

## The Lamb of God

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John 1:19-34

When the Lord was about to deliver Israel from bondage to the Egyptians, he established a “new year” celebration for them. This came to be called the “Passover.” Exodus, chapter twelve, records the instructions that the Lord gave to Moses and the Israelites on the occasion of the very first Passover.

They were to take a lamb for each household. This lamb was to be without blemish. The lambs were slaughtered and some of the blood was applied to the doorposts and lintels of each house. The lamb was roasted and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It was to be eaten with belts fastened and with sandals on their feet. Staff in hand, the Israelites were to eat hastily because the deliverance of the Lord was very near.

On that night the Lord was to pass through the land of Egypt striking down the firstborn of both man and beast. Judgment time had come for the oppressors of God’s people. But for those who had applied the blood to the doorpost and lintel, there was no hand of judgment. They were to be passed over.

The Lord told them, *For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.* (Exodus 12:12-13) After the giving of the law at Sinai lambs would become the chief sacrificial animals in the ministry of the tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem.

And so John the Baptist said of Christ, *Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.* (John 1:29b) The judgment of God fell on the sacrificial animal and not the repenting sinner. The lamb was a substitute for the human who deserved to die.

Like the lamb in the Old Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ had come to die. *But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.* (Hebrews 2:9-10)

Jesus the Messiah would be the acceptable substitute for his redeemed people. Like the lamb without blemish he would be without sin. Only Christ would be found sinless among the sons of men. Only Christ would be able to die as a human being without blemish for those who had been tainted by sin in every part of their being.

And, just as the Passover was double edged, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ would bring either judgment or salvation. For those who reject him only judgment remains. Sin deserves eternal punishment and receives that punishment in the fires of hell. But for those who depend on Christ to provide pardon for their sins, and depend on Christ to be their righteousness, a righteousness that is perfect and acceptable to

God, there is deliverance. They come to know Christ as the Lamb of God who died for them, and they begin a journey, not to an earthly promised land but to heaven itself.

And, there is a notable difference in the scope of what Christ accomplished and what was accomplished by the Passover. The Hebrews were saved from bondage to Pharaoh. But those who trust in Jesus, the true Lamb of God, are saved from bondage to the world and its ways, to their own fleshly inclination to sin, and from the devil's power. And this deliverance is not just for Hebrews but for people from every race and tribe and nation. Christ Jesus came to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin the world.

Do you trust in Christ? Is he your savior? There is no other way to God. There is no other way to have sins washed away. There is no pardon except by faith in Jesus Christ. Only he is the acceptable Lamb of God.

by Joe Nesom