

Exodus 12:1-14

Let us pray: Lord, purify our faith community today by covering us with your eternal blood, and offer us the abundant table of life through your Word today. In our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.

Friends, why do you think we believe in Jesus? Do you think we believe in Jesus simply because he died for the forgiveness of our sins and if we believe that, we die and go to paradise? The gospel is not just about the afterlife, that's only a small part of it. The gospel of the kingdom of God is about the eternal present. In other words, it is about us enjoying the reign of God right here and now. The death of the Son of God is not just about the forgiveness of sins but also about ending who we were before we believed in Jesus.

Last Sunday, we celebrated the Lord's Supper. In Holy Communion, we spiritually eat the body of Christ Jesus and drink his blood. It says that we have become one body with Christ. Our old selves died on the cross and we were born into one new man, and Jesus Christ is that new man. Whether we have a little or a lot of Jesus Christ in each of us, we "no longer live, but Christ lives in [us]," as in Galatians 2:20. God already shows us this picture in the Old Testament. Just before the Israelites leave Egypt, God gives them the Passover, which Jesus later fulfills. Today we enjoy the spiritual Passover in Christ.

God gave us the Old Testament as His Word as well as the New Testament. The Old Testament shows us in theological terms "types," which are typifying models for Christ and what God has planned. For example, the Passover event in the Old Testament is a type that shows in advance that the real Passover is going to look like this. Just like a child sees an airplane in a picture book and later sees a real airplane and realizes, "Oh, it's an airplane," God gave us the Old Testament Passover so that when the real Passover shows up, we can realize, "Oh, this is the Passover." After we see the real thing, we don't throw away the picture or model. It's a reminder of the real thing. I've been to an exhibit of a city and seen a model of the whole city, and then I looked around the real city. In this way, the model gives you a detailed picture of the whole thing. If you remember it, then when you see the real thing, it will be more fun and make more sense. So the Old Testament words are part of Christ, who is the Word, and it is a rich table that is given to us here and now in terms of the eternal present.

The Passover event is very important. Without it, there would be no Exodus. Right before the Passover, there are nine plagues, and God's warning about the tenth and final plague, the death of the firstborn. Right after the Passover comes the plague of the death of the firstborn, and then the exodus from Egypt. The Passover foreshadows the event of the cross of Christ Jesus. No one can leave Egypt without passing through this Passover. The Passover shows two sides of the cross. One is the judgment of the world and the other is the redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus. The judgment is represented by the ten plagues, which are the judgment on the world and the old self in our lives before we believed in Jesus. The ten plagues mean that, through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" as in Galatians 6:14.

The firstborn in particular symbolizes our old selves that belong to the old world. Before the plague of the death of the firstborn swept through all of Egypt, God gave the Israelites the grace of the

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Passover. It does not mean that no one died in Goshen, the land of the Israelites. The judgment came the same. The angel of death came to the Israelite houses, too, but he passed by without harming anyone because the lambs died beforehand instead of the Israelite firstborn.

If you don't know that the 10 plagues are judgments on the world, you only half understand the Passover. So, in a nutshell, God wants us to see through the 10 plagues that the world that Egypt typifies is spiritually stained with blood, which represents death, and full of frogs, which means philosophies and vain stories that sound like frogs. God also wants us to see that the things out of the ground are the things that bother us. It's our old world that we have to come out of.

The next part of the Passover is being redeemed by the blood of the lamb and leaving Egypt. Redemption means payment in full. We owed God eternal judgment. God had sentenced us to "surely die" and this had to happen. Technically Christ did not come to spare us from death. For the believer in Jesus, God's judgment was accomplished on the cross of Christ. As Paul says in Romans 6:8, "... we died with Christ," Christ Jesus died with us by including us in Him. He finished us off and made one new man at the cross. That new man is Christ Jesus. We live in Him, united with Him.

The word "Passover" involves not only the passing of the destroying angel but also our crossing of the Red Sea. The root word of "Hebrew" signifies "to pass over," and hence is regarded as meaning "the man who passed over." So the Passover is not complete until we cross the Red Sea. We are spiritual Hebrews. As Paul the Apostle says in Colossians 1:13, we have passed over "from the power of darkness ... into the kingdom of the Son of His love" at the cross of Christ. We have passed over to God so that we will never have to cross over back into this passing world. Augustine says, "By Christ's sprinkling of his blood on us, we are saved from the angel of destruction even to the consummation of this world." In other words, we can enjoy the Passover as a present forever.

So far, we've covered the overall meaning, and now we're going to look at specific items. All of them have deep meaning, but we can't cover them all. So we're going to focus on the blood and meat of the lamb, which is at the heart of the Passover ritual.

In verse 2, starting with the Passover, God says, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year." This means that life truly begins when we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Christ. This month is Nisan on the Jewish calendar. God tells the Israelites to choose a lamb on the tenth day of Nisan, keep it for five days, and then slaughter it on the 14th.

Later, Jesus actually came to the temple five days before the Passover feast and taught the Jews for five days. He was chosen and prepared as a lamb, and then he died on the day of the Passover on the fourteenth of Nisan when the other lambs died. Why did it happen on the 14th of Nisan? Because it was the day of the full moon. This represents Christ being offered as the perfect light.

In verse 6, the lamb is slaughtered at twilight, which is the end of one day and the beginning of another for the Jews. It represents the end of the old world.

In verse 7, God says, "they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses." This blood cannot be seen by anyone in the house, for it is God and the

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destroying angel who see it. This blood typifies Jesus' blood, which is "the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel" in Hebrews 12:24 (NLT). It is the blood that defends us before God the Father. This blood is applied to the sides and the top of the doorframes. That means that no one in the house can see it. Also, it is applied not to people but to objects that cannot feel anything. Those two facts tell us that even though we cannot see or feel the blood of Christ, we must see it with the eyes of faith and enjoy it. Our hearts are now sprinkled with the blood of Christ Jesus. It's all over us, our whole body and our whole soul. The blood of Christ cleanses us. It's a spiritual blood. In 1 Peter 1:2, the apostle Peter says that we "have been chosen ... to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood."

In Exodus 12:22, the blood is to be applied with a bunch of hyssop, which is a mild and humble plant but its root is strong and penetrating. So this means that the blood of Christ is to be applied, penetrating into all of our hidden areas. We are to drink the blood of Jesus. The drinking of grape juice in Holy Communion symbolizes that. Spiritually we can drink the blood of Jesus forever. We are drinking it through the Holy Spirit. I hope your spiritual awareness of this is opened. Revelation 12:11 testifies that our brothers "overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."

I believe in the reality of the blood of Christ, and the act of faith brings reality. I want to share a bit about some events that happened in my family. Through my oldest son, we experienced the blood of Christ working a few times. There were spirits attacking him. As with anyone, evil spirits look for a place of weakness and attack you through it. When my wife laid her hands on his head and prayed over him, she declared that she was sprinkling the blood of Jesus on him. He saw the blood dripping from her hands with his spiritual eyes. The feet of the evil spirit that was tormenting him were burned off. Of course, the evil spirit was cast out in Jesus' name. A few years later, one day when I was still in Mondovi, our son was again troubled and he and his mother were praying together--this time without the laying on of hands, the blood of Jesus came to him and the blood fell on him, which he saw with his spiritual eyes. My wife didn't see it. Every day we need to claim the blood of Jesus. We already have a fresh supply of His blood. You can take the blood of Jesus in your hands every day and sprinkle it on yourself, your family, and our churches. We can purify every space we are in by declaring the blood of Jesus.

In verse 8, God tells them to roast the lamb over a fire and eat it. Eating the lamb is eating the body of Christ, which is eating the Word of God. In the Holy Spirit, we do that, and the sacrament of the Eucharist is the sign of that. The fire symbolizes the Holy Spirit. It means when you read the Bible, you are to rely on the Spirit of God. In verse 9, you must not eat it raw or boiled in water. To eat it raw is to try to understand it only literally. If you read the Bible literally without relying on the Spirit of God, it becomes the killing letter as in 2 Corinthians 3:6. If you know a lot of Scripture and even memorize it literally, you won't have the fruit of the Spirit and you might misuse the Scriptures, just like the people who justified slavery.

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To boil the lamb in water is to read the Bible with self-reason, self-knowledge, and self-judgment. The Bible must be interpreted by the Bible itself and by the Holy Spirit. I myself shouldn't read the Bible, but the Bible should read itself to me.

To eat the head, the legs, and the inner organs--each of which has meanings individually, but collectively, it's eating the whole Christ in God's Word.

In verse 10, to eat the lamb all night and not leave any for the morning is saying don't eat yesterday's meat today, which means you should always eat the Word fresh every day.

In verse 8, you are to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs with the meat. Unleavened bread is a yeast-free bread. The way you made leaven in those days was you took some of the dough and left it overnight by a warm fire and it rose. The next day you combined it into a new dough. The Israelites are leaving Egypt today, and God tells them not to put yesterday's leaven into today's bread because that means they're taking elements of the old world of Egypt with them. Also, the nature of leaven is that it makes the bread spoil easily. Leaven is yesterday's, past faith. It is relying on your past experience. Every day we need to receive a new faith, a new word from God. We need to receive the new Word proclaimed anew in worship each Sunday. Unleavened bread does not spoil easily. If you put conditions on believing and loving Jesus, that's leaven. If I believe in Jesus and it benefits me with something, so I believe, or if I try it and it doesn't work out, so I don't believe--that's leaven.

Bitter herbs can mean two things. It can refer to suffering, which has two aspects. One is a suffering that Christ, the Physician of our souls, allows for the healing and strengthening of our souls. It is just as medicine contains a bitter substance. The other is the tribulations that Christians suffer for the sake of the gospel because they do not love money and the world. It can also refer to the bitter words of Christ, the hard words to make us mature.

Brothers and sisters, we've been given a new life journey in Christ Jesus through this Passover. We're on a redemptive journey. In verse 15, God tells Moses to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. In the Bible, seven days implies our whole life. Jesus Christ fulfilled the Passover as "our Passover" itself (1 Corinthians 5:7) and set a new table in the new covenant with his own blood and body. May you enjoy the table of partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the unleavened bread and the lamb for a lifetime. Amen.

Let's pray: Lord, our Passover, thank you for bringing us to a new realization of the meaning of the cross through the events of the Passover. Help us to enjoy You anew each day as all the items in the Passover, so that the life of Christ Jesus living in us may flow more abundantly and draw others to Your table of life. In our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.