

Exodus Chapter 11 v 1 - Chapter 12 v 14

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[0 : 0 0] So if you have one of our Red Church Bibles, one of these, then you'll find that chapter, page 68. Page 68. And we're going to read from verse 4 of chapter 11 into chapter 12 and finish with verse 14.

Okay, so Exodus, page 68, chapter 11, beginning at verse 4. So Moses said, this is what the Lord says.

About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die. From the firstborn son of Pharaoh who sits on the throne, the firstborn son of the female slave who is at her hand mill.

And all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt, worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites, not a dog will bark at any person or animal.

Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, Go, you and all the people who follow you.

[1 : 1 8] After that I will leave. Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh. The Lord had said to Moses, Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you, so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.

Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor.

Having taken into account the number of people there are, you are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.

[2 : 3 8] That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roasted over a fire, with the head, legs, and internal organs.

Do not leave any of it until morning. If some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it, with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand.

Eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

I am the Lord. That blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

This is a day you are to commemorate. For the generations to come, you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, our lasting ordinance. Let's just pray before we come to God's word.

[3 : 45] Father, we thank you that you have given us your word. We thank you that you have revealed yourself to us, otherwise we would have never found you out.

And we pray this morning as we come before it, that we would allow it to sit over us, rather us sit over it.

Help us, Lord, we pray as we come to your word now. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, this morning and this evening, I want to look at two incidents in the life of the Israelite nation that are recorded for us in the book of Exodus, and to look how they find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

And this morning, we're going to have a look at the Passover meal, and more particularly, the Passover lamb that formed the main part of that meal.

The very last sentence that Peter read for us a little bit earlier said, this is a day you are to commemorate. And that was spoken and then written over three and a half thousand years ago.

[5 : 08] But the Passover is still today the greatest of the Jewish feasts, and it's celebrated each year by conscientious Jewish people.

That's quite remarkable to think of, isn't it? That something that happened three and a half thousand years ago is still remembered annually today.

But let me just remind you a little bit of the background to that Passover meal. I'm sure many of you are familiar with it, but let's just remind you of it.

At the time that it took place, the Jewish people, the Israelite people, had been living in Egypt for over 400 years.

And they had gone down to Egypt because there had been a famine where they were living. And they'd gone to escape that famine, and they were glad to be there, and they were treated at first very, very well.

[6 : 14] One of their own, Joseph, had gone down beforehand, and he had high offers in Egypt, and so they were welcomed, and they were well received in Egypt.

But the beginning of Exodus tells us that a time came when a pharaoh, that's a king of Egypt, came to the throne, to whom Joseph meant nothing.

Generations had passed. This pharaoh, this king, he'd never met Joseph. He knew nothing of him, and Joseph meant nothing to him.

And he looked around at this group living within his country, who had grown enormously. There had only been 70 of them who had gone down in Egypt.

Now they were a huge nation. And he looked at them, and he was very concerned about it, and saw them as a threat to his country.

[7 : 25] If they were attacked by another nation, how did he know that they wouldn't join forces with the opposition and come against them? And so instead of treating them well, he began to treat them as his slaves.

And times were hard, and increasingly hard, for the Israelites in Egypt. But God was not unaware of this, and he was not unconcerned about it.

We read that the Lord said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

And through Moses, God determined that he would bring them out of Egypt, and he would give them their own country, one flowing, as he said, with milk and honey to a lovely land.

But you know, that's just one thing for us to take note of. In a sense, if you took nothing else away from this morning, do take this away. There is never a situation where God is unaware of our situation and unconcerned about it.

[9 : 07] I wonder if you remember that incident in Jesus' life where they were on a boat on the lake, and there was a tremendous storm came up, and his disciples, many of whom were fishermen and knew that sea well, they were terrified.

And Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat, and they came to him and said, Don't you care? They were going to drown. Don't you care?

And sometimes that thought passes through our minds. We're going through perhaps a particularly tough situation in our life. We're puzzled by it.

And there is the temptation to think, Lord, don't you care? The answer to that is always that God is aware of it and that God does care about it.

But how was Moses going to persuade this Pharaoh, this king of Egypt, to let his people go?

[10 : 16] Why should Pharaoh let his slave force go? Well, I'm sure many of you know that a series of plagues were sent upon the country.

Blood in the rivers, frogs, gnats, flies, boils, hails, locusts, darkness throughout the land. And a pattern was very quickly established.

Whilst the plague was in force, Pharaoh said, I'll let your people go. But as soon as it stopped, Pharaoh changed his mind.

I'm not going to let my slave force go. And his heart, we are told, became more and more hardened. And he was determined not to let them go.

And then finally, the worst of all the plagues was threatened that there would be the death of the firstborn throughout the land unless Pharaoh let them go.

[11 : 32] Notice, there was always that that opt out for Pharaoh. Let my people go and this will not happen to you.

And this wasn't simply some capricious threat by God. God called Israel his firstborn. And he said, you are threatening, you are enslaving my firstborn.

Unless you let my firstborn go, then your firstborn will suffer. And this is where the Passover meal comes into being and the Passover lamb.

Moses is given instructions by God to pass on to the Israelites which if they follow will lead to their deliverance.

When you think about it, it was a great act of faith of Moses. In fact, in Hebrews 11, Moses is commended for his faith in giving the instructions for the Passover.

[12 : 43] Because if they'd gone into all this palaver of this meal with the blood over the lintels of their houses and nothing had happened the next day, Moses would have looked pretty foolish, wouldn't he?

but the instructions were given. They involved a meal to be prepared in each household the main constituency of which was to be a lamb.

Let's look in a little bit more detail at this lamb, how it was chosen and what was done with it. very precise instructions were given about it.

They were to take an animal for their meal that night. It was to be an animal that was without defect.

defect. So they couldn't look to their flocks and say, well, where's the one we can do without? We'll get rid of that one and have that for a meal.

[13 : 47] They were to look for one that was without defect. So physically as it looked at it, there was nothing wrong with it. There was no broken leg, there was nothing about it that was a defect.

Being an old English teacher in every sense of the word. I love coming across new words and I was reading a novel of George Eliot's a little while ago and I came across a husband being described as being a fleckless husband.

Now I'm sure one or two of you have heard of feckless husbands but this was different. This was a fleckless husband and what it meant was somebody without fault, without blemish.

they were fleckless. Well this lamb had to be fleckless. It had to be without any fault.

And in order to do that they looked after it for several days. I wonder if you noted that that on the tenth day of the month the lamb was taken for each household but it was only three or four days later that that animal was to be sacrificed.

[15 : 05] they had time to look it over and make sure that it fit the instructions that it was indeed without defect.

and then after it was killed the blood of that lamb was to be put on their door frames on the lintel and down the sides.

The people would sleep in their houses beneath the blood of the lamb. and it was to be roasted and it was to be eaten.

A little bit further on in the passage we didn't have time to read it all this morning but if we'd gone on as far as verse 46 pointed out very clearly that not one of the bones of the animal was to be broken even after it had been killed.

So those were some of the very precise instructions that were given about the lamb it was to be without defect its blood was to be put over the household not a bone in its body was to be broken.

[16 : 20] But what was the point of this? What was the significance of it? Well verse 13 explains the significance of it.

God says to them this blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are when I see the blood I will pass over you and of course that's how it gets the name the Passover meal when the blood is seen God would pass over that household and no harm would come to them they would be rescued from that impending tragedy and if you read on you'll know indeed that that is exactly what happened no wonder that the Jewish people still remember it today from there they would go on they would have their freedom they would be redeemed from slavery and they would gain their freedom in the promised land because they had been passed over eventually it wasn't Moses who took the people of

Israel into the promised land it was Joshua and one of the first things that Joshua did when they got over into Canaan was to ensure that the people remembered and commemorated the Passover meal in Joshua 5 we read this on the evening of the 14th day of the month exactly the time it was designated while camped Gilgal on the plains of Jericho the Israelites celebrated the Passover what a wonderful experience that must have been to celebrate the Passover on the other side and to look back and to remember God saved us God redeemed us God has brought us into our promised land just as he said he would so that's a tremendous real historical event that has tremendous importance to the

Jewish people but as I said at the beginning what I want to show this morning is how this finds its fulfillment in Jesus that even though that event is historical and tremendously important in and of itself it points forward to something and someone who is even more important on two occasions John the Baptist saw Jesus coming and he had his followers around about him and he pointed to Jesus and he said behold the Lamb of God and on one of those occasions he said behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and surely at least partly in mind John had the Passover Lamb but even more precisely

Paul writes to the church at Corinth and he says this Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit makes that direct link between the Passover Lamb in Exodus and Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed and of course when was it that Jesus was crucified it was at the time of the Passover meal there are no coincidences in God's word it was all planned but did Paul mean anything more than that did he mean anything more than oh well Jesus was sacrificed at the Passover time therefore he's our Passover Lamb well Peter makes it even more explicit he writes to Christians then from scattered throughout the world and he said to them you were redeemed remember the idea of redemption being brought out of slavery he says you were redeemed not with gold or with silver but with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect you see there Peter is taking in the very language from

[21 : 24] Exodus and referring to Jesus about it he says you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect how do we know that Jesus was without blemish or defect well of course his life was scrutinised throughout his life the religious leaders were always trying to find fault in him he threatened them because of their hypocrisy and they would have loved to have found fault in him but they couldn't even at his trial the only way they could bring anything against him would be by paying people to come and lie about him but his perfection his flecklessness is shown tremendously through that trial and in the hours leading up to his death if you've got a bible with you just turn for a moment to luke's gospel and chapter 23 let me just get the page reference for you while you're looking it up for those of you who are using the church bible luke 23 on page 1059 let's look first of all at verses 13 to 15 we read the chapter the people and said to them you brought me this man as one who is inciting the people to rebellion i have examined him in your presence just as the passover lamb was examined i've examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him neither has herod for he sent him back to us as you can see he has done nothing to deserve death therefore i will punish him and then release him it's a little bit of a strange idea that pilot has of justice i've found there's absolutely nothing wrong with him so i'll punish him and then release him but there you have pilot and herod no friends of jesus indeed no friends of each other but they looked at the charges that had been brought against jesus and they said we find no basis for these charges we find nothing wrong with this man and then later when jesus is on the cross between those two criminals one of the criminals joins in the crowd who sneer at him and laugh at him but the other criminal says don't you fear god since you are under the same sentence we are punished justly we are getting what our deeds deserve it was a horrible death but this criminal recognized well okay in a sense we can't complain about it you know we've done the crime now we're suffering the punishment harsh though it may be but then he turns to jesus and he says but this man has done nothing wrong he's blameless he's without

fault he's without defect he's the eternal son of god and then the centurion this roman centurion as he witnesses jesus's death as he witnesses the remarkable fact that as he comes toward the end when normally people could hardly get a breath out that jesus with a loud voice says father into your hands i commit my spirit this centurion praises god and says surely this was a righteous man so in all of those hours before his death just as the passover lamb was checked over to make sure physically there was no blemish or defect in it jesus was scrutinized to see if any character fault could be found in him and herod and pilot and the criminal on the cross and the roman centurion all came to that same conclusion this is a righteous man without fault without defect and there were so many more details about jesus death that matched the passover lamb again his blood came forth as the spear of the soldier was thrust into his side without the shedding of the blood there can be no remission of sins and you remember the fact about the broken bones it was getting very near to the sabbath by the time those criminals were hanging on the cross sunset was approaching the romans wanted to make sure these guys died and were taken down from the cross in order that they didn't upset the jews by having them hang there on their sabbath day so he said to his soldiers go and break their legs break their legs because that would speed up their death they could no longer press down on their legs and stretch up and so stop themselves suffocating go break their legs and they did that with the two criminals but they came to

Jesus there was no need to break his leg he had already died these things says John these things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled not one of his bones would be broken so even in those very tiny details Jesus' death death is the fulfillment of the Passover lamb but what about its effect what about its significance those Israelite people who slept under the blood of the lamb were rescued rescued from a tragic death what does Paul say when he writes to the church in Thessalonica he says that you have been rescued from the coming wrath and if you are a

Christian this morning you can give thanks to God that you are rescued from that day when the Lord Jesus comes again and when everybody will have to appear before the judgment seat of God and if you are trusting resting in the blood of the lamb the redeeming death of the Lord Jesus then you are and will be rescued from the coming wrath certainly he has freed us from slavery you say well I've never been a slave the Bible tells us that anybody who is mastered by sin is a slave to that sin remember what John the Baptist said look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world he frees us from that slavery of sin a man called

Philip Edgecombe Hughes writing about a verse in Hebrews which talks about Jesus rescuing us from the power of the devil makes a link with Pharaoh he says this he destroyed the power of the devil our spiritual Pharaoh and delivered us from lifelong bondage just as the Israelites were in bondage to Pharaoh unless we are rescued by Jesus we are in bondage to the devil and then thirdly his blood assures us of a place in the promised land the new heavens and the new earth if we are trusting and resting in him we don't commemorate the

[31 : 16] Passover meal but tonight if you're here tonight you're sharing a commemoration meal communion where we remember the Lord's death for us let me close with a word from a Christian from many many years ago from the fourth century a man called John Chrysostom and he said this if the blood of a lamb then preserved the Jews unhurt in the midst of the Egyptians and in the presence of so great a destruction much more will the blood of Christ save us for whom it has been sprinkled not on our door posts but in our souls I remember as a very young

Christian a hymn that we used to sing frequently at the church I first went along to was this it was a hymn whose opening line or chorus was this I've been redeemed by the blood of the lamb saved and sanctified I am all my sins are under the blood I've been redeemed is that your testimony this morning that be your testimony this Christmas time if not it needs to be that we need to come to Jesus the Passover lamb and ask that he would rescue us or may the Lord bless his word to us we're going to for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers but with the precious blood of

Christ a lamb without blemish or defect Lord Jesus we thank you that you were and are perfect holy and righteous we thank you that you laid down your lives for people like us who are far far from that Lord may we all rest and trust in your redeeming death for any hope we have of acceptance by a holy God and any hope for an acceptance into your heaven Lord give us that faith to believe we ask in your precious name Amen