

Lastly, I’ll refer to the Passover lamb as a “sacrifice.”

- And I’m not pulling that out of thin air.
- V27 calls it a sacrifice. And all the specifics about what kind of animal, what to do with the blood, how to cook and dispose of it, are found in sacrifices in the OT.
- So this isn’t just a meal. It’s much more.

2.)Now, let’s walk through the passage together.

- In vv1-2, God indicates that what's about to happen will shape everything for the nation of Israel.

- He said, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you."

- The month of Abib (later called Nisan) would be the first month of the Jewish religious calendar.

- The Passover and the Exodus, God's redemption, is so significant that it's the start of a new age for Israel.

- A new way of marking time began because of what God was about to do.

- Israel would celebrate and remember what God did to save them. And it would be the first thing they celebrated every year.

God then instructs Israel to prepare for a sacrifice and feast.

- "...on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 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."

- Now, "lamb" in Hebrew can mean either a lamb (young sheep) or a kid (young goat).

- Both would've been acceptable, but an actual lamb was preferred, as Jewish custom and records indicate.

Every head of house was to take a lamb for their household and set it aside for the Passover.

- God had threatened to strike the firstborn of every family in Egypt. So every Israelite family must have a lamb to sacrifice.

And if a family was too small to eat an entire lamb, then they were to find another family to share with.

- The smaller families were to, as best as they could, add up how much each person could eat and divide the lamb between the houses.

- QUESTION:** What's the point of this?

- As much as humanly possible, nothing was to be wasted.

- The meal was sacred. The sacrifice was holy. It wasn't to be treated as ordinary food or a light thing.

In vv5-6, God gave instructions about what kind of lamb could be used and when it should be sacrificed.

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

- The lamb must also be a year old male.

- A fully grown male. In the prime of life. Not weak or sickly or old. But able and strong.

And it had to be PERFECT.

- It could have no defects whatsoever. No blindness, broken limbs, diseases, parts too long or short, cuts, bruises, NOTHING.

- They had to offer the most perfect lamb they had. Nothing less would do.

- As God said in Leviticus 22:20, “You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable

for you.”

They were to choose the lamb on the tenth and keep it until the fourteenth when it would be slaughtered.

- It was to be set apart. You could say that it was consecrated. It was chosen for this purpose.

Think about this: Four days they had to keep the lamb.

- Why? Probably to ensure that it was ritually pure. And so that there was no scrambling to find one on the day of. Too much was at stake.

- But in keeping and caring for that lamb for four days, there probably would've been some identification with it.

- “That’s our lamb.” It would’ve become, however briefly, “part of the family.”

- And that may have been part of the point: Identification with the thing that was to be sacrificed. To see a bit of yourself in it as it dies.

And on the fourteenth, they were to kill the lambs at twilight.

- “Twilight” is literally “between the two evenings.”

- In Jewish time-keeping, days were reckoned from sunset to sunset. So the lamb was to be killed before sunset on the fourteenth.

- This happened either between the early evening and sunset, or between sunset and nightfall.

But this was messy business.

- You slaughter a lamb by slitting its throat. They

needed its blood. So it had to be killed in a bloody way.

- Think of how personal that would be: The father takes the lamb, pulls back its head, and cuts its throat.

- Blood would spurt from the wound, staining the wool red. The cries of the lamb would be for all to hear as it dies.

- This is what it takes to keep the firstborn alive: A bloody, dying, substitute.

But the sacrifice wasn't complete yet.

- In v7, God says, "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it."

- They had to take paint the doorframe, both sides and the top, with the blood of the slaughtered lamb.

- It's interesting to note here that blood was also applied to things in Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4).

- We'll wait until v13 to get into the significance of the blood.

After applying the blood to their homes, God said they were to eat. And He was very specific about it:

- vv8-10 say that the lamb was to be "roasted on the fire."

- It wasn't to be partially cooked (raw) or boiled. God wanted it thoroughly roasted with fire.

- And, once again, it's interesting to note something: Fire is biblically associated with God's wrath. And THAT alone was to be the method for cooking.

- And the WHOLE LAMB was to be roasted. Even then entrails would've been taken out, cleaned, and then put back in to be roasted.

- Nothing was to be thrown away or left out. The sacrifice was to be taken WHOLE by the People. Not in parts. The WHOLE THING was necessary.

The lamb was also to be eaten “with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”

- Bread with no yeast. Flatbread. Why? Because there would be no time to allow the dough to rise on the night of the Exodus.

- God wants them to make the food quickly. (Another reason for roasting the lamb, too. Quickest way to cook.)

- And bitter herbs are the other side. Why? To remind them of their bitter slavery that God was about to free them from. (The same word is used in 1:14.)

And nothing was to remain until the morning. The sacrifice, as much as they could, was to be eaten entirely.

- God said, “...anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.”

- Why? Because the meal is holy. That lamb is the means by which He’ll save His People. It’s not regular food.

The meal was also a sign that Israel belonged to God and He to them.

- Because this meal was a sign of their fellowship it was only to be eaten that night. It wasn’t common.

- Also, burning it kept it from being profaned by the Egyptians after they left.

- This sacrifice and meal was for God’s People ONLY. No one else could even touch it.

In v11, God even tells them how they should eat it:

•“...with your belt fasted, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.”

•They had to have their shoes on, walking sticks in hand, and robes tied up. And they had to eat fast.

•Why? Because they were leaving!

•They ate quickly, dressed for travel, and were ready to go, in expectation of God’s deliverance.

•Eating the meal in this manner was an expression of faith that the LORD was going to save and free them that very night.

Now we come to the explanation of all these commands:

•vv12-13: “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 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, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”

•God’s judgment was going to fall.

•Death would come to every firstborn in the land, both man and animal.

•God was going to judge Egypt and all its gods in a more powerful way than He had ever done.

•By this Plague, all would know that He is the LORD. He is the only God.

•The gods of Egypt would be fully exposed as unable to

save their worshipers. They were nothings.

- Wrath was coming. God's righteous judgment against the wicked was coming.

But His wrath wouldn't fall upon any house where the blood of the Passover lamb was applied.

- No plague would come upon those inside. They would be "passed over" when God judged.

The blood on the doorframes was to be a sign.

- A sign that a sacrifice had been made for the lives of those subject to judgment inside.

- In one sense, it was a sign to the Israelites that they would be spared. It was a sign to encourage their faith that God would save them.

- In another sense, it was a sign for the LORD. Not to inform Him of anything. But to represent that, according to His promise, those inside were His People.

- The blood symbolically said, "The people here are the LORD's. A sacrifice appointed by God has been offered for them."

By a sacrificed lamb, God's People would live, even as Egypt was judged.

- And a new era of freedom with God would begin.

2.) This passage is loaded with Gospel truth.

- So let's consider now how this text points us to Christ.

I hope you realize that God's wrath would've fallen upon Israel as well as Egypt, had God not provided a sacrifice for them.

- The fact that it was only the blood of the lamb that would shield them from death tells us that God would've judged them if they didn't have a sacrifice.

- Israel's SIN needed atoned for. Their sin needed to be dealt with by a holy God.

Israel was sinful. Just as sinful as Egypt.

- Joshua 24 and Ezekiel 20 tell us that Israel had been idolaters while in Egypt, just like the Egyptians.

- They had rejected God's Word through Moses (Exodus 5), just like the Egyptians.

- And consider all their sin the wilderness! All the complaining against God, rebellion against His appointed men, literal idolatry, sexual immorality, and unbelief.

- And that's not to mention the future sin of the nation told throughout the rest of the OT!

Israel deserved to be judged by God just as much as Egypt.

- They hadn't committed all the same sins as the Egyptians, but they were just as SINFUL.

- And that's why judgment was threatened to them just like it was the Egyptians.

- One commentator said, "The blood was daubed around the doors, not because God couldn't tell who was inside the house, but because HE COULD! He knew there were sinners inside."

And yet, Israel was saved.

- Why? What had they done to deserve salvation?

- NOTHING. Nothing at all.

- God simply had mercy and provided a way of salvation for them.

- He should've hated them. He should've judged them.

- But instead He gave them GRACE. Unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor.

- He loved them in spite of them, and chose to withhold judgment and save them.

- They hadn't done a single thing for it. It wasn't because they were better. It wasn't because they were more deserving than Egypt.

- It was all of God's sovereign grace.

Friends, there are none righteous. Not even one.

- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- There is not a man, woman, or child that doesn't deserve His righteous wrath.

- We're all born in Adam. His sin against God in the Garden of Eden has been credited to us, because He represented all mankind in covenant with God. AND THEN BROKE THE COVENANT THROUGH SIN!

- We're born sinners. Born guilty. Born deserving of damnation.

- And then we grow up and get volition and ability and commit our own sins that just compound our guilt.

Every one of us has earned the hatred, wrath, and curse of God.

- We have rebelled against the King. Spat in the face of our Maker. Attempted to un-God the only God. Refused His ways to establish our own. Loved our sin and hated Him.

- Don't you deny it! Don't try to soften it to ease your

conscience! You know it's true! Your sin is the proof!

- There is not a person in this room that God doesn't have the right to hate, kill, and damn. And we'd all have to confess His righteousness if He did so.

- If you deny this, then there is no hope for you. For you are so blind to your own sinfulness that you'll never look for a Savior.

And yet, like Israel, those of us who trust in Christ, are loved by God, not hated.

- We're pitied, not condemned.
- Embraced as children, and not judged as enemies.
- Saved, not damned.

Brothers and sisters, did we earn this?

- Surely not. When God found us, we were dead in our sins and trespasses. We were neck deep in rebellion.

- We had earned, sure. But what we had earned was death and Hell!

- We who are saved, have been saved by grace and grace alone!

- It's because God chose to have mercy on us that we won't go to Hell. Not because we're better than others.

Christian, don't be proud.

- As you look at the unbelieving world, it's ok to be upset and even angry at the sin you see.

- It's ok to be angry with the wicked as you see them trample righteousness and blaspheme the Lord.

- But don't stick your chest out. Don't puff yourself up. Don't believe the lie that says, "You're not like them because you're better."

- They're Egyptians. But God's Israel is just as sinful as Egypt.

- We're not better. We've received grace.

A Jew, seeing an Egyptian wailing in sorrow, should've said to himself, "If not for God, that would've been me."

- And that's what we should say as we see the lost.

- Some of us are so quick to forget who we were when God's grace found us.

- And we become so self-righteous. We think we're worthy of salvation. We think we're believers because we're smarter and make better decisions.

- We so quickly become like later generations of Jews who thought they were God's People because they were simply better than the Gentiles.

- But that's a lie from Hell.

- It's by grace we've been saved. And nothing in us.

- By nature, we're literally no different from them.

God had mercy. God gave us grace.

- That's all we can say.

- The Plague of judgment that is falling and will fall on the unbelieving should've fallen upon us, too.

- God Himself is who made the difference. Not us.

3.) But in order to save Israel, and us, a sacrifice was needed.

- A sacrifice was necessary to save guilty sinners.

But what kind of sacrifice?

- A male. Young. In its prime. Strong. Able.

- A consecrated sacrifice. Set apart for the salvation of God's People. Not chosen at random, but intentionally.
- A perfect sacrifice. A lamb without spot or blemish. No defects whatsoever.
- A substitutionary sacrifice. A lamb to die so others can live. One to die in their place.
- A propitiatory sacrifice. Blood to actually turn away the wrath and judgment of God against sinners.
- An applied sacrifice. Applied to the home by faith. One had to believe what God said, believed His promise to save, or the blood would've never been applied.

That's what God provided for Israel at Passover.

- And they were saved from the Plague.
- But as Hebrews 10:4 says, "...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."
- The sacrifices offered by Israel could never actually remove their sin. They only covered them for a time.
- A more efficacious, more precious, more perfect sacrifice was needed, ultimately.
- The Passover lamb pointed forward to a sacrifice that God Himself would provide: Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord is the true Passover Lamb.

- A man. Fully grown. In His prime when He offered His life to save sinners.
- He is strong and mighty to save as God. Able to save His People by His own righteousness and power.

He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

- Set apart, consecrated, for the work of redemption

from all eternity.

- Chosen by the Father to redeem those given to Him.
- In the fullness of time, sent into the world to be born of woman, born under the Law, to save His People from the curse of the Law.

He is the Lamb without spot or blemish.

- Morally perfect in every way. Completely upright.
- Protected from the stain of original sin by virgin birth.
- No sin was found in Him. Only a perfect love for God and man. No accusation against Him could stand.
- He knew no sin. Had no sin of His own. A perfect, spotless, sacrifice for sinners.

He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

- Bearing the sins of all who would ever believe on Him, He was roasted in the fire of God's wrath at the Cross.
- He became sin. And no mercy was shown to Him.
- He was entirely consumed by the judgment of God against sinners.
- And by bearing God's wrath for sin, He turned it away! He exhausted it for His People!
- No wrath remains for the one who trusts in the Lamb!

He is the Lamb who died. Our precious Substitute.

- He shed His blood. He gave His life at the Cross.
- And He did FOR US.
- Life for life. The just for the unjust. The holy One for sinners.
- He died that we might live.

And He is the Lamb whose blood is for all who will apply it by faith.

- No matter how unworthy or wretched the sinner, His blood will save.
- No matter how black the spot of sin, His blood can remove it and make you clean.
- Believe on Him and His blood will be applied to you.
- To every sinner who will trust in Him, believing that He died to save them and was raised on the Third Day, God says, “...when I see the blood I will pass over you...”

In Egypt, in every house in the land, there would be a corpse.

- The question was this: Is it a person or lamb?
- The same is true with regard to our eternal salvation.
- God’s judgment for sin will come upon all.
- The question is this: Will it fall upon you? Or did it already fall upon the Lamb of God in your place?
- And to answer that question, you must answer a second question first: Is the blood of the Lamb applied to you?
- Do you trust in Christ?
- Without the Lamb of God, all will perish.
- But by faith in Him, all will be saved.

4.) Friends, the Passover lamb is Christ.

•In Colossians 2:16-17, the Apostle Paul says that the Jewish holidays, like Passover, were “a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

•In 1 Corinthians 5:7, he says, “...Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.”

•Now, if the shadow was able to save from God’s

judgment in Egypt, how much more will the substance, Jesus Christ, save us from the wrath of God?

God looks upon the Cross and there sees it stained with the blood of His Son.

- If He passed over at the sight of a lamb's blood, He certainly will not despise the blood of Christ.

- He will pass over you who believe. And you will be saved forever.

And this is beautiful (I'm stealing this from DA Carson):

- At the Passover, it didn't matter how strong the Israelite's faith was. If the blood was there, they were saved.

- Weak faith in a mighty Savior will save you.

- Why? Because it's all about Him, really.

- If your faith is weak, Christ is still strong. And He will save you.

- If the blood is there, salvation is yours.

5.) Brothers and sisters, we are the unworthy.

- We deserve nothing but Hell.

- But we've been saved by grace alone.

- It's all God's doing.

- It's all by the blood of Jesus.

- Nothing in us. It's all of God through Christ.

I'll leave you with this:

- Imagine asking a Jew from Exodus, "Why were you spared from the Plague?"

- Any Israelite with an ounce of understanding would've

said, “Because God was gracious, and accepted the blood of a lamb in our place.”

That’s our answer, too.

- May God grant each one of us to confess it by faith.
- Amen.