

Place: Lurgan Baptist 15:1:2008

Readings: Leviticus 23:5 Exodus 12:1-14

## FOCUS ON THE FEASTS

### 2. THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

Thomas Jefferson did many great things during his lifetime, but he wanted only three of them mentioned at his grave for posterity to remember. Number three, was the founding of the University of Virginia. Number two was the authorship of the Virginia statue for religious freedom. And number one was the authorship of the Declaration of Independence. He did not even want it mentioned that he was the President of the United States of America. We know how the Declaration of Independence states this matter of freedom, “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are endowed equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*” The “*Declaration of Independence,*” for Israel was the Passover. “*In the fourteenth of the first month at even is the Lord’s Passover.*” ( Lev 23:5 ) This was a declaration for them of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It meant life because those who were protected by the blood of the lamb were not slain by the Lord. It meant liberty because Israel was delivered from bondage. And it meant the pursuit of happiness because deliverance

meant they were on their way to the Promised Land. Now the Passover is the first of these great feasts of Jehovah, indeed it is the foundation and starting point of all God’s dealings with His people as a nation. If you look at ( Ex Ch 12 ) you will notice two significant phrases.

#### 1. “*The First Month,*” ( 12:2 )

The seventh month of the civil year became the first month of the ecclesiastical year. 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.* God was about to reveal Himself in a new way. Up to now He had revealed Himself in a variety of ways, but not as Saviour and Redeemer. Up to now Israel had existed only as a horde of downtrodden slaves, with no national status or aspiration. Now a new beginning was made in their history, through God’s power. *The past with its bondage and subsequent miseries is blotted out.* They are now redeemed from slavery by blood and the power of omnipotence.

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. It’s interesting to notice in Scripture that God rejected several first born individuals. God rejected Cain and chose Abel. ( Gen 4:1 ) God rejected Ishmael and chose Isaac ( Gen 16:1 ) God rejected Esau and chose Jacob ( Gen 25:19 ) God cannot accept your first birth. 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 were 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 ) ***Just think of it, a little lamb was worth more than all the wealth of Egypt.*** 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 in order to understand this feast a little more I want to draw your attention to 3 simple words that for me summarise this passage.

### **(1) THE SELECTION OF THE LAMB**

Can you picture an Israelite family going out to the flocks of sheep and selecting a lamb to be slain ? Yet even in their selection they were not left to their own ideas and methods. You see, the Lord gave specific

directions for the selection of the lamb. 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. Of this the late Andrew Bonar said, “*the first altar exhibited a slain lamb. The first act of God for Israel concerned a slain lamb. The first deed of the new dispensation was presenting the true lamb. And the opening of the sanctuary above exhibits a slain lamb.*” The word appears at least 5 times in ( Ex Ch 12 ) First we read of “*a lamb,*” ( 12:3 ) then of “*the lamb,*” ( 12:4 ) and then “*your lamb.*” ( 12:5 ) Don’t you like that ? A lamb, the lamb, your lamb. The indefinite has become definite and the impersonal has become personal. Is that not how it was in each of our experiences ? in our unsaved state, Christ appeared to us as nothing more than a Lamb, we saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him, but when the Holy Spirit awakened us, and turned our gaze on Christ, we saw Him as the Lamb, and when by faith we received Him as Saviour we were able to say “*your lamb, my lamb, our lamb.*” Now according to the Word of God,

#### **(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 )

*No mortal can with Him compare  
Among the sons of men  
Fairer is He than all the fair  
That fill the heavenly train*

Now if you look at ( 12:3 ) and compare it with ( 12:6 ) you will notice that there was a four day testing period. This four day period gave ample opportunity to test it and find out a blemish if there was any. Was it not the same with the Lord Jesus ? The Lord Jesus was well tested. His life on earth was the testing time. Heaven, hell, and earth tested Him and we have the witness from each that He is the Lamb “ *without blemish.* ” The **Father** testified from heaven, “ *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* ” ( Matt 3:17 ) The **demons** cried, “ *I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God.* ” ( Mk 1:24 ) **Man** also testified. Pilate the Roman Governor said, “ *I find in Him no fault at all.* ” ( Jn 18:38 ) So the three spheres of the universe, heaven, hell, and earth testify to His sinless-ness and crown Him with the crown of spotless holiness. Oh, precious, perfect, sinless, spotless, stainless Lamb of God is He  
“ *without blemish and without spot.* ” ( 1 Pet 1:19 ) (a)

**(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. It would have left the question of sin and a broken law unsettled and unsatisfied. The unvarying teaching of Scripture from beginning to end is, “ *without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.* ” ( Heb 9:22 ) Therefore the Lord Jesus came forth, the sinless and spotless One upon whom sin and death had no claim, and He of His own free, voluntary will, gave his life for sinners.

***There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heaven and let us in***

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, when God selected the Passover lamb He intended the death of the lamb to be a substitute, in the place of others, in the stead of others. Indeed the need for a substitute was clearly demonstrated ever from the moment sin entered the human race. The aprons of fig leaves Adam and Eve made for themselves could not cover their sin and shame so the Lord provided the substitute. “ *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.* ” ( Gen 3:21 ) 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 )

*The wrath of God that was my due  
Upon the Lamb was laid  
And by the shedding of His blood  
The debt for me is paid*

***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 Prophesied !*

*\* 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 !  
(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 & 20:23 ) 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  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could gave the guilty conscience peace  
Or wash away the stain*

*But Christ the Heavenly Lamb  
Takes all our guilt away  
A sacrifice of nobler worth  
And richer blood than they.”*

*Did you notice that the blood had to be shed by Israel ?  
“ And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel,” ( 12:6 )* Not that every particular individual .... man, woman, and child shared in the act itself but they did so representatively, and the fulfilment of this aspect of our type is plainly brought out in the gospels. My .... ever sinner had a hand in the death of Christ, for the world was represented around the cross. ( Acts 4:26-27 ) Here they are representatives of man’s wisdom, and power and religion. They differed in many things, but in this they agreed that the Son of God must die. They all played a part in the death of Jesus Christ, but then so

did we. For was it not my sin and yours that nailed Him to the tree ? ( 1 Pet 2:24 )

*“ I pierced those sacred hands and feet  
That never touched or walked in sin  
I broke the heart that only beat  
The souls of sinful men to win.”*

## **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.* Now in both the Old Testament and the New Testament numerous passages speak of sprinkling the blood. The terms “ *strike,*” and “ *sprinkle,*” convey the same thought namely applying. It was not enough that a Hebrew father kill the lamb the blood of the lamb had to be applied to the doorposts. Now notice for example,

### **1. WHERE the Blood was Applied:**

Look at ( 12:7 ) None of the blood was to be put on the threshold or sprinkled on the floor, it was far to precious for that, it was to costly to be trampled under foot. Rather it was to be above them and around them. Placed between our soul and God the blood secures eternal salvation, trampled under foot, it incurs eternal judgment. ( Heb 10:28-29 )

### **2. HOW the Blood was Sprinkled:**

For it was by means of the hyssop that the blood of this little lamb was applied to the doorposts. ( 12:21-22 )

Hyssop was a little plant that grew out of walls and was common in Egypt and Palestine. In the book of 1 Kings ( 4:33 ) hyssop is contrasted with the great and majestic cedars of Lebanon. It is therefore symbolic of something very small. 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. **My .... 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. 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 ) (1) (2)

### **(3) THE ATTRACTION IN THE LAMB**

Now I don't know how it is in your home, but if Catherine sets me down something that's not too attractive, I don't feel like eating it, but when there is something appealing, then we will eat. 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 ) 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 Spiritual Health:***

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. Now roasting is perhaps the slowest method for preparing meat for consumption, and suggests the most painful. Roasting by fire speaks of the judgment our Saviour endured at the hands of God, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. When it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. When all God's "*waves and billows were gone over Him.*" ( Ps 42:7 ) Is that what you are mind is occupied come Lord's day morning, when you sit at this Table ? Do you meditate on His work ?

#### **2. On His WISDOM:**

Do you see God's division of the lamb in ( 12:9 ) ? His head, his legs, his inwards. I take it that the head may speak of the wisdom of Christ and we find that largely in the epistles. But then we are to feed,

#### **3. On His WALK:**

Do you revel in the sinless life of the Lord Jesus ? Often I feel we do not read the Gospels enough for

there we see the Truth lived among men, and there is not a thing we need to know but we may find it in practice and precept in the life of Christ. Now tell me is your meditation of the Saviour sweet ? 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 Spiritual 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 needs 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.  
(a) (b)

#### ***(c) We must “feed on the Lamb,” with Spiritual Hope:***

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. Do we ? Are we ready to hear the shout ? Are we ready to meet the Lord in the air ? My .... fellow pilgrims saved by blood, assured by the Word, communing with the Father and Son by the Spirit, let us stand on tip toe expectancy waiting for His coming, saying “ *even so come, Lord Jesus.* ” The Feast of the Passover telling us that “ Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” ( 1 Cor 5:7 ) How will we respond ? Perhaps we should make C.T. Studd’s response ours. **“ If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”**