

# The Feast of Passover (2)

## The Slaying of the Lamb (v.6)

The lamb was selected on the tenth day and 'kept' until the fourteenth day. This is symbolic of the four generations Israel had spent in Egypt and reminded them of the oppression they had suffered for 430 years (Exodus 12.40). During these four days each household appreciated the perfections of the lamb, but when the appointed time came the lamb **must** be slain. The keeping of the lamb would not deliver them from judgment – it must be 'killed' ('slaughtered', also called a 'sacrifice' in v.27). We are reminded that seeking to emulate the perfect life of the Lord Jesus cannot bring salvation. His life condemns us and demonstrates how far short of God's glory we have fallen. He must die. He will always be the Lamb as it had been 'freshly slain' (Revelation 5.9).

Although there were *many* individuals (heads of each family) who slew *many* lambs on Passover day, v.6 only speaks of '**the whole** congregation of Israel' and **one** lamb. In the mind of God there is **one** sacrifice for **all** (2 Corinthians 5.14). At Calvary the chief priests, elders and scribes acted representatively (Mark 10.33, Luke 24.20, John 18.35, 19.6), but **all** the people cried out for His death (Matthew 27.22-25, Luke 19.14, cf. Acts 4.27). There is a sense in which the whole world was responsible for the death of Christ. The 'slaying' took place 'in the evening', or as the Hebrew, 'between the evenings'. This was the period of time between the decline of the day and the actual sunset, approximately 3-6pm. This of course, according to the Judean method of reckoning, was the exact time (ninth hour) that the Lord Jesus laid down His life (Matthew 27.46-50, Mark 15.34-37, Luke 23.44-46). See chart on the last Bible Class notes.

## The Striking of the Blood (v.7)

This is the first mention of blood in relation to sacrifice in the Bible, emphasising the value of the blood of **the** Passover Lamb. *The penalty of sin is death (Genesis 2.16-17, Romans 6.23). Since the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17.11), the shedding of blood speaks of death. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9.22).* The blood must be **applied** (sprinkled) to effect salvation. We are reminded that there is individual responsibility in the matter of salvation. We must **appropriate** to ourselves the value of the shed blood and sacrifice of Christ through **faith** (hyssop). The shedding of the blood speaks of *propitiation* – provision is made. The striking of the blood speaks of *appropriation*. The word 'strike'<sup>1</sup> here means to 'put', 'give' or 'present' and involves a definite act of the **will** – the obedience of faith. The Israelite could not strike the blood where he desired; it must be as God had said for the faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Acts 9.6, Romans 1.5, Hebrews 11.28). The blood was applied with 'hyssop' (v.22), a common and small plant that grew out of walls (1 Kings 4.33). Hyssop is therefore a picture of humility, faith and cleansing (see Leviticus 14.4, 6, Psalm 51.7). *HK Downie: We must dip the hyssop of our faith into the blood and apply it to our hearts.* Our faith may be as weak as the hyssop, but it is not faith in our faith that saves; it is faith in Christ. It is not the amount of faith, but the act of faith that saves. The blood upon the 'upper door post' (lintel) suggests deliverance from Divine judgment (eye of God). The blood on the 'two side posts' suggests separation from Egypt. *It is possible to rejoice in the former truth without appreciating the latter. The blood claims us for God and separates us from this evil world upon which the final judgment is about to fall (Galatians 1.4).*

## The Sustenance of the Lamb (vv.8-10)

The lamb could not be eaten until the blood was applied. 'Eating the flesh' is a concept the Lord Jesus spoke of in John 6.53. We are to *once and for all* (aorist) eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood. This is to appropriate to oneself the saving value of the work of Christ at Calvary. **Saved through faith**. John 6.56 uses similar language but emphasises a continuous act (present tense) of feeding *upon* and communing *with* Him. **Living by faith**. Have we found complete satisfaction in Him? There must be a feeding on Christ to sustain life as there was a trusting Christ to obtain life. Note that the eating was according to capacity (v.4). *Herein lies the secret of many a failure in the Christian life. Many are seemingly satisfied with the safety from wrath to come provided by Christ, but know little of feeding upon Him. There must be communion without which life could never be sustained. We should be anxious to know all about Him.*

The unleavened bread (also called 'bread of affliction', Deuteronomy 16.3) and bitter herbs reminded Israel of the misery, oppression and bitterness (Exodus 1.14) of a life of slavery in Egypt. It was from this they were being delivered. These symbols also pointed forward to the character of life now expected as the redeemed people of God. Their lives should now be holy (absence of leaven) and they were to expect bitter trial and conflict in the days ahead. *Christians*

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<sup>1</sup> In v.22 a different Hebrew word for 'strike' is used which can mean to 'touch violently'. The word is translated 'stricken' in Isaiah 53.4 and reminds us of what Christ suffered that the value of His precious blood might be applied to us.

*have a magnificent table spread for them in the presence of their deadliest enemies. Rising from the table they return into the camp of their enemies to difficulties and trials, afflictions and sore temptations. They still have to withstand the sharp arrows of the Egyptians and to cross a Red Sea. They have to traverse a wilderness, where there is no water. They have to fight against an Amalek and pass over a Jordan before they can come to the glorious Promised Land. Here they will enjoy their Passover without bitter herbs and abide in the presence of the Lamb forever.*

The lamb was not to be eaten 'raw' or boiled ('sodden') in water, it must be 'roast with fire' in its entirety. Roasting is the slowest method of preparing meat but produces searing heat that penetrates to the innermost parts. All is suggestive of the heat of divine judgment endured at Calvary. Why not raw? This is suggestive of the life of Christ without Calvary. Why no boiling? This would reduce the intensity of the heat and hinder the action of the fire. The lamb's head, legs and inwards ('purtenance') are specified, reminding us of the One who was holy in **mind** (*knew no sin*), holy in **movement** (*did no sin*) and holy in  **motive** (*in Him is no sin*). Exodus 12.46 states that no bone of the lamb was to be broken, a prophecy gloriously fulfilled by the Lord. All His bones were out of joint (Psalm 22), yet not a bone was broken (John 19.33, 36). Note. The Jewish mode of death was by stoning, which would have broken the bones.

Nothing of the lamb could remain until the morning. If the lamb was left for any length of time, corruption would set in and thus mar the type of Christ (Acts 2.27, 13.37). He is ever the Lamb 'freshly slain'. Additionally, the Israelite must never be tempted to make the Passover lamb into a common meal. Holy things must never become common.

#### The Shoes of the People (v.11)

The Passover lamb was eaten with an expectation of imminent departure from Egypt. They were to be fully prepared for the pilgrim journey ahead and thus eat the lamb with eagerness and anticipation. Loins were to be girded, shoes were to be worn and staff was to be at hand – this was the required garb of the pilgrim! Every believer is a stranger and pilgrim (1 Peter 2.11). As such our **loins** should be girded (see Ephesians 6.14, 1 Peter 1.13). *William Kelly: There must be the disentanglement of the Christian from all hindrance to devotedness.* The **shoes** are not those of *sonship* (Luke 15.22) but the sandals of *pilgrimage*. The shoes of the Israelites never wore out (Deuteronomy 29.5) but our feet should be shod with the preparation (readiness) of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6.15). The **staff** was for strength, safety and protection. Long and difficult days lay ahead and support would be required. Our staff is the word of God; we are to lean on its promises. *Upon this Word I rest each pilgrim day, the golden staff is best for all the way.* Incidentally, the Passover belonged to the Lord ('Lord's Passover' occurs three times in Scripture). The death of the Lamb glorified God (Genesis 22.8). Christ vindicated His throne, satisfied His justice and magnified His holiness. Christ is now *our* Passover (1 Corinthians 5.7) but only because He was first the *Lord's* Passover.

#### The Smiting of the Firstborn (v.12) and Security of the Blood (v.13)

It would seem that the plague of death was delivered by a 'destroying angel' who passed through the land as the **executor** of Jehovah's judgment (Exodus 12.23, Hebrews 11.28, cp. 2 Samuel 24.16, 1 Chronicles 21.15). Upon seeing the blood (no matter the *grandeur* of the house or the *excellence* of the inhabitants), Jehovah Himself **overshadowed** each house and **protected** His people (v.13, 23). The judgment passed upon all (cf. v.30), but Israel sheltered beneath the blood. This was God's judgment upon the *whole* of godless humanity, a terrible foreshadowing of tribulation wrath yet to come. It was more than the judgment of a sinful, idolatrous people – this was a confrontation between Satanic forces (the 'gods of Egypt') and 'the LORD' (Jehovah), cf. Exodus 9.14, Numbers 33.4.

What is the significance of the firstborn? God had revealed to Pharaoh that **Israel** was His firstborn (choice) son. If Pharaoh would not let God's firstborn go, his own firstborn would be slain (Exodus 4.22-23). The word 'firstborn' is used of anything which is chief or first of its kind and referred to a family's eldest son. This would have been devastating. *Estates descended to the eldest son, and in many cases high dignities also. No severer blow could have been sent on the nation, if it were not to be annihilated, than the death of the hope of the family in each house – the parents' strength, the other children's guardian and protector.* Thus, those who were symbolic of the nation's strength and vigour (cf. Genesis 49.3) were slain. This is a picture of mankind in its first and natural state of birth – in Adam. It was at Calvary (typified in the Passover) that mankind in the flesh was brought to an end before God.

***Exodus 12.27: 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.' And the people bowed their heads and worshipped.***