

THE RESCUE

2. Behold the Lamb of Exodus 12:1-13

Last week we began a series titled, **“THE RESCUE.”** The springboard for this series is in **Luke 24**. Two men were devastated by the arrest and brutal murder of Jesus that had transpired 3 days earlier. They had hung all their hope on a dead man — and on top of that they were confused by the reports of an empty tomb. Jesus spoke directly to their despair and their confusion

Luke 24:26-27 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

The death of Jesus on a Roman Cross was not some senseless, random event; some tragic miscarriage of justice. It was the ultimate necessity for **the rescue** of fallen man. The cross was not only the ultimate necessity, it had always been the divine **rescue plan**! In the words of Peter, Jesus was *crucified and killed, according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23)*.

From **Genesis 3** forward the whole of the Old Testament is the story of a divine rescue! The cross of Jesus casts a giant shadow across the Old Testament, pointing to and anticipating **the rescue** of fallen man recorded in the Gospels.

We began our series where Jesus began to explain **our rescue** — in the book of Genesis. The first thing we saw was the **necessity** of **our rescue** — answering the words of Jesus — *Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things*. Then we saw **our rescue** foreshadowed in the lives of Abraham and Isaac. This morning we’re going to see **our rescue** in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 12:1-13 ¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their

fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. ⁷Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I 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. ¹³The 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.

There are those who read these verses and are affirmed in their belief that the God of the Old Testament is impetuous, impatient, cruel, and blood thirsty — an all powerful deity with anger issues who cant wait to judge and destroy. But this story doesn't affirm any of that. God didn't wake up on the wrong side of bed one morning and decide it would be fun to wipe out all of the first-born in the land of Egypt. Actually, the exact opposite is true. God had been incredibly patient in His dealings with the Egyptians.

The Egyptians had been afflicting the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for centuries. Moses is 80 years old at the time of **Exodus 12**. When Moses was born his parents had to hide him because 80 years before **Exodus 12** the Pharaoh of Egypt had ordered all of the baby boys of the Israelites to be thrown into the Nile River and drowned. The Descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been under horrible oppression. In **Acts 7:6** we're told that they had been slaves in Egypt 320 years *before* Moses.

With all of that in mind, there was a tipping point, if-you-would, a moment that set in motion a series of judgments that led up to the one announced here in **Exodus 12**.

Exodus 5:1-2 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” ²But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?”

In the Egyptian Civilization the Pharaoh’s were looked upon as deity. It was believed that they descended from the sun — which they worshipped as deity by the name Ra. When you took an oath in Egypt the highest oath you could take was to use the name of Pharaoh. Pharaoh considered himself to be a god, and did not like the idea of having any competition from this God of the Hebrews.

This, by the way, is a very accurate picture of fallen man. Fallen man has set himself up as God — he is the self-appointed sovereign in his little *Kingdom of One*. Fallen man asks the same question — *Who is the God of the Bible that I should obey Him?*

The Egyptians not only worshipped Pharaoh as deity, they were deeply involved in the worship of the Sun-god, Ra. They also worshipped the wind, the moon, and the planets. They worshipped the Nile River and gave it the name Osiris, who was considered to be the goddess of fertility. They worshipped virtually ANY object or any phenomenon of nature.

The judgment pronounced in Exodus 12 was preceded by 9 plagues. Each of those nine plagues were intended to show the Egyptians, and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that the gods of Egypt were not gods at all.

Exodus 7:5 The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord

400 years and 9 plagues is a LONG time for the Lord to wait before bringing judgment — PROVING **2 Peter 3:9**

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

We have to marvel at the patience and longsuffering of God before He brings down a final judgment.

But I want us to get back to the question of Pharaoh in Exodus 5 because it is crucial to the story of our rescue. Pharaoh asked — *“Who is the Lord that I should obey HIS voice? In other words — Who is your God? What is so unique about your God? What is so unique about your faith that I should embrace it?”*

That question is the same question asked by countless men and women today. *“There are so many religions, so many versions of God, what makes your faith the exclusive and only way to God? Who is Jesus that I should obey HIM instead of Buddha or Mohammed?”*

THE answer to Pharaoh’s question, and the modern variations of his question, is found in **Exodus 12!** Pharaoh asked, *“What makes your faith so unique?”* *“What makes the God of Abraham so unique?”* The answer is — *“Look at what is at the center Biblical faith: At the very heart of the story of God is the bloody death of a helpless victim!”* The story of the Lamb is the centerpiece of the story of our rescue!

We were introduced to the Story of the Lamb last week in **Genesis 22.**

Genesis 22:2; 7-8 *Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.....⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”⁸Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”*

The story of the Lamb continues here in **Exodus 12.** Here in **Exodus 12** God declares a **final stroke of judgment** upon the land of Egypt.

Exodus 12:12 *For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I 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.

Look at the language Moses uses in explaining the Passover.

Exodus 12:23 ²³*For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow **the destroyer** to enter your houses to strike you.*

the destroyer — We have got to see what this night was all about! Whenever we chose to violate God's design for creation, our bodies, or relationships, there is going to be an inevitable breakdown, disorder and disintegration. Exodus 12 is NOT that! God says that ***the destroyer*** is coming! God is saying that on one night, in one place eternal, divine judgment justice is coming down.

DON'T MISS THIS — In an act of perfect judgment God was going to unleash ***the destroyer***. It was going to go through the greatest military and political power in the then known world like a hot knife through butter, and God said that there was only one way to face the ultimate force of His judgment — A lamb! God gave very clear instructions: "Here's the only way you can survive My judgment — Kill a lamb; eat it with your family, and put the blood on the doorposts."

I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt — Have you ever wondered why God's judgment singled out just the firstborn? Modern culture, especially western culture, is intensely individualistic. In ancient cultures people didn't think of themselves first and foremost as individuals. They thought of themselves as families. The future of the family rested with the firstborn. The identity of a family, the future of a family, was embodied in the firstborn. By judging the firstborn God was saying that is a debt over every member of every family on the face of the earth — a debt of sin.

Romans 3:23 *for **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Romans 6:23 *For **the wages** of sin is death,*

THERE ARE TWO HUGE THINGS FOR US IN EXODUS 12 concerning ^{1.} our need to be rescued and ^{2.} the means of our rescue.

1. In **Exodus 12** we are going to see that **both** the polytheistic pagan Egyptians and the descendants of Abraham needed to be rescued.

Exodus 12:22 Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

God was telling them that *the destroyer* was not just coming for Egyptians. Yes, the Israelites were oppressed and the Egyptians were the oppressor. Yes, the Israelites worshipped the One, True and Living God and the Egyptians worshipped idols. But God informed the descendants of Abraham that apart from the blood of the Lamb they could not stand before the destroyer! There in **Exodus 12:22** God let them know that they could not escape the destroyer merely because they were descendants of Abraham, or because they were monotheistic. None of that would help them. Without the blood of the lamb they would be as lost as the people in the world they hated most — the Egyptians. God wanted them to know that their deliverance from slavery and death in Egypt was not the ultimate deliverance they needed. They needed to be delivered from the bondage and debt of sin.

HERE'S THE POINT — The religious person, the moralist, needs to be rescued as much as the irreligious. It's not enough to be free from an immoral value system or become "religious." None of that delivers us from the reality of sin, the power and penalty of sin. That's why "moral" people, "religious" people, really dislike it when the Gospel — the message of **our rescue** — is clearly proclaimed — while at the same time "irreligious" people — are intrigued and attracted."

2. In **Exodus 12** we see that **our rescue** is made possible by way of a substitute.

QUOTE: Timothy Keller — *In every single house in Egypt that night there was either a dead son or a dead lamb. It was one or the other.*

The lamb was a substitute. The lamb paid the debt so the firstborn did not have to pay the debt for the family. Every firstborn son in every Hebrew home that night saw this in a profoundly visual way. As he sat at the table and saw the lamb he would think — *“The only reason I’m not dead is because the lamb is.”*

Let’s walk through the specifics of the Passover and see the incredible portrait of the Lamb

Exodus 12:1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²**“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.**

Something so powerful, so wonderful, was going to happen that they would measure time by it - set their calendars by it!

Something so powerful and so wonderful happens when the blood of Jesus is applied to your life — deliverance from the power and penalty of sin — that it brings about a NEW BEGINNING.

2 Corinthians 5.17 NKJV *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

I’m 63 years old - but life BEGAN for me on Dec. 31, 1973. The term *BORN AGAIN* takes on wonderful and fresh light for us in **Exodus 12**.

³**Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for **the** lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats,**

Notice the PROGRESSION.

v.3 - *a lamb*

v.4 - *the lamb*

v.5 - *your lamb*

This is a great picture of our perception of Jesus as the Holy Spirit progressively draws us to Christ. First we see Jesus as *a lamb*. A special teacher; one of many great religious figures. Then He becomes *the lamb*. We realize that He is MORE than just a prophet or teacher. We come to see Him as *the Only Begotten Son of God*, as *the lamb of God*. Finally, you make Jesus *your lamb*. He becomes *your Savior*; *your Lord*.

EXAMPLE: Mary Magdalene in the Garden on the first Easter morning - *Where have you taken MY Lord?* Is Jesus YOUR Lamb / YOUR Lord? He wants to be! He will be!

I pray that each and every one of you will leave here this morning knowing Jesus as *your lamb*.

4And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take.... according to what each can eat

A house might be too little for the lamb - but the lamb is NEVER too little for a household. There is more of Jesus than my home or yours can ever appreciate. There is plenty of Jesus to go around for this lost world. **THAT'S** our mission!

5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male

Jesus is the *Only Begotten Son of God*

5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old.

That is the peak year of a lamb. That is the point of its greatest value. Jesus was in His PRIME when He was slain!

7Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts

and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

This points to, pictures and anticipates the seen at Golgotha. **Verse 22** tells us that they were to slay the lamb in the basin — a little ditch at the threshold of the door. They were to put the blood on the two doorposts — the uprights; and then on the lintel — the top of the doorframe. They were essentially painting 2 crosses with THE LAMB SLAIN in the center. Jesus was crucified between 2 thieves.

***John 19:17-18** and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate*

In the pages of the Old Testament we have MINDBLOWING, MINUTE DETAILS of the cross! Blaise Pascal, one of the greatest thinkers in the history of the world, was saved when he was 31 years old. He devoted the next 8 years of his life (died at age of 39) to the study of the Scriptures.

QUOTE: Pascal — *“I am amazed at how the Lord ingeniously detailed the work of the coming Christ, and yet obscures it to those who would not want to see it.”*

How true that is! He ingeniously opens understanding to us as we desire to know Him AND obscures it from those who refuse to see.

⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Not only slain — but eaten!

HERE’S THE PICTURE — It’s not enough to merely acknowledge Jesus intellectually. We must **appropriate** Him — We must **partake** of His life!

***John 6:53** So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*

The multitudes left Jesus - *This is too hard for us!* **Listen** - This is where the rubber meets the road. Jesus must make an impact upon our hearts — He must make an impact on our lives from the inside out!

8...roasted on the fire

This is crucial to the story of **our rescue**. Fire speaks of judgment. We will see this next Sunday when we see the story of our rescue in the life of a man named Elijah. Here's the preview — God poured out on Jesus all of His wrath; the wrath that we deserved. Again — the Lamb is our substitute. As we think of the Passover lamb, roasted with fire, may we see in a fresh and radical way the judgment Jesus endured in our place for our salvation.

10And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

The Passover was NOT a drawn out process. It was an event at a point in time. There was a moment in space and time when Jesus was offered for our rescue! There is a point in time when one confesses Christ as Savior.

11In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. 12For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I 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.

Eat it with haste because AFTER you eat it I am coming and you don't know when. Be ready to go!!

HERE'S THE PICTURE — Those who trust in Jesus — appropriate Him as their personal savior and Lord, need to be *ready to go!* They need to be living like pilgrims in this world.

13The 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.

Their rescue had nothing to do with feelings. I'm sure that of the 3.5 million Jews there were some of the oldest sons who were sweating bullets! *"You sure that you got the blood out there real good dad? Top, bottom, both sides?"* It didn't matter how they felt. If the blood was there they were rescued!

I'm so GLAD that this is recorded for us because sometimes we don't FEEL saved.

HERE'S THE PICTURE — The Lord sees the Blood — not your failures. The Lord sees the blood — not your good works (or lack of them). All that He sees is the blood!

FAST FORWARD in the story of the Lamb to the Gospels.

At the age of 30 Jesus stepped out of the obscurity of life in Nazareth to begin 3 years of public ministry that was all moving towards His death on the cross. He was walking by the Jordan River in the Judean wilderness and John the baptizer *saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)*

When John said **"Behold"** he surely wanted to direct everyone's eyes to the One who was the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover Lamb. But there's more to the word **"Behold"** than just, *"Look over there! Look at that guy!"* John was saying, *"Look! Realize! Take it in! HE is THE LAMB. HE is our RESCUE! HIS blood will pay my debt. HE will endure the judgment I deserve. HE will rescue us from our sin.*

Fast forward 3 years — On the night before Jesus died He celebrated the Passover meal with the twelve men closest to Him. Check this out — There are three things you have at a Passover meal. The unleavened bread. Jesus broke that bread and gave it to the disciples. There are four cups of wine. Jesus Christ poured the wine and told them that it was the cup of the New Covenant that would be established in His shed blood. Then there's the lamb. Has it ever struck you that in all of the Gospel record there is no lamb on the table? There was no lamb **on** the table because the Lamb was **at** the table. Jesus is **the Lamb** and all of human history had been moving towards His death for **our rescue!**

CLOSE

The story of the Lamb in Exodus 12 is packed with truth that rescues — truth that transforms hearts and lives.

- 1.** Everyone needs to be rescued — some from godless idolatry, others from religious idolatry. There's only one rescuer — Jesus, the Lamb of God.
- 2.** The story of the Lamb changes the way I look at others because in Exodus 12 I discover that *I* need to be rescued as much as the person(s) I disdain. Do you and I truly realize that? Do you and I realize that we are no better than anyone else. We are accepted and loved in Jesus — period. The story of the Lamb tells me that outside of Jesus I am as lost as the person I disdain. Outside of Jesus I am as without God and without hope in this world as the person I disdain. Outside of Jesus I cannot stand before the destroyer. When I really understand **my rescue** it radically transforms the way I see the lost world around me, and the way I engage those in it.
- 3.** The story of the Lamb radically transforms the way I understand life — the way I process glory. Fallen culture says that life and glory is a matter of achievement, recognition, and possessions. The cross tells me that glory is sacrificial love! The story of the Lamb radically changes your whole understanding of life.
- 4.** The story of the Lamb radically transforms the way I view suffering. Follow me here! The most undeserved suffering in the history of the world, what appeared to be the most senseless suffering in the history of the world, accomplished the most good — the rescue of fallen men and women. That brings a whole new perspective on my own suffering. Just because I can't see or imagine a good reason I'm suffering doesn't mean there can't be one. On top of that, when I see what Jesus was willing to do for my rescue I **know** that if I'm suffering, it's not because God doesn't love me!
- 5.** This is so relatable to every Christian. Many of us find ourselves thinking, *“Okay — because I know that Jesus is the Lamb of God, my attitude toward*

others should be totally different. Because I know that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the way I process meaning in life should be totally different. Because I know that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the way I process suffering should be totally different — but that is not always true in my life.”

The story of the Lamb in **Exodus 12** speaks to that! Figuratively speaking — we need to eat the lamb with others — FELLOWSHIP! We “Behold the Lamb of God” together! We share with each other the ways in which we have experienced the rescuing love of the Lamb. We point one another to the Lamb who loves us and washed us from our sins with His blood. In every blessing and in every trial we say to each other — “Behold the Lamb of God!”

HERE’S A FEW IMPORTANT QUESTIONS — Is **that** the way **you do life**? Is **that** the way **you view** and **relate to** your brothers and sisters in Christ? **Or** — does your Christianity **consist** of a **visit** or two to a building?

I don't know if you've ever thought about this — but the Israelites who left Egypt were a collection of men and women rescued by the blood of the Lamb. They were strangers in a foreign land, under penalty of death. But they took shelter under the blood of the lamb. Because of the Lamb they were brought out of a life of cruel bondage and death. God was present with them as they traveled through a harsh wilderness towards a destination that God had promised to them. THAT is such a stunning picture of our rescue and our life together as we live between the already of the cross and the not yet of the promise of a heaven.