

Exodus 12:21-27
The Passover Lamb
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EXHORDIUM

The breaking of the covenant required blood. To cut a covenant is to signify the sanctions of a broken covenant, namely the cutting of the party that breaks covenant. Thus, we can be ‘cut out’ of the covenant or ‘let the evil be put away from Israel’ through execution.

Israel was a covenant breaker as was Egypt. Thus, they needed the blood of the Passover so that God did not stop and destroy them. They needed to learn that God’s grace was sufficient for them. In this passage, the Israelites seem to get it. They bow themselves down and worship God. But they do not stay down. They keep getting back up to fight with God and God must repeatedly humble them.

We must learn this kind of submission to the Lord. And once we learn that this sort of submission, this sort of worship, exalts God to the highest degree, then we will see Him also exalt us.

A man who will not stay down refuses to recognize his better. He keeps getting back up, insisting that he is not beat. But if the other man truly is his better, his attempts at rising to fight are mere futility that will only involve a greater destruction.

But a man who ‘stays down’ before God is then given a hand up and exalted to a place of honor.

EXEGESIS

Ex 12:21-27 21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

The Passover was a lamb that was to be killed and its blood put on the posts and lintels of the house. This signified that all who were in the house were covered by the blood of the lamb. The lamb was to be without blemish.

It was to be eaten as a family meal and wholly consumed. They were to eat all of.

If they followed the Lord's command, then would be spared from the justice of the Lord that was coming to afflict the Egyptians. But we must note that if they did not apply the blood of the lamb, even the first-born of the Israelites would be consumed by the devouring angel.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

It was not good enough to believe in the hearts that God would destroy Egypt's firstborn and spare their own. They must take the hyssop, dip it in blood and apply it to their house. This became a public spectacle. The Israelites were originally in the land of Goshen, living separately from the Egyptians. Now, some 215 plus years later, they are prolific in the land, perhaps even outnumbering the Egyptians. They are their slaves and had some near access to them. No doubt, the Egyptians and other races living among them would see the blood on the door posts. This was public declaration of their faith. Without the blood displayed there was no salvation.

Matthew Henry makes a fine observation about the blood. It is put on the posts and lintel but not on the threshold, signifying that you should not trample on the blood of Christ.

None of you shall go out- This signifies that our refuge is only in the blood, only in Christ. If we go out into the streets and leave the blood, then we are subject to the death angel. Only by staying in Jesus through the long night of death are we secured. Once the death angel has passed, then we are safe to venture out. But even when we venture out, we must remember that the only reason that we can do so is that we are covered by the redeeming substitutionary blood of the Passover, Jesus.

23 For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the

Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

It was God's intention to smite the Egyptians. They were wicked and had oppressed His chosen people. Incidentally, we are to remember that God is keeping His promises. He made promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He is not doing this because Israel is righteous and holy and good. They are not so. When the death angel passes through, He will kill the Israelites as easily as He kills the Egyptians. It is not the righteousness of the Hebrews that saves them. It is only the blood. The lamb represents an innocent victim that is slain instead of them. They are guilty but they acknowledge their guilt by offering an animal to die in their place. They are redeemed by the innocent animal who becomes their sacrifice.

When God sees the blood of the sacrifice, the blood of the Passover, He passes over the Israelites. He would have stopped by and judged them had they not put the blood on their house. If they thought they were holy, or that God would make a difference between them and the Egyptians, they would be horribly mistaken. God would rightly judge them both for their guilt as well as their presumption.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. 25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

This was to be a perpetual ordinance. Israel was to always remember that God graciously passed over them by means of blood. Thus, this sacrifice becomes the paradigm for all future sacrifices.

In the New Testament, it becomes clear to us that these animal sacrifices were not effective to take away sins. God allowed Israel to come near Him because of sacrifice but they had to be offered continually, year after year. This should have caused Israel to be both thankful and frustrated. They would be thankful that God provided a means for them to draw near to Him. But they would have to be frustrated that the blood of bulls and goats was never able to take away sins. But Jesus has taken away sins.

When ye come to the land- The Lord makes no bones about it. They will come to the land and they will take the land. God does this but not

without a great struggle. There are many battles facing impossible odds but God provides for them. Also, even though they do in some sense ‘take’ the land, God does not describe it that way. All of their hard work and warfare is to be seen as God’s gracious provision for them. They are ‘given’ the land. It is a gift. So, their works are merely a subset of God’s grace.

Because God has been gracious we are to remember. We remember through memorials. The memorial itself is both a remembrance on our part and a declaration of promise on God’s part. See, I have sworn and I will do. I give you blood to bolster your confidence. If you covered by the blood, then rest assured, I will keep my Word. Even if you hear lamentations right next door to you, do not fear, for I will neither kill you nor leave you alone. I will be a God to you and you will be My people.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

Just as Abraham’s children were circumcised, not knowing what was going on so, too, the children of Israel were participants in the Lord’s Passover, not knowing what was going on. We are expressly told that they did not know what was going on and that some day they would come into some understanding. And when they do, then teach them what God has done.

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.

When you children ask you why you do what you do, what will you tell them? First. You must be doing something they have to ask about. We must keep the Lord’s Service, doing what He commanded. If we have baptized our children, then we must be able to give an account to them about who God is, what He has done, what their requirements to Him are and what will happen if they forsake the covenant of the Lord.

Furthermore, if our children eat of the Lord’s Passover, we must tell them all that God has done. How He saved Israel from the Egyptians and even from the righteous judgment of God. They were saved not because they were holy before the Lord but because the Lord received a lamb on their

behalf. This corresponds directly to our Passover Lamb, Jesus, whom God provided on behalf of His people and all people everywhere. And Jesus is better than the Passover Lamb because He was the perfect man who died on behalf of all imperfect men. Thus, the blood of Jesus actually takes away sins and makes the guilty guiltless.

Furthermore, we must tell them that to trample under the Old Covenant signs and symbols was a great sacrilege but to trample under the blood of Jesus is much worse. Thus, those who lie in this covenant are held to even a higher degree of wrath than the those in the Old Covenant. This should cause us to fear but only a fear that would drive us into the house covered by the blood of Jesus. If we stay in the house covered by the blood, then we are showing our faith that God will keep His promises and we are completely safe. If we leave the blood, seeking the concerns of the world, then we are in great danger.

God does indeed make a distinction but the distinction is not about who are the most holy race. The Israelites were no more deserving of God's favor than the Egyptians. It is about who will trust in the One true God and who will submit to His way of salvation.

This do and thou shalt live.

EXHORTATION

And the people bowed the head and fell prostrate before the Lord. Too bad the Israelites were not able to fully follow the Lord. But we do have here a great example of faith. When Moses spoke these words, the people responded in simply obedience. They acquiesced to the will of God. They bowed their stiff necks and humbled themselves before the Lord.

This is all that the Lord asks us to do. Once we do this, He then empowers us to walk in His goodness. Our great danger is to wax fat and kick. As soon as we forget that we are hiding within the posts and lintel of Jesus's blood, we venture out into a dangerous place.

But if we peek out and see that there is destruction in the streets, then we will always retreat to Jesus. This is simply agreeing with God that Jesus is our only hope and stay.