

IN MY PLACE CONDEMNED HE STOOD - The Biblical Pattern of the Atonement - Part five - Sunday, June 26th, 2022

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IS CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SUBSTITUTIONARY PASSOVER LAMB IN EXODUS 12?

IPAD TEXT - 1 Peter 1:13-19 - "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, (Not an insult. Profound insight - Until you were totally devoted to Jesus as Lord you *didn't know* how you were cheating yourself by living for your own desires. At the time, you thought that was freedom. Upon knowing what it means to honor Christ as Lord above your own desires, you look back with amazement on the bondage and boredom of your own life. You see it in a way you didn't see it when you were immersed in it!) [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

We will come back to this text at the close of this teaching. The premise of the last two teachings from Exodus chapter 12 was Israel was delivered in ***two important, yet different ways*** as she escaped the tyranny of Pharaoh's Egypt. First, she was delivered from the oppression of Egypt itself. But there was another deliverance. We saw that Israel was also delivered from the wrath of God in the tenth plague - the death of the first-born.

And here's the important point. Israel **needed** to kill a Passover lamb. She needed to be **protected** by the shed blood of that lamb, actually **painted** onto the doorposts of the households, if she was to avoid the **exact** same judgment that would fall on Egypt.

God was not **unjust** to reveal His wrath against Israel. Israel was not **holy** while she was in Egypt. The prophet Ezekiel reveals details of Israel's captivity that are often overlooked:

IPAD TEXT - Ezekiel 20:5-8 - "...Thus says the Lord God: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt; I swore to them, saying, I am the Lord your God. [6] On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. [7] And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. [8] But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt."

So, again, God was not arbitrary or unjust in His holy wrath against Israel's stubbornly entrenched sin. He **never** is. God's wrath against sin is always a **righteous** response - probably **too** righteous for us to fully digest. **J. I. Packer's** words on the righteous wrath of God against sin are some of the most brilliant I've read: ***"....This is righteous anger - the right reaction of moral perfection....against moral perversity in the creature. So far from the manifestation of God's wrath in punishing sin being morally doubtful, the thing that would be morally doubtful would be for him not to show his wrath in this way. God is not just - that is, he does not act in the way that is right - he does not do what is proper as a judge - unless he inflicts upon all sin and wrongdoing the penalty it deserves."*** (*"In My Place Condemned He Stood"*- p.35)

Make sure you pluck the rich meaning out of that opening sentence - ***"....This is righteous anger - the right reaction of moral perfection....against moral perversity in the creature...."*** When Packer says God's wrath is the ***"right"*** reaction, he means if God didn't manifest His wrath against sin He would be doing, not the ***right*** thing, but the ***wrong*** thing. He would not be a ***good*** God. He would be a ***bad*** God. If you live in a land where the leader has the power to reveal His might against wrong doing, but refuses to do so, then you no longer have a ***good*** leader. One of the conditions of being ***good*** is to punish ***evil***.

Think about it. Would you rather live under a dictator who didn't allow people to do **anything**, or under a dictator who allowed people to do **absolutely everything** (and I mean **everything imaginable, without restraint of punishment**)? I think the second dictator would be more dangerous than the first, and just as wicked.

So Israel, like everyone else dwelling in Egypt, was under God's judgment unless spared by the shed blood of the slain lamb. Note well what many miss. ***The Passover is a demonstration of God's mercy and love. But it's also more than a demonstration of God's mercy and love.*** The blood of the sacrificed lamb ***averts - transfers by substitution - the wrath of God away from the household and on to the lamb.***

But the blood also says sin isn't ***ignored***. So there is more than ***love and forgiveness*** manifested here because we ***need*** more than love and forgiveness. There is also a meting out of ***justice***. God's wrath is poured out against sin. The lamb must die ***in place*** of the first-born that first, dark Passover night.

In this ***"passing over"*** of the household where the blood was shed and applied we saw a great pre-figuring of the death of Christ. Jesus Christ, God the Son, came as the great ***"Lamb of God,"*** to bring the same ***two-fold deliverance***, delivering us from both ***sin and its bondage*** and from ***God's just wrath and its judgment against*** our sin.

But is this a valid conclusion? Is Christ really the **intended** fulfillment of that first Passover story? Or are we just reaching for what we'd **like** to have as an interpretation of that Exodus account? That's the important question we want to address in this teaching. I am arguing that Jesus Christ, God the Son, was in the Father's mind and plan when the instructions about the Exodus Passover lamb were being given, and that the New Testament makes it clear that we are **intended** to understand that first Passover in a Christ-centered way:

We'll go through these references quickly:

1) **THE FIRST RECORDED ADULT DESCRIPTION OF JESUS'**
SAVING ROLE IS THAT OF A LAMB

IPAD TEXT - John 1:29-30 - "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, '*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!* [30] This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'"

These are some of the best known words in the Bible. They're just so quotable. And that's also part of the problem. We don't feel just how freaky and weird they are. Imagine. The very first time God the Son, the creator of heaven and earth, is publicly introduced in His **ministry** capacity, He is introduced **not** as omnipotent, or regal, or prophetic, or even angelic. He is introduced as a **farm animal**.

What is going on here? And what's going on is a divinely planned unfolding of a theology that was introduced much earlier - as early as the time of Jesus' birth - **Matthew 1:20-21 - "But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."** - IPAD TEXT

So the angel tells Joseph Jesus was **born** to **"save his people from their sins."** Fine. But **how** will He do this? What is the process? Will He just **teach them a better system of righteousness?** Will He just **provide them a more loving example by which to live?** Or, perhaps, might He just tell them not to worry so much because Father God is more loving than they think, so He'll just act as if their sins don't exist? Exactly **how will Jesus save people from their sins?**

That's what John is telling everyone. There surely are **many** wonderful things to know about Jesus. He would teach. He would bless. He would heal. He would work miracles. He would truly demonstrate infinite love and compassion. But the **first** thing the watching crowd - the watching **religious** crowd - needed to know - the way they needed to be **introduced** to Jesus - was He was the **"Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world."**

This is a Christmas truth easily missed. We hear the unfairness of those cold words, "No room at the inn!" But was this just a mistake? Jesus, born in a **barn**. Poor Jesus! Someone should have spoken up. Someone should have offered to give up **their** room. **No**. It's all planned. It's intentional. And more than that, it's extremely prophetic. Where **else** would a **Lamb** be born? Lambs aren't born in **beds**. They're born in **stables**.

So the process for the removal of **our sins** - and the process for the removal of the **judgment of God** on our sins - was the death of the **Lamb** in our place. This is important. What it means is John saw right away that even Jesus, God the Son, couldn't just **pronounce** forgiveness. He would have to **purchase** it. He would die the death of the Passover lamb. Exactly as the Passover lamb died in Exodus chapter 12.

2) AS JESUS EXPLAINED HIS OWN DEATH, HE FRAMED IT IN TERMS OF THE PASSOVER EVENT

IPAD TEXT - Luke 22:7-15 - "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. [8] So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and *prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.*" [9] They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" [10] He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters [11] and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may *eat the Passover with my disciples?*' [12] And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." [13] And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. [14] And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. [15] And he said to them, "*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*"

So Jesus, according to Luke, was “**earnest**”(15) about breaking the bread and drinking the cup - both of which He said were reminders of His own spilled blood and torn body - He was **earnest** that these reminders of His coming death were presented to His disciples as they gathered for **Passover** - “....I have earnestly desired to eat **this Passover with you before I suffer**”(15). Underscore that word, “**before.**” He wanted to use this Passover to explain the **meaning** of His death **before** the event of His death took place.

Jesus doesn't want His disciples to be looking upon His body on the cross thinking of Him as a religious **martyr**. He wanted the **advance** preparation of the Passover meal so they wouldn't see His body on the cross and think of Him as a political revolutionary who pushed the powers that be too far. Clearly, He wanted them to look at His body on the cross and see a **sacrificed Lamb** - the **Passover Lamb**.

3) **JESUS SAW THE COMING EVENT OF THE CROSS AS A “CUP” THAT HAD TO BE DRAINED**

I'm not now talking just about the **cup** that He passed around to His disciples - the cup we still drink that reminds us of His shed blood. That's just a small picture of the cup I'm thinking about in this point. I'm drawn into Jesus' words as He prayed to the Father, pondering the event of the cross:

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:36-39 - "Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." [37] And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. [38] Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." [39] And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

"Let this cup pass from me...." Now, those are strange words. And the important question to ask is where did Jesus get the idea that the suffering He was about to go through was like a ***cup***? What made Him choose those words? How was His death like a ***cup***?

And the answer gives a profound insight into the way Jesus understood the nature of His coming death and the way He was about to ***"give His life a ransom for many."*** Jesus knew His Old Testament very well. He was constantly quoting it - from memory. And that's where Jesus framed His understanding of what He was about to suffer:

IPAD TEXTS - Psalm 75:8 - "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs."

Isaiah 51:17 - "Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering."

IPAD TEXT - Jeremiah 25:15-18 - "Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. [16] They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them." [17] So I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it: [18] Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day..."

The dread of the cross for Jesus wasn't Rome or the Jewish authorities. It wasn't the thorns or the nails or the spear. Jesus dreaded the "*cup*" - "***Let this cup pass from me!***"(Matthew 26:39). This is what rang the dark sky with Jesus' words, "***My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?***"(Matthew 27:46). Jesus bore the *wrath of God*. That's the only understanding of the "*cup*" Jesus would have drawn from the Old Testament Scriptures.

4) PETER SPECIFICALLY LINKS OUR BEING RANSOMED AND THE SHED BLOOD OF CHRIST WITH THE PERFECT LAMB OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER

IPAD TEXT - 1 Peter 1:14-19 - "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] *but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*"

Very quickly, there's a reason this text is important. We know from the rest of the Biblical teaching on the atoning work of Christ that it is by His **death** that we are saved. I know it seems like a silly point, but if they had merely **scratched** Jesus and He shed a few drops of blood, and then died of old age, would we be redeemed? And the answer is clearly **no**.

The penalty of sin is **death**. Jesus **died** in my place to deliver me from the bondage of sin and the fear of death. Paul says Jesus took the **sting** out of death for us. And He did it by dying.

But Peter doesn't write about the **death** of Christ in this text. At least not directly. He writes about the **blood** of Christ that was shed. And the reason is it's the **blood** of that sacrificed lamb that was highlighted in the first Passover account. Certainly that lamb **died**. We know that. But it's the blood that gets all the attention. It's the blood that was drained from the victim. It's the blood that was painted on to the doorposts and doorways of the house.

That's the connection Peter is intentionally trying to make. We were ransomed by precious blood. Just as the lamb was to be a perfect lamb, so Christ Jesus lived a perfect life. That would force us to conclude that it wasn't for **His own** sins that He died. He, like that first Passover lamb, was sacrificed for the sins of **others**.

I have one more text:

- 5) **PAUL MAKES THE MOST DIRECT STATEMENT OF ALL THAT JESUS DIED AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER LAMB**

IPAD TEXT - 1 Corinthians 5:7 - “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

Admittedly, Paul’s purpose in the context of this verse isn’t merely theological. It’s intensely practical. He is addressing the sexual immorality in the Corinthian congregation. His caution is timely for the church today. Sin can never be tolerated in the body of Christ because it is not only *wrong*, but *leaven-like* in the way it leads to more and more corruption. Sin multiplies *exponentially*, requiring only a small amount of yeast to radically alter a large amount of dough.

So sins must be cleaned out of the body just as Israel was commanded to clean out all the leaven out of the house before the slaying of the Passover lamb.

And now the church must root itself in a passion for purity. And the reason God gives relates to our study today. Christ, our **Passover Lamb**, had been slain. This means the time for purity is here. Just as Israel was released from Egypt into a new identity as the people of God, so we too have been delivered from our old way of life by our Passover Lamb.

So we come to the conclusion of the matter. It is no pipe-dream to attach the death of our Lord to its Old Testament roots. The New Testament endorses the Passover meaning of Christ's death on the cross. He, like that Old Testament lamb, bore the wrath of God against our sin. Both ***freedom from sin*** and ***deliverance from divine wrath*** come only through Him. This is the gospel we proclaim because, however the sensitivities of our culture assess it, it's the only gospel the Scriptures know.