

Exodus 12:1-13 • The Blood of the Lamb

Introduction

Mention the word “blood” and the average listener will squirm. Mention the word “blood” from some pulpits today and the pastor will be considered insensitive or distasteful. Why bring up unpleasantness in the middle of a church service? Therefore, some churches avoid singing great hymns such as “Nothing But the Blood” and “There Is Power in the Blood.”

Christianity is based upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. The shedding of His blood is paramount to His purpose on earth: “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17). For, as the writer of Hebrews states, “...Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22)

Since the Garden of Eden, God has been preparing the world to receive the message about the blood of Christ. The work of Christ on the cross is foreshadowed in this great chapter in Exodus and the institution of the Jewish Passover.

¹Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. ³Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. ⁴Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb.

⁵“Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. ⁷Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. ¹⁰And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire.

¹¹“Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD’S Passover. ¹²For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute

[Read 12:1-13]

Q: In verse 2, why does God establish “the first month of the year to you”?

A: God is making the most significant event in Jewish history the beginning of a new calendar, a religious calendar created specifically for the Hebrews. This new calendar would be significantly different from the Egyptian calendar. This event marks the official beginning of the Jewish nation.

Footnote: The month’s original name was Abib and lasted from mid-March to mid-April. After the Babylonian exile, the name of the month was changed to Nisan. The “New Year” celebration of Rosh Hashanah was a later development in Jewish history. It occurs in the fall and represents the beginning of the Jewish civil year.

Q: What are some of the key characteristics of the lamb that was to be sacrificed?

A: It was to be a young, unblemished male. It could be either a sheep or a goat.

Q: What are some of the details concerning its sacrifice?

A: It was to be “kept” for four days before being killed. All lambs were to be killed “at twilight.” Its blood was to be applied to both doorposts and the lintel, or beam across the doorposts.

Q: What are some of the details concerning the preparation and eating of the lamb?

A: It was to be roasted (fastest method of cooking) and eaten entirely that night as if in a hurry. Leftovers and remains were to be burned. When eaten, the participants were to be dressed for a journey (girded, sandals, staff).

Q: What reason did God give for the applying of the lamb’s blood on the doorway?

A: There would be a judgment on Egypt. Any house that was not marked with the blood of the lamb would suffer judgment. That judgment was the death of the all firstborn. God would therefore “pass over” the houses where blood was applied. This event will forever be known as the “Passover.”

judgments—I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; 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.

¹⁴Now 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.

⁴⁰Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. ⁴¹And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴²It is a night to be observed for the Lord for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.

²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ^{5a}but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

[Read Exodus 12:14 and 40-42 for additional insight]

Q: One reason the Passover was performed by the Israelites was to be protected from God's judgment of Egypt. What do these verses indicate is another reason?

A: The night of Passover was to memorialize forever "*the LORD...having brought them out from the land of Egypt.*" The Hebrews were instructed to eat all the lamb and save none till morning because they would be parting from Egypt that very night. It represented their deliverance from the bondage of the Egyptians.

Now that we have examined the institution of the Passover, we are ready to examine how this event relates to the blood of Jesus Christ.

[Read Genesis 3:21]

Q: How does God's actions in this verse preview the events of the Passover?

A: For there to be "*garments of skin for Adam and his wife*", blood of an innocent animal needed to be sacrificed. The shedding of blood enabled God to clothe them, thus offering protection from the world.

[Read Genesis 4:3-5a]

Q: Why was Abel's sacrifice more acceptable than Cain's?

A: Abel's sacrifice was of "*the firstlings (firstborn) of his flock and of their fat portions.*" Again, this required the shedding of blood. Both these verses imply that the only sufficient sacrifice for man's sin involves the shedding of innocent blood.

²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Now have various members of the group look up and read the following verses in regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- Matthew 1:20-21
- John 1:29; 19:34
- Romans 5:9
- Hebrews 9:13-14 (or, time permitting, the entire chapter)

Q: How is the Passover lamb in Exodus 12 representative of the person of Jesus Christ?

A: He was a young, firstborn male without blemish (Heb. 9:14; 4:15)

Q: How is the sacrifice of the Passover lamb in Exodus 12 representative of the work of Jesus Christ?

A: He willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice, His innocent blood was shed, His blood was shed on a wooden cross (symbolized by the doorposts and crossbar), and those who are “covered” by His blood are protected from God’s judgment. It marks the beginning of their deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Application: Exodus 12:28-30 records that the Hebrews believed the word of Moses and were protected from the angel of death by the blood of the lamb. How can you become protected from God’s judgment by Christ’s blood today? Read and consider:

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26