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Exodus 12

“Christ, Our Passover Lamb”

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When we last left off, God had brought ten Plagues upon the nation of Egypt because of their stubborn refusal to let the Israelites go after enslaving them for more than 400 years. The tenth and final plague was the most severe and grievous of them all. It involved the death of the firstborn males of every family and of all the livestock in Egypt. Death came to every house from the king to the most common man.

God, however, made gracious provision for the Israelites living in Egypt. God told the Israelites that if they would follow His instructions, they would be spared and protected from this sweeping Plague of Death that was about to be unleashed on all Egypt. Recorded in [Exodus 12](#) are the instructions God gave the Israelites, His gracious protection from this tenth Plague.

As we read this passage in [Exodus 12](#) there are two things that must be noted.

The Passover

1. The events of [Exodus 12](#) are still commemorated today. The Jews continue today to celebrate and commemorate the time when God spared them from this tenth Plague with an annual feast, which is called in Hebrew *Pesach* or in English Passover.
2. This provision from God is not just for the Jews, it's for us too. In the New Testament, Jesus told us to preserve an aspect of the Passover as a lasting ordinance for the Church today. We call it Communion or the Lord's Supper.

So for the Jew and Gentile alike, this section of Scripture has tremendous significance. It's so significant that God tells the Israelites to mark the beginning of their calendar year with this month, the month He spared them from the tenth Plague and brought them out of Egypt. So this chapter is very important on a few different levels.

In [Exodus 12:1-13](#) we read God's instructions to the people as given to Moses:

"The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 'This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

'On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.'"

Maybe you have been passed over for something. Normally, being passed over is a bad thing; it is often thought of as something unfair. However, in Exodus 12 it is not a bad thing. For the Israelites being passed over is a very good thing! God is going to pass over the homes, and no harm will come to the people within, if they would follow God's prescribed way to be saved.

What was God's prescribed way? God's way involved the Israelites applying blood to the doorposts and lintel of their homes. Of course the blood had to come from somewhere, thus we see the key ingredient to the central theme of God's plan involved a lamb. You cannot talk about Passover without talking about a lamb. God was very meticulous about His instructions concerning the lamb.

Instructions for Choosing a Passover Lamb

1. God tells the people when to choose the lamb.¹
 - a. The people are to choose a lamb on the tenth day of the month of *Nisan* and care for it until the fourteenth day of *Nisan*.
2. God tells the people how to choose the lamb.²
 - a. The Israelites are to choose a young male sheep that is without defect or blemish.
3. God tells the people when to slaughter the lamb.³
 - a. They are to slaughter the lamb at twilight⁴ on the fourteenth of *Nisan*.
4. God tells the people how to apply the blood of the lamb.⁵
 - a. Once the lamb has been slaughtered they are to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts and lintels of the doors.
5. God tells the people how to cook the lamb.⁶
 - a. They are to cook the lamb whole, roasted over an open fire. They were forbidden to break any of its bones.
6. God tells the people how to eat the lamb.⁷
 - a. Once cooked the Israelites were instructed to eat the lamb in haste.
7. God tells the people how to dispose of the leftover lamb.⁸
 - a. Finally, they were to completely burn any of the lamb that was leftover.

God surely could have instructed them to do a number of things. The question is, why a lamb? The answer is that God was teaching them something important about life, about death, and about sacrifice. He was teaching them that life is a gift; and that death comes to all homes; but if you offer life for a life—in this case a spotless lamb as an acceptable sacrifice, God will say, ‘I will accept it as a substitute for your life. The death of the lamb will satisfy my wrath that would ordinarily come to you.’ The blood was a sign for the people that they believed God; they applied the blood by faith.

¹ [Exodus 12:3-4](#)

² [Exodus 12:5](#)

³ [Exodus 12:6](#)

⁴ The literal Hebrew term used here means “between the two evenings” which is understood as some time between 3pm and 6pm.

⁵ [Exodus 12:7](#)

⁶ [Exodus 12:8-9](#)

⁷ [Exodus 12:11](#)

⁸ [Exodus 12:10](#)

This is what the Jews today commemorate as the Passover. However, there is an even greater significance. Jesus was eating the Passover with His disciples when He gave a deeper meaning to the whole Passover celebration. We pick up the story in [Luke 22:14-20](#) -

“When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.’ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, ‘Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’”

What we call “Communion” today is simply the preservation of a portion of Passover that commemorates Christ as the ultimate and final Passover Lamb who died for the sins of the world. Christ is the fulfillment of all the feast and rituals of the Old Testament. Passover, like all Jewish Feasts, points to an ultimate fulfillment in Christ.⁹ Paul and Peter both declared Jesus to be our Passover Lamb.¹⁰ Even John the Baptist, upon seeing Jesus, proclaimed, *“Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.”*¹¹

Jesus is our Passover Lamb

1. Jesus was without Sin
2. Jesus was slain in the prime of His life
3. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem for Passover on Palm Sunday, the very day the lambs were selected.
4. Jesus died on Passover at sunset, the time of sacrifice.
5. Jesus was sacrificed whole without a bone being broken.
6. Nothing of His sacrifice was left behind. He rose from the grave!
7. Even the stain of the Passover blood on the doorpost and lintel is a picture of the cross!

⁹ [Colossians 2:16-17](#)

¹⁰ [1 Corinthians 5:7](#) and [1 Peter 1:18-19](#)

¹¹ [John 1:29](#)

All who apply the blood over the door of their hearts shall be saved. It is not enough to know about Jesus, you must, by faith, apply Jesus by accepting His sacrifice on the cross for you! Life is not free—it is a gift; and a perfect sacrifice was offered for your life to bring you to God. [Second Corinthians 5:21](#) tells us, “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*”

Don't be like the Egyptians who resisted God; who thought they knew better. God has made gracious provision for us all by offering His Son, Jesus, on the cross. So that though we die physically, our spirits might live with Him forever in Heaven!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Exodus 12:1-13, 29-30](#) and [Luke 22:14-20](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. What is an example of another event in the Old Testament that pointed to the sacrifice of Christ?
 - a. See [Genesis 22](#).
4. What can we learn about the plans of God in the details He gives the people for choosing the lamb for sacrifice?
 - a. God is a God of details.
 - b. Obedience in faith?
5. Discuss with the group different traditions for Communion they may have been a part of.
 - a. Read [1 Corinthians 11:17 - 34](#) for more information about Communion.
6. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: obey God in faith and trust in God's provision.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984). (JM-ME)