

• *The Israelites to be brought into Canaan*

**A picture of salvation by the blood of the lamb**

• *The passover event to be remembered*

• *Judgement on Egypt – salvation for Israel*

• *Salvation to take place by the sacrifice of a substitute*

• *God's judgement not brushed aside*

• *Israel had sinned as much as Egypt*

• *This helps us to understand the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*

God is about to bring the Israelites to the land of Canaan as He had promised<sup>□1</sup>. At the same time God is giving Israel a picture of the way in which He sends salvation by the blood of the lamb. The passover gives the principles of salvation which would later operate in and through the blood of Jesus. Exodus 12:1–13:16 tells of the original events. Other vital references to the subject in the Old Testament are Exodus 34:25; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:1–14; 28:16; 33:3; Deuteronomy 16:1–8; Joshua 5:10–11; 2 Chronicles 30:1–27 and the two accounts of the same event that we find in 2 Kings 23:21–23 and 2 Chronicles 35:1–19.

**The event of passover was to be ever remembered in Israel.** The calendar would start at its anniversary. 'This month is to be for you the first month'<sup>□1</sup>. From now on Israel's year would begin in the month which commemorated the deliverance by the blood of the lamb.

**God's judgement is about to come into the land of Egypt but there is a way of salvation.** On the tenth day of the month, each family is to take a lamb. Some sharing might take place but every family or group of families joining together was to have a lamb<sup>□1</sup>. The lamb had to be young, healthy, male and without any defect<sup>□2</sup>. On the fourteenth day the entire nation would sacrifice 'the lamb' at twilight<sup>□3</sup>.

**Salvation is to take place by the sacrifice of a substitute.** God is about to save Israel but God's salvation takes place by a lamb being killed instead of the firstborn. Salvation does not come about by God's ignoring the problem of sin. It is not that God says to Israel 'I'll judge Egypt for its sins but in your case I'll just forget the whole matter!' No, salvation does not come by God's forgetfulness or neglect. It is not that God simply and purely withholds the punishment of sin in the case of His people. It does not work like that.

Rather Israel's sins are punished in the lamb. Israel is punished for its sins as much as the Egyptians are punished for their sins. The only difference is that in the case of Israel the punishment falls on the lamb. The judgement of God against sin is not brushed aside. Instead it falls elsewhere.

**Israel had sinned as much as Egypt.** Israel were sinners too! Pharaoh had refused to hear Moses. But there were times when Israel refused to hear Moses. On one occasion the Bible says 'The Israelites did not listen to him'<sup>□1</sup>. And there would be many times in the future when Israel would criticise Moses and refuse to heed him. Pharaoh refused to listen out of the unbelief of his rebelliousness. The Israelites often refused to listen out of the deep unbelief that had come through their great discouragement. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Israel was also about to experience the falling of the wrath of God, but it will be turned aside to fall upon the lamb that God has provided. The lamb is a substitute. The lamb dies instead of the firstborn sons of Israel.

This helps us to understand the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation still comes by the death of a substitute. Jesus died instead of us. He carried the anger of God against sin instead of us ourselves having to carry the anger of God against sin. Yet when God forgives the sins of His people, He is not changing His mind about punishing sin. He **still** punishes sin – only He punishes it in another, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

□1 Gen 15:13-14

□1 12:1-2

□1 12:3-4  
□2 12:5  
□3 12:6

□1 6:9

**God saves by the blood of the Lamb**

Salvation does not come because God's people are worthy of salvation. Far from it. They have been sinners as much as anyone else. And salvation does not come by God's somehow neglecting His wrath in the case of His people. No! God saves by atonement. God saves by providing a substitute. God saves by the blood of the lamb.

• *The provision of a sacrifice for sins is God's idea*

Jesus is God's lamb. He is 'the lamb of God', as John the Baptist called him<sup>1</sup>. He is provided by God. **The provision of a sacrifice for sins is God's idea.** It was God who put forward this way of salvation. It was not Moses' idea or the people's idea. 'Christ our passover has been sacrificed', said the apostle Paul<sup>2</sup>. 'He was led like a lamb to the slaughter', says Isaiah 53:7, speaking of the predicted Suffering Servant of God. 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering', said Abraham when talking to his son Isaac<sup>3</sup>, and the same principle applies in the passover that saved Israel, and in the cross of Jesus Christ which saves us. God provided the lamb.

<sup>1</sup> John 1:29,36

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor 6:7

<sup>3</sup> Gen 22:8

• *The lamb had to be perfect*

**The lamb had to be perfect.** Jesus had to be sinless. Jesus would never have been able to save us if He had been a sinner. He took the place of sinners but He was not a sinner himself. One sinner cannot bring salvation for another sinner. Jesus had to be 'without spot or blemish' if He was to be our Saviour.

• *The lamb had to die*

**The lamb had to die.** There was no salvation through the lamb until the lamb had died. The producing of the blood was the proof that the lamb had died. Our salvation does not come by our imitating the earthly life of Jesus. Nor does our salvation come simply by our accepting the teaching of Jesus. Our salvation comes by the death of Jesus. We are 'justified by his blood'<sup>1</sup>; it is through 'the blood of his cross'<sup>2</sup>. We are 'made near by the blood of Christ', says Ephesians 2:13. He has 'loosed us from our sins by his blood', says Revelation 1:5.


<sup>1</sup> Rom 5:9

<sup>2</sup> Col 1:20

• *Our salvation in the same way – the death of a substitute*

In the days of the passover God was bringing salvation in the same way that He would bring it through Jesus. All have sinned, but God's salvation consists in the death of a substitute. We have 'redemption through his blood'<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Eph 1:7

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