

Place: Lurgan Baptist 28:7:2013

Readings: Exodus 12:1-14

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

8. “WHAT MEAN YE BY THIS SERVICE ?”

During the American Civil War, a man visited a cemetery near Chickamauga in the state of Georgia. While walking through the burial grounds, he noticed a young man decorating a fresh grave. Upon making an inquiry he learned that he had an old mother at home, and three brothers in the war. When it was his time to go and fight in the war, another man offered to take the young man's place so that he could continue to care and look after his mother. Not long after he went into battle this man was killed. Later, the man who had been observing all these things walked back by the grave and noticed the young man had made a homemade cross for the headstone. On that cross he had carved these words, “He died for me.” This chapter is a detailed explanation of the first feast in Israel's calendar year. Indeed if you look at (Ex Ch 12) you will notice two significant phrases.

1. “The First Month,” (12:2)

The Jewish civil calendar began in the autumn of the year, but the Jewish religious calendar begins in the spring. *Passover meant the beginning of months.* It was the beginning of months because it was the birthday of a nation. The birthday of a soul is also the beginning of months, because the day of the new birth overshadows

the day of our natural birth. Then the past is under the blood, forgiven and forgotten by God, “ *old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.* ” (2 Cor 5:17) “ *The first month,* ” but the reason why we have to have a first month, is because of another phrase.

2. “The First Born,”

(12:12) You see, God has condemned our first birth. The first born in the land of Egypt were condemned to die. Now you may be proud of your first birth. You may say, “ *I was born into a wonderful family, with a great deal of talent,* ” but God rejects your first birth and affirms that you must have a second birth. “ *Ye must be born again.* ” (Jn 3:5) Now this is why the Passover lamb was needed. Israel was in bondage, but more than that, death was coming and the only people that could be saved from death were those protected by the blood of the lamb. (12:4-6) Now one of the problems with reading through a passage such as this one is that some of us are too familiar with it. What we need to do is to put ourselves in the sandals of those who were hearing Moses face to face.

Can you imagine receiving these instructions for the first time ? Remember the Hebrews had never done anything like this before. They had never smeared the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. They had never heard of such a thing as an “ exodus. ” Who had ? When had a whole nation, 2 million people picked up in a single night and left the country where they had been living for 430 years ? This was all new stuff and it must have stunned these soon to be freed slaves. Can you

picture a godly Hebrew family as they hear Moses repeat God's instruction? "You're to take a lamb, cut its throat. And with a bunch of hyssop you are to smear the blood on the doorposts. Have you got it? Okay, and you are also to smear some of that blood on the lintel, that's the horizontal beam above the doorway. Those are the only places that you are to put that blood. Do you understand?" I mean what logical reason was there for doing those things with the lamb's blood? You say, "Well, God told them to do it." That's exactly it. Indeed from that significant day to this present day, the Jewish people remember Passover. It was a "**memorial**," to be celebrated to keep alive in Israel the story of the Exodus. (12:14, 13:8-10) Indeed look at (12:25-26) So this feast commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and it tells us that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor 5:7) Now I want to speak on these words, "What mean ye by this service?" and I want to say that it was a service that reflected,

(1) THE PROVISION OF THE LAMB

You see, even the firstborn of the people of Israel would have been slain had it not been for the special provision that God made. And what was that provision? Well, look if you will at (12:3) Just think of this. *A little lamb was worth more than all the wealth of Egypt.* Now the word "*lamb*," is the general figure that is used to typify the Lord Jesus. In the book of Revelation the word is used some 28 times. The word appears at least 5 times in (Ex Ch 12) You see,

(a) The Lamb was to be SPOTLESS:

Look if you will at (12:5) It was to be the finest of the flock. Indeed if this lamb was broken, blind, bruised, or diseased, it was absolutely no use, you see, nothing but a perfect sacrifice could satisfy the demands of a holy God. (Lev 22:21) In the course of time, Israel flagrantly disobeyed this command, for in Malachi's day the Lord brought the charge against them, that they offered imperfect animals as sacrifices to God. (Malachi 1:6) What they were doing was this, they were bringing the leftovers to God. My ... is the Lord just coming in for your leftovers? If you have any time left, after your wheeling and dealing, you'll give it to God. If you have any money left, after spending so much on self, you'll tip the Lord. If you have any energy left, you'll do a wee job for the Lord. *Is this how you are treating the Lord? God requires your best but are you just giving Him the leftovers?*

Now why did God place such emphasis on the perfection of this lamb? Well, surely it was because this lamb was typical of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In requiring the lamb to be perfect God was anticipating the perfection of His Son. For had there been one spot, in Christ, then He would have been incapable of being a sacrifice for sin. But the New Testament contains extensive and eloquent testimony to the perfection and purity of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul states, "He knew no sin." (2 Cor 5:21) The apostle Peter says, "He did no sin." (1 Pet 2:22) And the apostle John declares, "In Him was no sin." (1 Jn 3:5) These three testimonies form a united witness to the perfection and purity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was perfect as the babe of Bethlehem

perfect as the boy of Nazareth, perfect as the Lamb of God upon the cross. “ *Yea He is altogether lovely.* ” (S.S. 5:16)

(b) The Lamb was to be SUFFICIENT:

Look if you will at (12:3-4) We never read “ *If the lamb be too little for the household.* ” No, the lamb was to be sufficient. It is interesting to trace the ever widening circle affected by the precious death of the Lamb of God. In (Gen 22:8) we find the sacrifice of Christ in relation to **One Person**. Do you recall what Abraham said to Isaac ? “ *My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.* ” The death of Christ first of all was for God alone. He found His perfect satisfaction in a work that met all the claims of divine justice. Then in (Ex 12:3) the lamb meets the need of **One Family**. Do you see what (12:3) says “ *a lamb for an house.* ” Then in the Jewish economy a lamb was offered each day for **One Nation**. The writer to the Hebrews says “ *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.* ” (Heb 10:11)

Then in (Jn 1:29) it is the Lamb in relation to the whole world. For John cries, “ *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.* ” His precious death is sufficient for all, and then finally in the Book of Revelation we have these wonderful words. “ *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them heard I saying blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the*

throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. ” (5:12-14) That’s the whole universe joining in ascribing to Him the glory that is His due. My can you see the widening circle ? **A Lamb in relation to One Person: A Lamb in relation to One Family: A Lamb in relation to One Nation: A Lamb in relation to One World: A Lamb in relation to One Universe:**

(c) The Lamb was to be SLAIN:

“ *And the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it in the evening.* ” (12:6) A living lamb, however carefully selected, could not save the Israelites, it had to die. So Christ’s life of righteousness, apart from the cross would have availed us nothing. The unvarying teaching of Scripture from beginning to end is, “ *without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.* ” (Heb 9:22) Now did you notice the time the lamb had to be slain ? “ *In the evening.* ” (12:6) Another rendering has it “ *between the two evenings.* ” It is said that this would be at 3 o’clock in the afternoon, the very hour when Christ finished His redemptive work on the cross. (Deut 16:6) The Lamb was slain. The poet put it like this.

***When we see Thee as the victim
Bound to the accursed tree
For our guilt and folly stricken
All our judgement borne by Thee
Lord we own with hearts adoring
Thou hast loved us unto blood
Glory, glory, everlasting be to Thee
Thou Lamb of God***

(d) The Lamb was to be a SUBSTITUTE:

You see, the lamb would receive as their substitute the death the firstborn deserved to die. The Biblical doctrine of substitution is a basic teaching of Christianity. Paul declares, “ *Christ died for us.* ” (Rom 5:8) “ *Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.* ” And then he brought it down to a personal level for he said, “ *the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.* ” (Gal 2:20)

***Isn't it wonderful to know the Lamb Personally.
Isn't it wonderful to see the Lamb Biblically.***

For the doctrine of the Lamb pervades the Holy Scriptures. Here is the grand theme of Holy Scripture. Here is the master theme of the Bible. Jonathan Edwards wrote in his “ *A History of the Work of Redemption,* ” “ *Christ and His redemption are the subject of the whole Word of God.* ” For example,

- * In Genesis Ch 22 we have the Lamb Propheted !
- * In Exodus Ch 12 we have the Lamb Typified !
- * In Isaiah Ch 53 we have the Lamb Personified !
- * In John Ch 1 we have the Lamb Identified !
- * In John Ch 19 we have the Lamb Crucified !
- * In Revelation Ch 22 we have the Lamb Glorified !

***Isn't it wonderful to know the Lamb Personally.
Isn't it wonderful to see the Lamb Biblically.
Isn't it wonderful to follow the Lamb Wholeheartedly.***

For speaking of the 144,000 in the Tribulation, John

says “ *these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.* ” (Rev 14:4) Is that you ? Are you following in His footsteps ? Wholeheartedly ? Enthusiastically ? Zealously? “ What mean ye by this service ? ” (1)

(2) THE PROTECTION BY THE LAMB

And this protection has a two fold aspect to it. They were protected,

(a) From DESTRUCTION by the Blood of the Lamb:

Look if you will at (12:13 12:23) Now all of this tells us three things.

1. The Blood of the Lamb had to be SHED:

Look if you will at (12:6) In other words, ***the death of the Lamb had to be Accomplished.*** Its blood was shed. Now this is a most remarkable statement. I mean we would expect it to read “ *and the whole congregation of Israel shall kill them in the evening.* ” That is, the lambs. But it actually reads “ *shall kill it,* ” singular as if to impress upon the people of Israel and us the deeper truth that all the lambs (plural) that were to be slain typified one lamb, the unique and solitary Lamb of God. My there was only Lamb before God's mind, the Lamb of Calvary, and in God's sight there is only person who can effectually die on behalf of others and that is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. “ **Not all the blood of beasts,** ”

2. The Blood of the Lamb had to be SPRINKLED:

Look if you will at (12:7) *The death of the lamb had to be Accomplished, but the death of the lamb had to be Appropriated.* It was not enough that a Hebrew father kill the lamb. No, for it was by means of the hyssop, a little plant, (1 Kings 4:33) that the blood of this little lamb was applied to the doorposts. (12:21-22) What does it signify ? Faith. For just as the hyssop was the means which conveyed the blood from the basin to the doorposts, so faith makes the atonement of Christ of personal benefit to us. *Righteousness demands the sacrifice, love provides the sacrifice and faith appropriates the sacrifice.* Is this not exactly what Paul teaches in the book of Romans ? He tells that a person comes into a right relationship with God through faith in the blood of Christ. (3:25) Its not good enough that the death of Christ is accomplished, that death must be appropriated. My have you appropriated it ? Do you see Him as the one who “ *bare your sins in His own body on the tree ?*” (1 Pet 2:24) Have you made Christ your Saviour ? Can you say with the hymn-writer,

**Upon a life I did not live
Upon a death I did not die
Another's life, another's death
I stake my whole eternity**

3. The Blood of the Lamb had to be SEEN:

For God says “ *When I see the blood I will pass over you.*” (12:12-13) Who of us does see and will see all the value of that precious blood ? We trust it, but God

sees it. The Jew could not see the blood when on the inside but he trusted it. God saw it and that night was called the Passover and the feast has ever since been known as the Passover. (12:13) Now of course this meant that they were exempt from judgement, but it meant more than that. The verb “ *pasach,*” occurs in three other passages. In (2 Sam 4:4) its rendered “ *become lame.*” In (1 Kings 18:21) its rendered “ *halt.*” In (Is 31:5) its rendered “ *passing over to preserve as a bird her young.*” Now when you apply that to (Ex Ch 12) the thought conveyed is not just that God spared them, the truth is that He stood on guard as it were at every blood sprinkled door, He became their Saviour. My do you know what makes us perfectly safe ? The blood of the Lamb. Here is the ground of our salvation. Do you know something ?

So many theologians and preachers like to talk about Jesus Christ as a Saviour and Teacher, but they would rather not talk about His blood. But we believe in the precious blood of Christ. We believe in the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, Jesus Christ shedding His blood for our sins. Now the reason for all this talk about the blood is very simple. “ *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission, no forgiveness of sins.*” (Heb 9:22) (a) But they were protected,

(b) From DOUBT by the Word of the Lord:

The ground of our salvation is the Blood of the Lamb, but the ground of our assurance is the Word of the Lord. Their salvation depended on **what God saw,** “ *when I see the blood,*” their assurance depended on

what God said, “ *I will pass over you.* ” You see, the blood of the lamb made safe, the word of the Lord made them sure. The one gave them security, the other gave them confidence. What did it matter to a blood sheltered Israelite how he felt, what he feared, as long as God was true to His Word ? Do you lack assurance this ? Have you no settled peace in your heart ? Could it be that it stems from the fact that you have made your own feelings, something subjective, the ground of your assurance, instead of the Word of the Lord ? Does God speak the truth ? If He does, then get rid of your fears, because of the blood of the Lamb you are safe, because of the Word of the Lord you are sure. (Jn 5:24) “ ***What mean ye by this service ?*** ” (1) (2)

(3) THE PRESERVATION THROUGH THE LAMB

Tell me, is Christ still appealing to you ? Once you spoke of Him as the Shulamite maid in the Song of Solomon. *To you He was the chiefest among ten thousand* (5:10) but what about now ? Then “ *every day with Jesus was sweeter than the day before,* ” but what about now ? Are you still in love with Him ? Are you still drawn out to Him ? Do you still feed on Him ? Was this not what the Israelites were to do ? Look if you at (12:8-11) Five times in these four verses the children of Israel were instructed to “ *eat,* ” the body of the lamb. My this is what we are to do. We trust in Christ to obtain life, we feed on Christ to sustain life. Will you notice that,

(a) We must “ feed on the Lamb,” for STRENGTH:

You see, it was not enough for these captives to be rescued from danger, they had a journey before them and they needed strength for the journey. The blood of the lamb ensured safety, but the flesh of the lamb conveyed sustenance. Now who are we to feed on ? Christ. (Jn 6:56) Notice, that we are to feed,

1. On His WORK:

Do you see what (12:8) says “ *Eat the flesh in that night roast with fire.* ” The Passover lamb was first slain, then roasted, but Christ was first roasted, then slain. Does this not speak of the judgment our Saviour endured at the hands of God, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us ? When all God’s “ *waves and billows were gone over Him.* ” (Ps 42:7) My is that what you are mind is occupied with come Lord’s day morning, when you sit at this Table ? Do you meditate on His work ? Or do you turn your back on this Table and forget about His worth ?

2. On His WISDOM:

Do you see God’s division of the lamb in (12:9) ? I take it that the head may speak of the wisdom of Christ and we find that largely in the epistles.

3. On His WALK:

Do you revel in the sinless life of the Lord Jesus ? Do you feed on His work, His wisdom, His walk and,

4. On His WEALTH:

“ *The inward parts.* ” Do you know something ? Every Israelite had a whole lamb at his disposal. John Wesley said, that “ *he had a whole Christ as His Saviour a*

whole Bible as his guide, and a whole world as his parish.” There’s a whole Christ for each of us ! My we know Him as Saviour from the penalty of sin, but do we know Him as the One who delivers from the power of sin and self ? Do you know Him as a Saviour from the cares that weigh you down ? From the fears that play you up ? (a)

(b) We must “feed on the Lamb,” in HOLINESS:

“*And unleavened bread,*” (12:8) Now leaven is the yeast, the substance that makes the dough rise. Now great emphasis was laid on this. (12:20) Leaven in the Bible is emblematic of evil. No wonder Paul says, “*purge out the old leaven.*” (1 Cor 5:6) You see, if there are particles of the old leaven within our borders, then its goodbye to Christian joy.

***One cherished sin within the heart
One evil thought received
The joy of Christ must need’s depart
The Holy Spirit grieved***

My it’s as only as we are separated from what is repugnant to God that we can really feed on Christ.

(c) We must “feed on the Lamb,” with EXPECTANCY:

Did you notice how they were to eat it ? (12:11) They stood as pilgrims in a strange land but their home was waiting for them on the other side. My they were to eat the lamb in haste because they expected the

imminent coming of the Lord. My do we ? Are we ready to hear the shout ? Are we ready to meet the Lord in the air ? Oh, you say, “*I’m under the blood.*” But what about the wrongs that have never been put right ? What about the relationships that have never been mended ? What about the apologies that have never been made ? What about the books that have never been burned ? What about the family that have never been warned ?

“What mean ye by this service ?” (1) (2) (3) My the feast of the Passover is telling us that “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*” (1 Cor 5:7) How will you respond ? One day in January 1858 Francis Ridley Havergal was visiting the art museum in Dusseldorf, Germany. She was gazing on Domenico Feti’s painting entitled “*Behold the Man.*” As she stood there gazing on the thorn crowned Saviour she read the caption underneath, “*I did this for Thee. What hast thou done for Me ?*” Deeply moved, Francis scribbled some lines that flashed in her mind, and wrote them down on a piece of paper. Reading them over they did not satisfy here, so she tossed them into the fire, but they fell out untouched. Some months later she showed them to her father who encouraged her to preserve them. It was this very hymn that launched her career.

***I gave my life for thee
My precious blood I shed
That thou might ransomed be
And quickened from the dead
I gave, I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for Me ?***

