

Text: Exod. 12:1-11, 21-22

Title: "Christ, our Passover sacrifice"

Time: 9/20/20 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: The Lycurgus Cup is an artifact in the British Museum that dates to 4th century Rome. It is a remarkable piece of craftsmanship, because its glass uses nanotechnology to reflect light in strange ways. Lit from the front, the glass appears green, but lit from behind, it appears to be red. The glass does this because tiny portions of a silver and gold alloy have been installed in the glass to create this effect.

The amount of silver in the glass is 330 parts per million, and the amount of gold is 40 parts per million. This composition cannot be seen with an optical microscope. An electron microscope is necessary to see what is going on. Researchers were shocked at the advanced technology they found in this 4th century invention. The Cup is an example of something wonderful found in an unexpected place.

In our passage, the Lord has found the nation of Israel in a very unexpected place – the slave homes of Goshen or Avaris of 15th century B.C. Egypt (v. 1). In our passage, the Passover of Israel is instituted, and with it the nation of Israel is born. It is as though in this beautiful cup of ancient civilization, the true silver and gold is going to be exposed, and God's people are going to soon shine with the brilliant colors of the light of liberty.

But the New Testament is clear that there is something even more surprising to be found in what the Lord says to Moses in Egypt in this passage. Paul was very clear about this to the church at Corinth. He says simply that "Christ is

our Passover sacrifice." He writes the following to this local church in its struggle with its sin: "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Clearly, if we are to be what God wants us to be as a local church, we must remember that Christ is our Passover sacrifice, and to do so we need the help of this chapter in Exodus, where the Passover is first instituted, to understand what that means for our lives. This chapter describes a Passover sacrifice (vv. 1-12, 21-22), a Passover propitiation (vv. 12-13, 24), and a Passover memorial (vv. 14-20, 24-28). Christ is the key to them all. This morning we want to look at the first of these, "Christ, our Passover sacrifice."

I. A new beginning is the creation of the Passover sacrifice (v. 2).

Illustration: In the 1790s the leaders of the newly formed French Republic endeavored to purge their society from all trappings of Christianity. One of the things they did to that end was invent a new calendar. It had ten-day weeks, and it began when their French Republic began, with 1792 designated as Year I. Twelve years later, after the Republic had devolved into the tyranny of Napoleon, the emperor switched back to the old calendar, and that was that.

Application: Our passage mentions a new calendar, developed not by the arrogance of frail men, but by the decree of almighty God. The night of the Passover would mark the

beginning of a brand-new creation, and in a sense the start of time for that creation. This was the seventh month in the civil calendar of Judaism, what we would have called April, the fourth month in ours, but now it was going to be month Number 1. After the Passover celebration each year, a seven day feast was to be celebrated, which reminded these young-earth creationists that the creation of something new had been perfectly completed at Passover.

And so it is for the life of the believer whose Passover is Christ. It is the moment that Christ becomes our Passover sacrifice that our spiritual lives begin. Before, we were dead in our trespasses and the slaves of sin like Israel had been the slaves of Egypt. But after the power of Christ our Passover touches our lives, everything changes. We are now free, redeemed from the bondage of our sin, and we live as an absolutely new creation of spiritual life.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). No one truly touched by Christ as the Passover sacrifice remains unchanged from what he was before. If you have never experienced this new beginning, Christ is simply not yet your Passover sacrifice. A new beginning is the creation of the Passover sacrifice.

II. An innocent lamb is the victim of the Passover sacrifice (vv. 3-7, 21-22a).

Illustration: Genesis mentions a lamb in the account of Chapter 22, where Abraham is commanded by the Lord to sacrifice his son Isaac. Isaac is confused as they make their way up the hill of sacrifice because they had no lamb, and when he asks his father about this, Abraham says, “The LORD will provide Himself a lamb.” And so the Lord did.

The Lord stopped Abraham from killing his son and provided a lamb to be slain in Isaac's place.

At the other end of our Bibles, in the book of Revelation (Chapter 5), the Apostle John is shown a scene before the throne of God, where a call has gone out for someone who is worthy to break the seals of judgment on the title deed to creation. John weeps as none are found worthy, but then one of the elders present tells him to stop weeping, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy. John turns to see Judah's Lion of judgment, and when he does he sees the Lamb standing as one that had been slain.

Application: From start to finish, our Bibles are all about the slaughter of an innocent Lamb and why it is that He had to die. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world through His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. C. H. McIntosh rightly commented that if Jesus were still on the earth doing good to this day, the veil of the temple would have never been ripped, and we would have no protection from the destroyer and no access to God. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb of Calvary, and the Passover, of course, is rich with this truth. Notice four specifics with me.

1. The lamb is presented four days prior to the sacrifice (v. 3; Luke 1:80, "And the child grew, and waxed strong, until the day of his showing unto Israel"). On the 10th day, the lamb was chosen to be the sacrifice. The household would be able to see the innocence of the lamb alive before it dies. Jesus lived a miraculous and sinless life before going to the cross for sinners. John recounted, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Whenever we see the glory of the life of Christ, we must see Him as the Lamb whom God sent to be our atoning sacrifice.

2. The lamb is the only acceptable sacrifice (v. 4). Some households might say, "We are too few for an entire lamb." God's reply is that there is no substitute for the lamb. All the lamb and only the lamb was to be the sacrifice of the Passover. Peter explains, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

3. The lamb is a perfect lamb, both a symbol of adulthood and innocence (v. 5). Peter says of Christ that He is the One "who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). He was the "just dying for the unjust" (3:18). Paul writes, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Even those who pounded the nails into the flesh of his hands and feet concluded, "Certainly, this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47). Yet He laid down His life willingly, the decision of one fully grown (John 10:18).

4. The lamb is slaughtered for its blood (vv. 6-7, 21-22a). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). An innocent lamb is made the victim of the Passover sacrifice.

III. A meal's menu is the sharing in the Passover sacrifice (vv. 8-10).

Illustration: In John 6 Jesus preaches a message that causes Him to completely lose His audience. The audience had been built because Jesus fed thousands with five barley loaves and two small fish (vv. 14-15). Prior to the message, they were ready to make Him a king. After the message, with everyone gone except the original twelve, Jesus won-

dered out loud to them: "Will ye also go away?" (v. 67). The theme of the message that chased so many away was one that told them that they needed to eat less barley loaves and fish, and more of Him. He referred to Himself as the bread from heaven, or manna, which was a reference to Exodus. But the idea of needing to feed on Him also comes from the Passover meal's menu. It is symbolism that every one of these Jews should have understood, and so should we.

Application: Notice three menu items for the symbolism of the meal, and how they teach us that we should in a sense feed on Christ, meaning that what He is should be what we are becoming and what we want to be.

1. Roasted lamb was on the menu (v. 8a, 9-10). Scripture associates fire with the way a holy God deals with sin. As the roasted lamb, Christ is the one who experienced God's wrath while enduring the condemnation of sinners. As those who feed on the roasted lamb, we who are in Christ are called to endure the chastening that a holy God loving gives to His children.

At times this chastening is described in the harsh terms of burning fire (John 15:6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"; Heb. 10:26-27, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"; Heb. 12:28-29, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.") God's fire is a refining fire for believ-

ers. Job understood this well: "When I am tried and purified, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

2. Unleavened bread was on the menu (v. 8). – Leaven is a symbol of impurity and evil in this context. Christ lived a sinless life; we who feed on Him to become like Him battle sin through walking in the Spirit and humble confession (1 Cor. 5:6-8, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth").

3. Bitter herbs were on the menu (v. 8). The bitterness of suffering is here depicted. Christ was hated by sinful men and suffered violent persecution at their hands; it is enough for us to be like Him in this regard (Matt. 10:22-25, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?").

To feed on Christ, to become like Christ, is not a popular thing to do. It is not the excitement that builds an audience of thousands. But it is the life calling and eternal privilege of those who have been redeemed with the blood of the Lamb. We are bought with a price. We are not our own. These menu items are our share in the Passover sacrifice.

IV. A final exodus is the anticipation of the Passover sacrifice (vv. 11).

Application: Clearly, those who were saved that night by the blood of the Passover lamb were ready to leave Egypt. Sadly, many of these same people would soon wish they had never left. As the redeemed, we need to be willing to leave Egypt behind thankfully, completely, and without any thought of returning. Our Passover Lamb died so that we could have a complete and final Exodus from our sin.

Conclusion: God did so much for Israel's salvation that night, and He asked only one simple thing of them. "Do not leave the house" (v. 22b). "Stay behind the blood." "Partake of the meal of greater Christlikeness." "Let the freedom of the new life begin, and do not look back." What will it be for us this morning? Will we stay in the house? Will we be saved by Christ, our Passover sacrifice?

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*