

I want to take thirteen messages to discuss with you the Passover Ritual. We usually associate this ritual with the religious holiday of our Jewish friends. They are celebrating a ritual that was given to them over 3000 years ago. According to this ritual the children of Israel were instructed to take a lamb, slay it, catch the blood of the lamb in a basin, take a shrub called hyssop and sprinkle it on their doors, and then after charring the lamb black they were to eat it along with massahs and bitter herbs.

Now, before you touch that dial I know that some of you are asking, who in the world is the congregation of Israel? And why in the name of heaven is this preacher going to spend thirteen messages on such a ritual as this? But it may surprise you to know that this ancient ritual does have significant meaning and relevance for you today.

First of all you must understand that God had set apart the nation of Israel, or the Jewish people, to bless the earth. That is why you will sometimes hear that the Jewish people or the nation of Israel are a chosen people. By that we mean that God chose the Jewish people to bless the earth. Now let us establish this important point from the Bible. The crucial passage in this respect is Gen. 12:1-3. In this passage God gives a brief sketch of his program, or plan for saving every family on this earth. This program has three phases. In the first phase of His program to bless the earth God set apart a man of faith. He took this man from the midst of a world which knew there was a God, yet refused to acknowledge him or to thank him for what he is or does. That man's name was Abraham. Abraham lived about 2000 years before Jesus Christ. Thus we read in Gen. 12:1, "And the Lord said unto Abraham get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you." That was the first phase in God's program of salvation for this earth. He set apart Abraham, a man of faith. In the second phase of his program to bless the earth, God promised to create a nation from the descendants of Abraham. In Gen. 12:2 God said to Abraham, "And I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great." Abraham had a grandson whose name was Jacob. Jacob's name was later changed to Israel, or the great grandchildren of Abraham, God created this nation. Therefore it is called the nation of Israel. The first phase of his program of salvation for this earth then was to set apart Abraham, a man of faith. The second phase of his program of salvation for this earth was to create a nation from the descendants of Abraham. In the third phase of his program God purposed to bless the entire earth through this nation, or the Jewish people. At the end of verse 2 God said to Abraham, "and thou shalt be a blessing." In reality the original text has an imperative here and we should read, "and be thou a blessing!" Undoubtedly this command was not only given to Abraham but also to the nation that God purposed to form from his descendants. The nation of Israel then had the commission to bless the entire earth. In Ex. 19:5-6 God repeated his purpose for the nation of Israel. In that passage God said to his nation, "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Finally in Gen. 12:3 God concluded with the promise that he would bless every family of the earth through Abraham and by implication through the nation which God would form from Abraham's descendants.

The second thing you must understand if you wish to see the relevance of this Passover ritual to you is not only that God purposed to bless the earth through the descendants of Abraham, or the Jewish people, but in addition that these descendants had become stained with sin when God instructed them to slay the Passover lamb. Abraham and his son Isaac and his son Israel maintained a fairly close walk with God. They seemed to have had a clear concept of their family destiny and vocation because they separated themselves from the sinful Canaanites in whose midst they were living. These Canaanites, who inhabited the land which we today call Palestine or Israel, worshipped gods and goddesses who killed, and stole, and committed acts of adultery and other sexual perversions. In fact prostitution was a normal concomitant of Canaanite worship. Abraham studiously kept his son Isaac from marrying the daughters of Canaan who were past repentance. Isaac in turn saw to it that his son Jacob did not marry these Canaanite women. Instead, both Isaac and Jacob secured wives from the Arameans who lived hundreds of miles away. In addition, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob built altars in the midst of the Canaanites and testified concerning their faith in one righteous God who created heaven and earth. They not only built altars and separated themselves from the defiled Canaanites but they also maintained a close family loyalty and solidarity. In other words, they seemed to have had a clear concept of their family's vocation: they were called upon to sanctify the earth.

But Abraham's twelve great grandchildren, the children of Israel, seemingly forgot their divine calling. Never once do we read that these twelve sons of Israel built an altar or prayed to God. Instead we read that they fought amongst themselves. You have probably heard the story about Joseph and his brothers; how the 11 brothers plotted the death of their brother Joseph, but finally sold him into Egypt. The point of that story is to show the breakdown of the family unity. They had become like Cain and Abel. Not only did they fail to build altars and did they begin to fight amongst themselves, but we also discover that they began to marry and to become like these polluted Canaanites in whose midst they were living. One of the most sordid chapters in the entire Bible is Gen. 38. In this chapter we learn that Judah, one of Israel's 12 sons, having separated himself from his brothers, had relations with the Canaanite prostitutes, believed in their superstitions, and married a Canaanite woman. Indeed the children from that unholy marriage committed immoral acts which are too despicable to discuss on a radio program. In other words this chosen family became stained with sin and was in danger of losing its identity and mission. Therefore, in order to preserve the descendants of Abraham as a unique people for its chosen destiny, God led the twelve children of Israel into the country of Egypt. But their sojourn in Egypt did not change them or cleanse them from their sins. It is true that they remained a separated family, but that was probably because the Egyptians would have nothing to do with them. The Egyptians despised the Israelites. They not only refused to marry them, but they even refused to eat with them. But that did not cleanse the Israelites from their sins. For 430 years Abraham's family sojourned in Egypt, but in all this time we never once read that they built an altar to God. Instead we learn that they had completely forgotten about the God of their fathers so that when God once again revealed Himself to them, they had to ask God His name. Abraham circumcised Isaac to indicate that his seed was set apart unto God, but even Moses failed to circumcise his own son. The children of Israel were far from God and deeply stained with sin, when God instituted the Passover Ritual.

Now the third thing you must know if you wish to understand the relevance of the ceremony of the passover lamb to you today is this: at the time God instituted the Passover Ritual, He was about to take Israel's children out of Egypt and form them into His chosen nation. After he delivered them from Egypt God would give them His law and give them the land of Canaan as their possession.

But God could not use a dirty, defiled people to bless the earth. You can't clean a house with dirty water and dirty wash rags. The first instruction on any box or a can of cleansing agent is that the rag and water you plan to use be clear. Likewise, before God could use the children of Israel to cleanse the earth, they themselves must first be cleansed.

Now, How does God cleanse a nation or a man from sin? We all know that soap and water cleans the skin, but what cleans the soul of a man? God says, "the blood of Jesus Christ." For example, we read in both the book of Leviticus and the book of Hebrews of the New Testament that "the life is in the blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins." It takes life which is in the blood to cleanse your soul, your life. Moreover it takes a sinless sould to cleanse your sinful soul. That life, that blood, is the blood or life of Jesus Christ. Prior to the birth of Jesus Christ God used a perfect lamb to foreshadow or to picture the death of Jesus Christ. Therefore God instructed His chosen people to shed the blood of the passover lamb to cleanse them from their sin. It was but a precursor of the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the first instruction given to the congregation of Israel by God. After they had applied the blood to their lives and they had been cleansed from their sin, then God gave them His law and gave them the land of Canaan.

But years later Israel once again lapsed back into horrible sin. God pleaded with them to repent, but they refused. Finally God temporarily put them on the shelf and refused to use them as his nation of blessing. Instead, today he is forming His Church to be a blessing upon the earth. Don't misunderstand me, the Church will not utterly save the world-- Israel will one day still do that . But until that day the Church is a restraining influence against sin on the earth. In one sense, the Church is the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Just as he used the nation of Israel in the long ago to sanctify the earth and will again use them in the future, today God is using His Church to bless the earth. Today God is calling out individuals, including you and me from this wicked and perverse generation. Today hs is using His Church to be a blessing upon this earth. Today he invites you to ba a member of His universal, triumphant Church in bringing salvation to the earth. He desires to use you, whoever you may be to be a blessing upon this earth. But like Israel, before He can use you, you too must first be cleansed from your own sins. Just as the homes of the Israelites needed the blood of the lamb to cleanse them from their sin, so God says we need the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from our sins. The beloved apostle John wrote in I John 1:7, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin." Jesus Christ has done the work. He died for your sins. Now it only remains for your to apply His blood to your life to cleanse your soul from sin. Will you trust Him? Will you trust in the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away your sins just as the Israelites of long ago trusted in a lamb? If you will say in your heart, Lord Jesus I trust in you to cleanse me from my sins, he will first wash your soul which is stained with sin so that it will become whiter than the whitest snow and then God can use you to bless others.

NEW BEGINNING

Most of us like the idea of a new start, a new beginning. I remember when I was a boy growing up in New Jersey how I would love to tromp through fields of freshly fallen snow. One of our favorite games in the snow was fox and goose. We would track out a large figure eight in the snow and then play tag along the curves of the figure eight. Naturally we slipped and fell trying to round those curves at full speed. Sometimes it was fun just making new tracks and new patterns in the snow. But one of the most enjoyable experiences came when we would move from one field of snow to another. Often a gate would separate the two fields. As you paused at the gate you could look behind you over the field of snow you had just messed up. You could see where you had run and played, where you had slipped and fallen down, or where you had wandered. But there lying ahead of you was a field of snow no one had touched. And it was a challenge to make your new tracks just as straight and clean as possible.

Perhaps as you look back upon your life you realize that it is all messed up. You have wandered, you have slipped and fallen, and somehow or another you wish you could start your life all over again. If that's your situation, my friend, I have good news for you. You can start your life all over again. Let me tell you what this new beginning can be for you.

In this series of messages we are considering the Passover ritual, a ritual celebrated by the Israelites centuries ago. The Passover ritual reminded them of their new beginning, their new start. Because the Passover ritual reminded them of their new start, their new life, it marked the beginning of their new year. Thus we read in Ex. 12:2 "this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." In other words, what New Year's day is to us, the Passover day was to Israel in Old Testament times.

According to Exodus 13:4 the name of the month in which the Passover was celebrated had the Hebrew name Abib. The name Abib means "young sprouts of grain." It was the time of the year when the young, green plants were first pushing their sprouts out of the ground. All of nature suggested a new year, a new start, a new beginning. Last year's crop was forgotten and behind them; ahead lay the promise of a new crop, a new harvest. These young sprouts formed a fitting surrounding for the celebration of the Passover, for it reminded the Israelites of their new beginning, their new start in life. It also reminded them of that which made their new life possible. From this ritual we too can learn about our new start in Jesus Christ.

First of all we must have clearly in mind that at the center of this ritual was the slaying of a lamb, and the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb upon their homes. It was the blood of this passover lamb that made their new life possible. As we shall demonstrate in another message that lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ. It is by our faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, our passover lamb, that our new lives are possible.

Now there are four similarities between their new beginning through the blood of the passover lamb, and our new beginning through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The first similarity is this: they were cleansed from their sin by the blood of the lamb. In an earlier message we saw that the Israelites were stained with sin and that God could not use them to be His nation of blessing upon the earth until they were cleansed from their sin. God's agent for cleansing from sin is blood. Just as water and soap can clean our skin, so the Bible teaches that blood cleanses the soul of a man. I have no idea why God made blood His cleansing agent from sin, but the Bible says very clearly this is the case. The writer of Hebrew quoting the Old Testament says in Heb. 9:22: "and without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins." So likewise today, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all of our sins. While there are many statements to this effect in the New Testament, the clearest one is found in I Jn. 1:7 "and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." When you place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Passover Lamb, all your past sins are washed away.

But there is a second similarity: not only is there cleansing from sin when we place our faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, but there is also deliverance from the bondage of sin. Before the Israelites applied the blood of their passover lamb to their homes they were in bondage in the land of Egypt. Prior to that night in which they shed the blood of the passover lamb were 430 years of exile and slavery in the land of Egypt. The Bible pictures this period as a period of horror of great darkness. They were slaves of the Egyptians and the reward for their service was death. That evening in which the Israelites sprinkled the blood of the passover lamb on their doors demarcated an exodus, a deliverance from the bondage and death of Egypt. Likewise when we place our faith in our lamb, Jesus Christ, we experience an exodus, a deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. Prior to that act of faith in Jesus Christ, we are the slaves of sin: slaves to our passions, slaves to our pride. Our old inherited sin nature and Satan is our master.

But exactly how are we delivered from this bondage by placing our faith in Jesus Christ? In the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul tells us how this exodus, this emancipation from sin and death is accomplished for the believer in Jesus Christ. In the third verse he tells us that the believer has been baptized into Jesus Christ for he says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The word baptism means to immerse, to place into--in other words, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior we are placed into His body. In his letter to the Corinthians the apostle tells us that this baptism is accomplished by the Spirit of God. In I Cor. 12:13 we read "for by one Spirit we all are baptized into one body." When we believe in Jesus Christ the Spirit of God places us into the body of Christ. When we are placed into the body of Christ we become participants in the whole history of His body. For example, biologists tell us that new cells are constantly being added to our bodies. These new cells become completely identified with the whole history of our body. Likewise, because we have become one with Christ, we have become completely identified with His entire life. Because we are now in His body we have become identified with His death. Therefore the apostle says in Romans 6:3 and 4 that we have shared in His death. We are dead and buried with Him because we have been immersed into His body. In verse 6 he continues: "Let us never forget that our old selves--that is our old sinful nature, the inborn tendency to sin--died with Him on the cross, that the tyranny of sin over us might be broken." He concludes: "for a dead man can be safely said to be immune to the power of sin." Therefore we are freed from sin, and need serve sin no longer.

The first similarity then is that there is cleansing from sin; the second similarity is that there is deliverance from the bondage of sin; the third similarity is that now we are summoned to a new life of holiness. After the children of Israel sprinkled the blood of the passover lamb on their houses they were not only cleansed from their sins, and delivered from the bondage of Egypt, but God now gave them His law that they should become His precious treasure among all the nations of the earth. They were now to be His holy nation, a nation of priests dressed in white linen. So likewise after we place our faith in Jesus Christ we are summoned to live as priests dressed in white garments. When we are placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God, we not only take part in His death, but we also take part in His resurrection. Thus the apostle writes in Romans 6:4 "just as He was raised from the dead so we, too, might rise to life on a new plane altogether." We are raised with Him to a new life. The outward symbol of this new beginning is pictured by immersion. When the believer allows his body to be placed under the water in Baptism, he is signifying to the world that he died to his old life in Jesus Christ; and when he is raised out of the water, he is signifying to the world that he is being raised to a new life in Jesus Christ. Indeed as the apostle points out in the remainder of his letter to the Romans, we are able to live this life because we have been given a new nature and the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.

Finally, there is a fourth similarity. When the Israelites of old placed their faith in the passover lamb, they were not only cleansed from their sin, delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and summoned to a new life of holiness, but they also took with them their old hearts. We would like to think that they achieved perfection at this point, but they didn't. In fact only two out of the two and a half million people reached the promised land, which is a picture of a perfect spiritual life. The truth is that though they were positionally out of Egypt, they still had their old hearts. Passages such as Exodus 16:2 and 3 rankle us, for there we read "and the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said to them, would to God that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full . . ." Likewise in our experience after our salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, we discover that we still have our old hearts with us. We like to think that Christians attain perfection in this life. But we don't. The apostle John says of Christians: "if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us." That old nature continues with us until the day we die. Don't misunderstand me, there is a new nature and positionally we are in Jesus Christ and need not serve sin, but the old nature is still with us. Therefore, don't think after you have made your new start, your new life in Jesus Christ, you will not sin. You will, but God will cleanse you from your sin and will ever be with you to help you to overcome sin. But the Christian must learn to look to God to help him to overcome sin.

Is your life a mess, my friend? Would you like to experience a new life, a new start? You can by placing your faith in Jesus Christ. I cannot promise you that you will achieve perfection in this body, but I can assure you that the slate will be wiped clean, that you will share with Christ in His death and resurrection so that you need no longer serve sin, but can live by His power. As the hymn writer expressed it: "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, he sets the prisoner free, His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me." May God give you the grace to trust His blood to save you.

In this series of messages we are considering the Passover ritual, a ritual celebrated by the Israelites centuries ago. The details for the instructions of this ritual are given to us in Ex. 12:1-11. In this passage God gives detailed instructions to the Israelites on how to kill a lamb, how to take of its blood and strike it upon their homes, how to cook it, and how to eat it.

Now I think it is perfectly obvious to all of us that the Bible is neither a handbook for butchers on how to kill lambs, nor a cook book on how to prepare a good lamb dinner. As we shall see, when God prescribed this ritual for the Israelites, they and the whole land of Egypt were under a sentence of death. Surely on such an ominous occasion as this, God was not telling his people how to prepare a tasty lamb dinner. In fact, to my taste it wouldn't be a very good dinner at all. As we shall see the lamb was charred black even as the Samaritans do to the present day. The side dishes were bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Now quite candidly, I hope you never invite me to your home for charred lamb, a bitter salad and massahs. Obviously God had something else in mind than just a lamb dinner.

Is it not more reasonable to suppose that this supper was more like the Lord's supper, which we celebrate in our churches? When we eat the bread or wafer, and drink the wine or grape juice, we are not eating a meal as we eat any other meal. In fact the apostle Paul tells us that if we eat the Lord's supper just to feed our bodies, we actually are eating and drinking damnation to ourselves instead of nourishment for our bodies. In a word, we eat the Lord's supper to teach ourselves and remind ourselves of spiritual truths. The bread reminds us of the body of Jesus Christ, and the red grape juice or wine reminds us of the blood of Jesus Christ. So likewise, God gave the passover ritual to the Israelites to teach them and us spiritual truth.

Before we begin to consider these spiritual truths, I think we should also observe that while God prescribes many of the details for the enactment of the ritual, we would discover if we actually tried to carry it out that to a large extent we would have to improvise, for there is much left unsaid concerning the enactment of the ritual. Therefore, does it not seem plausible to assume that every prescribed detail had some spiritual significance?--otherwise God would not have bothered to give the explicit instruction.

Now the whole ritual revolved around the killing and eating a lamb. What is the lamb a picture of? What does it stand for? As a Christian I believe that the lamb represents the Lord Jesus. But perhaps you are saying: how in the world did you come to that conclusion? And perhaps you are continuing to argue: "As I understand it, our Jewish neighbors who do celebrate the Passover, don't believe in Jesus Christ. How can we be sure then that the lamb is a picture of Jesus?"

There are several considerations that convince me that the lamb is a type of Jesus Christ. The first reason I believe the passover lamb represents Jesus of Nazareth is because the Apostle Paul, who was the greatest theologian this world has ever heard, said that the lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ. To the

church at Corinth he wrote in I Cor. 5:7 "For even Christ our passover lamb is sacrificed for us." What the passover lamb was to the Israelites of a bygone day, Christ is to the believer today. So then the passover lamb sacrificed by Israel is a picture of Jesus Christ, the passover lamb sacrificed for the church. It is interesting to note that while God explains to the Israelites the spiritual meaning of the side dish, the unleavened bread, He does not reveal in the Old Testament the spiritual significance of the main dish, the lamb. In a later message we shall speak on the spiritual significance of the unleavened bread. But is it not strange that the significance of the main dish is never once stated? This silence certainly must have excited the curiosity of the Israelites even as it excites our curiosity today. In reality He could not indicate the significance or the reality behind the symbol of the lamb to the Israelites because they had never experienced or seen the reality behind the symbol. But after Jesus Christ, His Son, had lived and died, and the Israelites had seen Him first hand, the symbol could be explained as the Apostle Paul has done for us in I Cor. 5:7.

In the second place, we not only have the clear teaching of the inspired apostle, but Jesus Christ Himself intimated that the lamb was a picture of Himself. You may recall that our Lord deliberately instituted the Lord's supper, the bread and the cup, while He and His disciples were celebrating the passover supper. At one point in the passover ritual the unleavened bread is broken and distributed amongst the family. It was probably at this time that our Lord took the bread and said: "This is my body which is broken for you." At another point in the ritual a glass of wine is passed around to all these participating in the passover. It was probably on this occasion that our Lord said: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you." The Lord's supper sprang directly out of the passover supper. In this way our Lord was showing the unity of the two suppers. Both spoke of Him and His death. The passover supper anticipated the cross; the Lord's supper remembers the cross. For almost 1400 years the Israelites ate the passover supper in anticipation of His death; for almost 2000 years now the church has been eating the Lord's supper in remembrance of His death.

Moreover, there is a third reason why I believe the passover lamb depicts Christ. Not only did the Apostle Paul say so and did Christ intimate it, but also there are striking similarities between this passover lamb and Jesus Christ. As we continue in this series we shall continue to point out these similarities. Candidly, they are just too striking and too many to be accidental. It is really these similarities that have convinced Christians throughout the ages that the lamb is a picture of Christ. Let us look at one striking similarity. Both the passover lamb and our Lord were slain for precisely the same reason.

Why did the Israelites slay the passover lamb? At the time God instituted the passover ceremony, the Israelites had been exiles in Egypt for 430 years. At the end of this period of time, the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves and imposed hard labor upon them. The Israelites had to build Egyptian temples and large public buildings. Even today archaeologists are probably discovering the remains of some of these colossal buildings which the Israelites had to build under forced labor for the Pharaohs. The Egyptians made them serve as slaves in their fields. In all these labors they treated them ruthlessly. For example, they set the quota of bricks beyond human capabilities, and when the Israelites failed to achieve these prescribed quotas, the Egyptians beat

them, flogged them, and even put them to death. Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, also ordered that all the Israelite male babies be killed at the time of birth for he feared the Israelite population explosion. But when God saw the affliction of the Israelites, He had compassion upon them and through Moses demanded that Pharaoh let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. In response to this refusal God sent horrible plagues upon Egypt which decimated their land. But when Pharaoh continued to harden his heart and obstinately refused to let the people go, God finally said to Pharaoh through Moses that every first born male in Egypt would die at midnight on the night of approximately April 14, 1400 B.C. So we read in Ex. 11:4-6 "And Moses said to Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, about midnight I will go out into the midst of the land of Egypt and all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon this throne even unto the first born of the beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there was none like it nor shall be like it anymore." In reality the plague of death was imposed upon both the Egyptians and the Israelites.

But it was not God's desire to judge men in this way. God does not delight in bringing death upon any man. Thus God warned them that this judgment was coming, and even more than that He provided a way of escape from the threatened judgment. He instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and to strike the blood of the lamb on the two side posts and on the upper door post of their houses. If this were done God promised them in Ex. 12:13 "and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt." In summary, God instructed the Israelites to slay the passover lamb in order that they might escape the threatened judgment of death.

For precisely the same reason God ordained that our Lord Jesus Christ be slain upon the cross. Today every man, including both you and me, is under a sentence of death. We all took part in the original rebellion of our parents, Adam and Eve, against God. From those first parents an inherent sin nature has been passed on to each of us; even at the time of our conception sin is already present in us. This sinful nature expresses itself in our bitter attitudes toward other men, in our wars, in our lying and our cheating, in our lustful acts, in our pride, and in our scoffing attitudes toward a future judgment. Because of these sins God has threatened eternal judgment and damnation upon every man. It is a popular notion that we have our judgment in this life. It just isn't true. It isn't true either according to our experience or according to the Scriptures. Many wicked people die at a ripe old age in prosperity and in a condition which we would normally call successful. This philosophy that we have our judgment in this life is also contrary to the Word of God. God said in Heb. 9:27 "It is appointed unto man once to die but after this the judgment." That judgment is described in Rev. 20:13ff. when we read "and the sea gave up the dead which were in it and death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

But it was never God's desire to judge men in this way. Isaiah says that judgment is God's strange work. As in the days of Israel, so now, God has provided a passover lamb. That lamb is Jesus Christ. He died to save us from the coming judgment. Like the passover lamb of Israel, He died in our place; He bore our judgment upon the cross. He died to save us from the coming judgment in

precisely the same way the Passover Lamb died to save Israel from God's promised judgment.

For these three reasons, then, I believe that Jesus Christ is God's pass-over lamb; that Jesus Christ has provided a way of escape from the judgment to come. But the Israelites had to apply the blood of the passover lamb to their homes in order to be saved from that judgment. So we too must apply the blood of Christ to our homes if we are to be saved from the threatened judgment. Obviously we cannot literally take His blood and strike it upon our homes. That was merely an outward symbol of their faith in the lamb. So we too must place our faith in our lamb Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, "The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." The apostle Paul says, "For there is but one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." Christ has died for you and me. It now remains for us to trust Him. Paul says in Acts 16:31 to a man who desired to be saved: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." I pray that God will give you the grace to trust the lamb that He has provided for you, which is Jesus Christ, His Son.

Before putting our two year old girl to bed, my wife or I usually read her a few bed-time stories. Of course the books are filled with pictures which our little girl loves to look at and study. As we get older we really don't change too much, do we? Most of us when we read through a book or magazine linger on the pictures and briefly skim the narrative that accompanies the pictures. Many times we find photographs are more fascinating and actually more revealing than the accompanying narrative. The Bible is somewhat like a picture book; it is filled with pictures and accompanying theological narrative. The passover ritual serves as one picture in God's picture book. It is a picture of our salvation and sanctification through Jesus Christ as the accompanying theological narrative in the Bible explains. When we see a photograph or drawing that is very sharp and filled with detail, we study it all the more closely. The passover ritual is such a photograph or drawing; it is very sharp and filled with many details. This picture is found in Exodus 12:1-13. As we look at this wondrous picture more closely we discover that it has two main parts; the first part, vs. 3-7 focuses on the slaying of a lamb; the second part recorded in vs. 8-11 focuses on the supper of the lamb. The first part, focusing on the slaying of the lamb, depicts truths with regard to our salvation; the second part, focusing on the supper, or the eating of the lamb, depicts truths with regard to our sanctification through Jesus Christ.

If we look still more closely at this picture we discover still smaller details in it. In the section focusing on the slaying of the lamb in Ex. 12: 3-7 there are four sub-divisions. In Ex. 12:3-4 God gives instructions concerning the supply of the lamb. In vs. 5 and the first part of vs. 6 God gives instructions concerning the standard for the lamb; at the end of vs. 6 He gives instructions concerning the slaying of the lamb; and finally in vs. 7 He gives instructions concerning the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb. Thus to help our memory we have alliterated the content of these verses: the supply of the lamb, vv. 3-4; the standard for the lamb, vs. 5 and the first part of vs. 6; the slaying of the lamb, the end of vs. 6; and finally the sprinkling of the lamb's blood, vs. 7. Of course we must keep in mind as we sought to demonstrate in earlier messages that the lamb of this ritual is a picture of Jesus Christ, our lamb for our salvation and sanctification. But now let's look at our picture through a magnifying glass. Today I wish to center our attention on the supply of the lamb, prescribed in vv. 3-4. There are two truths I wish to bring out here. The first truth I want us to notice is this: the supply was sufficient.

You will recall that prior to this God had said through His prophet Moses that on April 14 at midnight of the year 1400 B.C. He would go forth among the Egyptians and the Israelites to slay every first-born male in the country of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the slave girl who labored behind the mill, and all the first-born of the cattle. But God also said that there was a way of salvation. God said that He would spare the oldest son, if the family sacrificed a lamb, and threw the blood of that lamb on the entrances to their homes. God went on to say, when I see this blood on the entrances, I will pass over you and the plague will not come nigh you. Now suppose you had been there on this historic day. Suppose this mighty prophet Moses, who had predicted other supernatural events all of which had come

to pass in an uncanny fashion, said to you: "you are going to die at midnight unless you sacrifice a lamb," what would you do? Or suppose Jean Dickson, who prophesied the assassination of the late President Kennedy, said to you: "tonight you are going to die unless you kill a lamb and splatter some of its blood on the door of your home." What would you do? I think the first thing you would do is that you would make sure you had a lamb. As I read this narrative in vs. 3 I discover that everyone who wanted to be saved had a lamb. There was a lamb for every house. Look at verse 3. God said, "speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel saying in the 10th day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to their fathers' house, a lamb for a household." The word that catches my attention is the word "every." This implies that there was a lamb for every man who wished to be saved. God would not have instructed every man to take a lamb unless one were available. God does not mock us. He does not ask us to do something which we are not able to do. Therefore when God instructs every man to take a lamb, I presume that there was a sufficient supply. No one died that midnight because he lacked a lamb; he only died because he failed to apply the blood of the lamb. The accompanying narrative to this picture explains the relevance of the picture to us today. We too, all of us, are under a sentence of death. Do you remember that Jesus Christ, Who did far greater miracles than those of Moses, and prophesied with far more precision than Jean Dickson, warned of the danger of hell-fire? In Matt. 5:21 He said; "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry against his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; whosoever shall say to his brother "racca" (or "simpleton") shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say thou fool shall be in danger of hell-fire." Again in vs. 27 of Matt. 5 He said, "ye have heard that it was said thou shalt not commit adultery but I say unto you that everyone of you that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," and then He went on to say that it is better that our bodies be destroyed, or one of its members be destroyed than that the whole body be cast into hell. Who of us has not been angry? Who of us has not committed an immoral act, or had an immoral thought? We all have, and hence we all are in danger of hell. But there is a lamb, a lamb who can save you; and the supply is sufficient. That lamb is Jesus Christ. He died for every man. He died for you. The Apostle John says in I John 2:2 "and Jesus is the satisfaction for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Christ died for all the sins of every man. The supply is sufficient. The Apostle Paul wrote in I Tim. 1:15: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Did you notice the last clause? The great apostle said, "I am the chief of sinners." Just before this he wrote that he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. That is an accurate statement. Before his conversion, Paul was responsible for the death of many Christians, and yet God saved him, and changed this chief of sinners into the chief of missionaries and apostles. If Christ died for Paul and saved him, be assured, my friend, that He also died for you and can save you. In the next verse, in I.Tim. 1:16, Paul says: "I am a pattern for them which should hereafter believe on Him to everlasting life." If He died for the chief of sinners then He also died for you. Later on in the same epistle in Chapter 2 vs. 4 the great apostle wrote that God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and in 2:4 he wrote that Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. The Apostle Peter also agrees with the Apostles John and Paul that Christ died for every man, for he wrote in II Peter 3:9; "the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." That includes you. Christ died for you and now God only asks that you trust in His lamb Jesus Christ as the one that died for you and provided salvation for you through His blood.

Now, let's take a look at the picture again under our magnifying glass. This time I want us to notice that the supply was not only sufficient but that the supply was precious and was not to be wasted. Let us look closely at Ex. 12:4 together. There we read: "And if the household be too little for the lamb let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according unto the number of souls every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb."

Josephus, a Jewish historian who lived in the 1st century A.D., tells us that an average lamb could feed between 10 and 14 people. Now the problem arose that there were some small families in those days with less than 10 to 14 people. Perhaps a family was very small, and of course you understand that these are purely relative terms, and had only five or seven people. What were they to do with the leftover lamb? Should they keep it over for another meal or should they throw it away? Or just what should they do with it? God said: "No, you must not keep it over and you must not throw it away; it is too precious for that; rather you are to share it with your neighbor." Perhaps a neighboring family also had five or seven people, then the two families were to come together and entirely consume the lamb. We do the same thing sometimes at our Thanksgivings and Christmas. We share the dinner with others. Thus the Israelites were to share the lamb for it was precious and was not to be wasted.

The accompanying narrative informs us that our lamb, Jesus Christ, is the precious lamb of God and He, too, must not be wasted. Though He died for all and this supply is sufficient, let no man count Him a common thing to be refused or despised or treated indifferently. He is precious to God. The writer of Hebrews makes the point exceedingly clear when he wrote in Heb. 10:29: "of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified a common thing and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace." Did you get that? The person who tramples under foot the Son of God -- that is, he despises Jesus Christ and rejects Him or treats Him indifferently; and counts His blood a common thing -- that is, he considers that His blood is no more precious than the blood of any other man; and rejects the promptings of the Holy Spirit that he ought to place his faith in Jesus Christ -- that person, God says, will receive greater punishment in the day of judgment than the person who never heard of the salvation through Jesus Christ. Like the blood of the passover lamb, the blood of Jesus Christ is exceedingly precious and must not be wasted.

Have you ever seen a picture of the great Sphinx of Egypt? It is the colossal statue with the body of a lion and the head of a human being. The Sphinx was probably fashioned almost five thousand years ago. It is one of the rare relics from antiquity, and is undoubtedly one of the most precious statues on this earth. Until just a few years ago this precious statue, formed many centuries and even millennia ago, had been preserved in perfect condition. But after all these many years, fairly recently, soldiers quartered in that area of Egypt senselessly shot off its nose and marred its face. As we look at that marred image we feel a sense of outrage -- these senseless soldiers who had no eye for or understanding of the beauty or value of this masterpiece destroyed it. Or have you ever seen a serene lake surrounded by sylvan glens, but littered with beer bottles and tin cans? Such a sight as this sickens us for we realize that some person has had no sense of appreciation for the beauty of nature. The way we feel when we see something beautiful marred and destroyed must be something of how God feels when He sees somebody indifferently or deliberately reject and despise His Son, Jesus Christ. He is exceedingly precious and God

desires us to value Him. Do you see the value of Jesus Christ? He is God's Passover lamb for you. May you not trample His blood under foot in indifference or throw Him away in complete rejection. But may God give you the grace to trust the lamb of God, Jesus Christ, to save you.

Most people are not sure whether or not they will go to heaven when they die. We all hope so, but most folks are not sure. If you think about it, I think you will agree with me that the reason we are not sure is that we are not sure whether or not we will meet God's standards. We really don't know just how severe or tolerant God will be with us. If He's tolerant, maybe we'll make it; if He's not--well, we'd rather not think about it. Our uncertainty is like that of a farmer who enters his bull in competition at the state fair. Will he win the blue ribbon? Well, it all depends on the judges. He's never sure that his bull will satisfy the critical eye of the judges until all the ballots are in and they reach their verdict.

Usually it comes as a surprise to people to learn that the Bible says we can be sure right now whether or not we are going to satisfy God and hence be admitted into His heaven. God has clearly revealed His standard in the Bible. Either we are meeting this standard or we are not. Just as you can tell whether a piece of cloth is too long or too short by measuring it against a yardstick, or tell whether or not you are on time by checking a clock, you can tell right now whether or not you are good enough to enter heaven by using the Bible.

Just how good do you have to be to be acceptable to God? The Bible says you must be perfect. Perhaps you are thinking that you didn't hear me correctly. You did. The Bible says you have to be perfect--in fact you must be as perfect as Jesus Christ. Nothing less will satisfy God. Let me prove it to you by quoting the Bible. Quoting Moses, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Galatia in Gal. 3:10: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law." Did you get that? If we don't keep the whole law perfectly, God said we are cursed. There is nothing gray here. Either we have kept the whole law, which is said to be perfect, or we have not. Anything short of perfection is not acceptable to a perfect God. Let's look at another verse. James wrote in James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." That's God's standard: the whole law or nothing. The Bible knows nothing of a balance with the good works on one side outweighing the bad works on the other side. One bad work, brother, and you've had it. There is no ambiguity, no contradiction, and no mincing of words in the Bible on this point. Jesus said in His famous sermon on the mount: "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." That's the standard: perfection. Some of our negro friends in the South are right when they sing: "God wants 100% and 99% won't do."

Is any man perfect? The Bible affirms that which you already know to be true about yourself. The Bible says no one is perfect, and hence no one satisfies this standard. Once again quoting the Old Testament the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 3:10 "There is none righteous, no, not one." In verse 23 he concludes: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The question is raised in the Book of Job in Job 4:17 "Can mortal man be just before God? Can a man be pure before his maker?" The implied answer is "of course not." David confessed in Ps. 51:5 "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Similarly we read in Job 14:4 "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Finally in Job 25:4 Job raises the question that you are pro-

bably raising: "How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?"

Today I want to answer that question: how can imperfect man satisfy a God Who demands perfection? In this series of messages we are considering the ancient Passover ritual instituted of God to picture His way of salvation. This ancient ritual vividly illustrates God's answer to this basic dilemma: It illustrates how a perfect God can accept a sinful man into His heaven. You will recall that at the center of this ancient ritual was a lamb which saved Israel from God's threatened judgment. That lamb as we have seen is a picture of Jesus Christ Who today can save us from the day of God's wrath. In the last message we considered the supply of the lamb. Today I want us to consider the standard for the lamb prescribed in Ex. 12:5 and 6a. By understanding the standard prescribed for the passover lamb, I hope we will be able to see how sinners like us can be acceptable before a righteous God.

There are two truths I wish to point out concerning the standard for the passover lamb. The first truth is this: the lamb had to be perfect. Look at Ex. 12:5: "your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats."

In Lev. 22:22-24 God tells us what He means when He requires that the lamb be without blemish. It could not be blind, or have a crooked nose or a broken hoof, or any broken bones; it could not have any boils or scabs or scars or scurvy upon its skin--its wool must be fleecy white. It had to be perfect to be acceptable before God.

Like the Passover lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely perfect and is therefore acceptable to God. The Apostle Peter described Jesus as a lamb without blemish and without spot for we read in I Peter 1:18-19 "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The outward perfection of the passover lamb portrayed the inward perfection of our Saviour. He was without sin and therefore acceptable to God. This is the consistent teaching of Scripture. The prophet Isaiah in Isa. 53:9 described Jesus beforehand thus: "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; for He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 5:21 "Jesus knew no sin." In Hebrew 4:19 we read that though Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He was without sin." Finally, returning to Peter we read in I Peter 2:22 "Jesus did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." In order that He might be without sin, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and brought forth by the virgin Mary. Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit the angel Gabriel referred to Him as that holy thing. Jesus of Nazareth was without blemish, holy, and sinless. Therefore three times the heavens opened and God said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The first point then is that our passover lamb, Jesus Christ, was perfect.

The second truth I wish us to note concerning the standard for the lamb is that the lamb was not only perfect when it was selected but it had to be proven perfect over a period of time. Let us read Ex. 12:6: "And ye shall keep the

lamb until the 14th day of the same month." You will note that according to verse 3 the lamb was selected on the tenth day for there we read: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the 10th day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb." The passover lamb was probably kept in some enclosure between the 10th day when it was selected and the 14th day when it was slain. Thus there was a four day period during which the lamb could be observed and proven to be perfect.

Likewise our Lord was proven to be perfect. His life was observed for 33 years by family, friend and foe, and all three could not find a blemish in Him. His own family eventually came to believe in Him as the lamb of God. For example, the writers of the New Testament letters James and Jude were probably our Lord's natural brothers. At the end of His life His foe, Pontius Pilate, confessed: "I find no fault in this man." Of His foes, the Pharisees, Jesus asked: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and there were no accusers. As we have seen His intimate friends, the disciples, said He was without sin. Even Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him, later said: "I have betrayed innocent blood." So then Jesus, our passover lamb, was proven to be perfect.

But what does the perfection of the Passover lamb have to do with our imperfection? Just this. When we place our faith in this perfect lamb of God, Jesus Christ, God imputes or reckons His righteousness as our righteousness. The Apostle Paul said in II Cor. 5:21 that we become the righteousness of God in Him. Let me illustrate the point. I am told that occasionally when ewes give birth to their lambs, sometimes the young lambs of one ewe will die, while in other instances the ewe will die leaving her young as orphans. Now if the shepherd attempts to take an orphaned lamb and place it with a ewe that has lost her young in order that the ewe might suckle the lamb and care for it, the ewe will reject the orphaned lamb. The ewe, I am told, will smell this lamb and when she realizes that the lamb is not her own, she will reject it. In order to remedy this situation, the shepherd will take the skin from the dead lamb of the ewe and place it on the lamb which has lost its mother. Now when the ewe smells the scent of her own lamb, she will accept the orphan lamb in the skin of her young and care for it.

In somewhat the same way, when we receive Jesus Christ by faith we are clothed in His righteousness and become acceptable to God. Three times the Scriptures tell us that when Abraham believed God it was imputed to him for righteousness. Paul says in I Cor. 1:30 that Christ is made unto the believer righteousness. The Scofield Bible has an excellent quote from John Bunyan in its note at Rom. 3:21 which reads as follows: "The believer in Christ is now, by grace, shrouded under so complete and blessed a righteousness that the law from Mt. Sinai can find neither fault nor diminution therein. This is that which is called the righteousness of God by faith."

Just as the Bible is explicit concerning our imperfection, it is also explicit concerning our perfection in Jesus Christ. There is no room for guess work here. If you are not clothed in His righteousness you are damned; if you are clothed in His righteousness you are safe. The issue then is: have you trusted in your perfect passover lamb proven to be without blemish and spot? You must measure yourself by this standard. But through faith in Jesus Christ you can have the thrill and delight of knowing that you are as perfect as God requires you to be. Trust Jesus right now to provide you with His righteousness.

Bishop Munsey, a Methodist Bishop, tells an allegory that vividly describes faith. He pictures a man who was walking along not particularly minding where he was going. As he was walking along in this preoccupied state of mind, suddenly he fell off the edge of a cliff and found himself falling to a certain death. Fortunately, however, as he hurtled down he reached out and grabbed hold of a limb that was jutting out of the cliff-like rock. As he grasped this limb holding him suspended between life and death, an angel suddenly appeared to him. In his desperation the man cried out to the angel asking him to save him. The angel responded by asking: "Do you believe I can save you?" Having observed the obvious strength of the angel, the man cried back: "Yes, I believe you can save me." Then the angel asked: "Do you believe I will save you?" Seeing the grace and kindness that radiated in the angel's face, the man cried out: "Yes, I believe you will save me." The angel then replied: "Let go!" That's a perfect illustration of what faith in Christ involves. It means to let go of everything else you may be trusting and trust only Him to save you. It means to let go of your faith in your own good works; it means to let go of the religion and traditions in which you may have been reared. Let go of everything and trust only Jesus Christ.

But is Christ trustworthy? Like the angel in Bishop Munsey's allegory, is He able and willing to save you? How could God point out Jesus Christ and say: "This is the One that can and will save you?" Well, one way He could do it is by giving us a picture of Jesus ahead of time. I am sure that all of us have seen a picture of something before we saw the reality. For example, most of us, I am sure, have seen a picture of a car before it appeared on the market. Because we saw the picture ahead of time, we recognized the car when we saw it in a show window or on a street. Have you ever seen a picture of a person before you ever met that person, and because you had seen his picture, you knew who he was when you saw him in person? Before I saw the late Adlai Stevenson in person, I had seen many pictures of him and because of this, I recognized him immediately when I saw him in person. Now God did something just like that. He sent to the earth a picture of His Son 1400 years before He sent His Son to the earth in order that men might recognize His Son when He appeared. The picture God sent was the lamb of the Passover ritual.

Let me show you that the lamb of the Passover ritual, which we have been studying, was merely a picture of Christ Jesus. If the lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ then the two should look alike, shouldn't they? In previous messages I have pointed out striking similarities between the lamb of the Passover ritual and Jesus Christ. Today I want to study the death of the Passover lamb and the death of Jesus Christ. Their deaths are so similar that I am convinced that the lamb of the Passover ritual is God's picture of Jesus Christ, and that God sent this picture on ahead of Jesus in order that men might recognize that Jesus Christ is God's Savior.

The first similarity in their deaths is so obvious that at first it escapes our attention. But notice, both the Passover lamb and Jesus Christ were slain! They did not die natural or accidental deaths. No, both were deliberately put

to death. Not only were they both slain, but both were slain by the whole congregation of Israel. Concerning the Passover lamb we read in Ex. 12:6 "and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." In precisely the same way the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel killed our Lord. Peter summarizes the action of the nation of Israel thus in Acts 2:23 "ye (referring to the congregation of Israel) have taken Jesus of Nazareth and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him." The chorus of the frenzied mob still rings in our ears today! "Crucify him! Crucify him!" they cried out. This similarity becomes even more remarkable when it is remembered that like the Passover lamb, Jesus Christ too was without blemish. Pilate, who sentenced Him to death, confessed just prior to the sentence: "I find no fault in this man." Think of it: this executor of the much lauded Roman law openly acknowledged that he found no fault in Jesus Christ, and yet he sentenced an innocent man to death in complicity with the desires of the congregation of Israel. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him, also confessed after his dastardly act: "I have betrayed innocent blood." The high priest Caiaphas accused Jesus of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God. And yet this was neither a lie nor blasphemy because He had authenticated His claim. He was without blemish, flawless--and yet like the Passover lamb also without blemish, He was deliberately put to death.

The second similarity involves the time of their slaying. Notice that at the end of Ex. 12:6 it is recorded: "And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." The phrase that interests us here is "in the evening." Actually the Hebrew says "between the evenings." According to the best Jewish authorities, e.g. Josephus, the Talmud, the Midrash, etc., the phrase "between the evening" refers to that period of time between 3:00 o'clock and 6:00 o'clock in the evening.

Now it was exactly at this time of the day that our Lord was crucified upon the cross. Not only was He slain at the same time of the day that the Passover lamb was slain but He was probably sacrificed upon the cross on the very day that the Passover lamb was slain. From John 18:28 we are led to believe that the Jews would eat the Passover on the very day that Jesus Christ was crucified. That He died between 3:00 and 6:00 in the evening is clear from Matt. 27:46 for there we read: "And about the ninth hour (i.e. our 3:00 p.m.) Jesus cried out with a loud voice: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani; that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." Finally in the 50th verse of Matt. 27, which is sometime later, we read: "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." From these verses we conclude then that Jesus Christ died at exactly the same time the Passover lamb was slain in perfect fulfillment of the type. So you see Christ is similar to the Passover lamb because He, too, was slain by the whole congregation of Israel, though without blemish, and because He died at precisely the same time as the Passover lamb.

The third similarity is based on the instructions prescribed in Ex. 12:46. In this passage God instructs the Israelites "neither shall ye break a bone thereof," (i.e. of the Passover lamb). Likewise when our Lord was slain not a bone of His was broken, though this was contrary to the custom of a Roman crucifixion. The Apostle John so simply and clearly points out this similarity that we need but read his account of the crucifixion as recorded in Jn. 19:31-37. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day)

besought Pilate that their (i.e. the three who hanged upon the crosses) legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." As the Apostle John states, God divinely foreordained these similarities between the Passover lamb and Jesus Christ that we might know that Jesus is His Passover lamb for us--worthy of our faith. Both were deliberately put to death by the congregation of Israel, though they were without blemish; both died on exactly the same day of the year, at precisely the same time; both did not have a bone broken, though this was contrary to the custom of the time. I find these similarities too striking to be merely coincidental. In all of this I see the hand of God sending His creation a picture of Jesus Christ ahead in order that we might know that Jesus of Nazareth is His Passover lamb, able and willing to save us.

Let me put it another way. Do you know anybody else who fits this picture? Think of all the great religious leaders who have lived upon this earth. Has any been absolutely sinless and yet crucified by Israel; - and then slain on the same day the Passover lamb was slain at exactly the same time; - and then while others had their bones broken, his bones were not broken? It's like Cinderella's slipper, isn't it? The slipper fits only our Lord Jesus.

But how does this show that Christ Jesus is our Savior? As we pointed out in earlier messages, the lamb of the Passover ritual was slain to save Israel from God's threatened judgment. Like the man in Bishop Munsey's allegory, the Israelites too were hanging suspended between life and death. On that midnight centuries ago God threatened to strike the Israelites with death. There was but one way of salvation. Let go and trust the lamb. God did not first give them His law and say keep this. Rather God instructed them to sacrifice the lamb and strike the blood of that lamb upon the doors of their homes. There was nothing but the blood of a lamb to save them. The Israelites did let go, and placed all their faith in the Passover lamb. They slew the lamb and applied its blood to their homes. In fulfillment of His promise, when God saw the blood He spared the Israelites from the threatened death. You see the lamb was a savior, but it is merely a picture of Jesus Christ, the real Savior.

Like the man in Bishop Munsey's allegory, and like Israel, we too are hanging suspended as it were between life and death. God has threatened a day of judgment for every man after he dies. The stakes are high for to face this judgment means eternal death. But God has provided a Passover lamb; the Lord Jesus Christ.

But maybe you are holding on to something else. Maybe you are holding on to your good works; or perhaps you are holding on to your church or synagogue, or to some religion. They cannot save you. God has but one way of salvation--the lamb, the Lord Jesus. Let go of whatever it is that you are trusting. God cannot and will not save you until you let go. Throw yourself into the arms of Jesus Christ. He alone is trustworthy, for He is God's designated Savior.

Sometime ago there was a popular program on TV called "You Are There." In this program you relived the events of some great day in history, like the first fourth of July or the first Thanksgiving, and you felt as though you were actually there. In this program there was a reporter who interviewed people to find out their reactions to the day's events as they were happening.

Today I'd like us to play: "You Are There." Let's pretend that we were there on the day the Israelites first celebrated the Passover. I'll play the part of the reporter, and I asked Dr. Robinson to play the part of the people interviewed. I'd like you to pretend that you are listening to us on ~~your~~ radio on that historic day. Maybe I better warn you right now, however, that people then were pretty much the same as they are today. OK? With that introduction, let's play: "You Are There." Here we go.

Hello there ladies and gentlemen: This is your roving reporter bringing you on the spot interviews to get the reaction of the people to the events of our day. Last Sunday the famous preacher Moses announced in his church that God was going to send a messenger of death at midnight tonight to kill the oldest son in every family unless they had placed the blood of what he called the passover lamb on their door. His text read: "Take the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of ~~your~~ house." Today I want to interview people who don't have blood on their doors. I have been roving the streets of our city and I notice that not ~~everyone~~ everyone has blood on their door. Let's find out why.

Here's a house now.

KNOCK

Mr. Liberal: Hello. Can I help you?

Reporter: Hello. I'm the roving reporter.

Mr. Liberal: Nice to meet you. Heard your programs many times.

Reporter: Thanks. Mind if I ask your name?

Mr. Liberal: Not at all. My name is Mr. Liberal. What is it you would like to know, Mr. Reporter.

Reporter: Mr. Liberal, I guess you heard about Moses' famous sermon.

Mr. Liberal: Sure have.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Liberal, I was wondering if you would be so kind as to tell us why you haven't sprinkled any blood on your door.

Mr. Liberal: Be glad to. In fact, I persuaded a few of my friends not to put blood on their doors as well.

Reporter: You have?

Mr. Liberal: Now, don't misunderstand me. I have no real objection if other people want to put blood on their doors; but I don't like the dogmatism of Moses and his group.

Reporter: Hum. Well, Mr. Liberal, just why haven't you put blood on your door?

Mr. Liberal: I just don't think God's so narrow minded as Moses says he is.

Reporter: I'm not sure that I follow you.

Mr. Liberal: Well, according to Moses the only way my boy will be safe is by putting blood on my door. Surely God is not so small as to limit Himself to just one way. Besides I don't like the whole idea of judgment at all. I just don't worship that kind of God. I worship a God of love. And a God of love wouldn't send a messenger of death.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Liberal, don't you think the land of Egypt deserves it? And after all God is telling us that this is going to happen before time and has provided us with a way of escape?

Mr. Liberal: As I say, it's alright if you want to believe that. But that's just not my kind of God. I worship a God of love.

Reporter: So you're not going to sprinkle any blood on your door, just to play it safe.

Mr. Liberal: No. I just don't buy that. By the way, I studied Moses' sermon more closely. You know it's interesting, but he didn't say "sprinkle". His original sermon says "to strike" the blood on the entrance.

Reporter: That's very interesting. Well, thanks a lot. It takes a lot of something to go against Moses, who predicted all those other judgments. Good night.

Mr. Liberal: Good night.

CLOSE DOOR

Reporter: Here's another house without any blood. I wonder why he doesn't have any blood on his door. Let's find out why.

KNOCK

Reporter: Hello there, I'm the roving reporter.

Mr. Churchless: Hi! I'm Mr. Churchless. What can I do for you?

Reporter: Mr. Churchless, I've been going around the city trying to find out why some people don't have any blood on their doors.

Mr. Churchless: Any what?

Reporter: Any blood on their doors. I noticed Mr. Churchless that you don't have any blood on your door.

Mr. Churchless: What is this, a joke or something? Are you sure you're not from Candid Camera?

Reporter: You mean to tell me you haven't heard?

Mr. Churchless: Heard what?

Reporter: Don't you go to church?

Mr. Churchless: No. Waste of time. Sometimes I take the kids to Sunday School, but that's about it.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Churchless, you've heard of Moses haven't you?

Mr. Churchless: Yeh. I've heard of him alright.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Churchless, Moses announced in his church last Sunday that unless we place blood on our doors, God will send a messenger of death to kill the oldest son of every family at midnight tonight.

Mr. Churchless: Where in the world did he ever get that idea?

Reporter:q He says from God.

Mr. Churchless: Sounds like a crack-pot.

Reporter: A lot of people are following his instructions.

Mr. Churchless: I wonder why.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Churchless, everything else he predicted came to pass.

Mr. Churchless: Like what?

Reporter: Remember the flies, and the lice, and the boils, and ---

Mr. Churchless: I sure do. What a mess this world is in. Everybody's coming down with something these days. Frankly, sometimes I think God forgot all about us; you know, I've even wondered sometimes whether or not there really is a God.

Reporter: Well, anyway, Moses predicted all these things.

Mr. Churchless: He predicted them ahead of time?

Reporter: Yes he did. He says it is God's judgment on the Egyptians.

Mr. Churchless: I never heard that one. What's this about having blood on your entrances?

Reporter: As I said, Mr. Churchless, Moses has now predicted that at midnight tonight God is going to send a death angel to kill the oldest son in every family unless there is blood on the door. You the oldest son?

Mr. Churchless: Sure am. Where can I get some blood?

Reporter: Down at Moses' church. Moses keeps the church open all the time. He's set up for fellows just like you. Hey, where're you going?

Mr. Churchless: Down to the Church. Thanks a lot. Sure glad you came by tonight.

Reporter: I wonder how many more there are like him. You know, after those last plagues some people said it was Moses' fault they hadn't heard. Well, I guess we have time for one or two more interviews. I sure want to be home tonight before midnight. Here's another house now. Let's see why this fellow doesn't have any blood on his door.

KNOCK

Reporter: Hello there. I'm the roving reporter.

Mr. Moralist: Pleased to meet you. I'm Mr. Moralist. What question would you like to ask me, Mr. Reporter?

Reporter: You have heard about Moses' sermon, haven't you, Mr. Moralist?

Mr. Moralist: Yes, I have. Great sermon he delivered last Sunday.

Reporter: You really think so?

Mr. Moralist: Oh yes, Moses is a very fine preacher.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Moralist, that surprises me, because I wanted to ask you why you didn't have any blood on your door.

Mr. Moralist: Do you have a minute?

Reporter: Well, just a minute. What did you want?

Mr. Moralist: I want to take you into my back yard and show you something.

Reporter: OK. What did you have in mind, Mr. Moralist?

Mr. Moralist: Come on with me into the back yard. There now, isn't it a beauty?

Reporter: What?

Mr. Moralist: The lamb!

Reporter: Oh, you mean the one in the pen there.

Mr. Moralist: Yes, isn't it a beauty? Look it over. That's the finest lamb I ever saw.

Reporter: Well, Mr. Moralist, why do you have the lamb penned up in your back yard?

Mr. Moralist: Remember Moses sermon?

Reporter: Yeah.

Mr. Moralist: Well, remember he told us to select a lamb without blemish four days ago.

Reporter: Yeah?

Mr. Moralist: Well, that was a great idea.

Reporter: What do you mean?

Mr. Moralist: That's the point of Moses' message. We were to find a perfect lamb and study it.

Reporter: Why study it, Mr. Moralist?

Mr. Moralist: Well, it inspires me to be just like that lamb. What a marvelous idea. That lamb has inspired me to be perfect. Don't you see that's the solution to our problem.

Reporter: I'm not sure that I follow you.

Mr. Moralist: Well, I study that lamb every day and I'm trying to be just like it. Our next step is to persuade the Egyptians to study that lamb. See, if they will become like the lamb they will stop killing us. We must have a dialogue with the Egyptians and persuade them to study the lamb. It's the only solution to our problem.

Reporter: That sure is a great idea. But what if the Egyptians don't buy it?

Mr. Moralist: The only solution is to keep on trying.

Reporter: But, Mr. Moralist, Moses also said that we were to slay the lamb, and put the blood of it on our doors. Then we will get out of this place all together.

Mr. Moralist: Well, that part I don't understand. What's the point of killing a perfect lamb. The only sensible thing to do is to study it. That whole idea of shedding blood is offensive to me.

Reporter: But Moses says it will save us. Well, thank Mr. Moralist, for your time. You know, I must confess that I'd feel a lot better if you'd slay the lamb first and then study it.

Mr. Moralist. As I say, that whole idea is offensive to me. Good night.

DOOR CLOSE

Reporter: I see there are many more homes without blood, but I think we have time for one more interview. Here's another house now.

KNOCK

Reporter: Hello, I'm the roving reporter:

Mr. Confused: The real roving reporter? The one I hear on the radio?

Reporter: Yes. Mind if I ask your name?

Mr. Confused: I'm Mr. Confused.

Reporter: Mr. Confused, I stopped by tonight to find out why you don't have any blood on your door. You have heard about Moses' prediction of judgment tonight, haven't you?

Mr. Confused: Oh yes. I just conducted a poll about it.

Reporter: You What?

Mr. Confused: I just went around all the streets of my community to find out how many have blood on their homes.

Reporter: Mr. Confused, what percentage do have blood on their homes?

Mr. Confused: Well, according to my statistics only 25%.

Reporter: Very interesting. Do you mind if I ask why you don't?

Mr. Confused: Well, I'm all confused. Everybody disagrees. How can you be sure of who's right?

Reporter: Well, Mr. Confused, Moses sure has done some mighty miracles and some fantastic things. And he says you must have blood on your door.

Mr. Confused: I know. But not many intellectuals are following him, How can all those brilliant men be wrong? I'm just all confused.

Reporter: How can you lose by putting blood on your door?

Mr. Confused: Well, I want to be sure first. You know some scientists say the earth is 2,000,000 years old, and we evelved from monkeys, and all of that .

Reporter: What difference does that make, Mr. Confused?

Mr. Confused: Well, its all confusing. I don't think Moses agrees with them.

Reporter: But right now you need blood. Worry about that later.

Mr. Confused: Oh, it'a all too confusing to me. Mr. Moralist sgys one thing. And Mr. Liberal says another dthing. And I just can't believe all those people are wrong.

Reporter: You know, Mr. Confused, Noah stood all alone for 120 years and he predicted a flood.

Mr. Confused: I know. But wome people don't believe that either.

Reporter: Say, did you ever hear Moses preach?

Mr. Confused: I think I went down to his church once or twice. It's all really very wonfusing.

Reporter: So you're not going to put any blood on your door, Mr. Confused?

Mr. Confused: No. I'm going to wait until we get some agreement on the subject.

Reporter: Would you mind telling, me, Mr. Confused, how many people you find confused like yourself?

Mr. Confused: About 25%

Reporter: Very interesting. Say, that's an awful lot of people, isn't it?

Mr. Confused: Yes, I know; it makes it all very confusing. I must go now.

Reporter: Do you know where you can get blood?

Mr. Confused: There's no agreement on that either. I think, however, I can get some at Moses' church. As I say, it's all too confusing. If God is going to do something like this to us, I sure wish He would have made it clearer. I really must go now. Good night.

Reporter: Good night. Come to think about it, Moses said something about us being like poor little lost sheep going astray. Well, I must be going home myself. There's my house now, and my oldest boy is running to me. He looks very excited. Hello son, what are you so excited about?

Son: Dad, you forgot to put blood on our door.

Well, so much for our little fantasy, "You Are There." Thanks Dr. Robinson for helping us. And thanks to all of you for playing this little game with me. As you know the rest is history. The death angel did come and killed every oldest son. And the Egyptians did expel the Israelites from the land. That night the nation of Israel was born and has been with us ever since. But that's the present, isn't it? The Israelites are still with us. Did you know that Moses, the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles all predicted the rebirth of the nation of Israel? They predicted a lot of other things too. Some have come to pass and others are still to happen. One thing that they all predict is that a day of judgment is coming for every man, and You Will Be There. You will be asked but one question at that time; "Has the blood of Jesus Christ been applied to the door of your heart?" You can place it there right now by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Bruce Waltke

Sometime ago a popular cook book appeared on the market entitled: "YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT." The thesis of the book is apparant from its title: You are What You Eat. When my wife was in college she majored in home economics. One of the courses she had to take was a course in nutrition. To demonstrate to the girls in this class the importance of a well-balanced diet, the professor had the girls feed two sets of white rats differeng food. They fed one set of rats whole milk, oatmeal, whole wheat bread, margarine and salt for breakfast and for lunch they fed them whole wheat bread, peanut butter, carrots and whole milk. But the other set of rats they fed with donuts and coffee for breakfast and for lunch white braad, jelly, candy, potato chips and coke. At the end of the week the first set of rats, fed the well balanced diet, were healthy and active; but the other set of rats was sickly: they were losing their hair, they developed sores on their bodies, they were ugly and inactive. You see, rats are what they eat--and so are humans!

Now it is also true in the spiritual realm as well that we are what we eat. If we feed our inner man a well-balanced diet we will be truly beautiful and vital, but aif we feed our innar man with poor spiritual food we will be ugly and inactive.

In this series of messages we have been studying the passover ritual, and the passover ritual instructs us about the food of a well-balanced spiritual diet. According to Ex. 12:8 ther were three dishes in the passover supper, for there we read: "and they shall eat the flesh of the lamb in that night, roast with fire, and unleanened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." The three dished then were the lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. Today, I wantnto consider the main dish: the lamb.

But before we go further in this study of the supper let me remind you that in this message and in the remaining messages dealing with the supper I am speaking to Christians. In an earlier message I pointed out that the passover ritual had two parts: the first part focused on the slaying of the lamb, Ex. 12:3-7 and the second part focused on the supper of the lamb. The first part centering on the slaying of the lamb teaches us spiritual truths concerning our salvation; the second part fucusing on the supper of the lamb teaches us truths concerning our sanctification. The second part, the supper, however, took place in sãde the house under the blood. Look at vs. 7 where we read: "and they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses wherein they shall eat it." You see this part takes place inside the house to which the blood has been applied. The supper then is eaten by those who are under the blood; they are in the house of safety. So then the spiritual truth of the supper pertained to the believer, that is, to those who are trusting the blood of Jesus Christ to save them.

Now let us look at this main dish, the lamb. As we have said is previous messages, the lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ. So them, the truth that is here being taught to us is that now that we are saved we are to feed upon Jesus Christ. Now obviously we cannot literally eat his flesh. R member in John 6 Jesus said in vs. 48: "Iam the bread of life." He continued in vs. 51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh." In vs. 53 he continues; "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you." Again in vs. 56 he said: "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

We then read in verse 60; "many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, this is an haaz saying; who can hear it?" Jesus responded in verse 60 by pointing out he was not speaking of eating his literal flesh and drinking his literal blood, rather he said: "it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." It is not his physical flesh and blood we are asked to eat for that would have no effect on the inner man; rather our spirit, our inner man, must feed on him by meditating on Jesus Christ and his words. Therefore, God is instructing us to feed on His Word.

It is reasonable, isn't it, that God would give instructions to his children about their spiritual food? What parent worthy of the name does not take care of his child's diet? What parent allows the child to eat whatever the child wishes? Good parents keep poison out of the child's reach, lest the child swallow the poison and die. We do not feed our children only candy and donuts and okes. Of course not. We not only see to it that they don't eat poison, but also that they eat wholesome food, and a well-balanced diet.

Likewise God has instructed His children concerning their spiritual food. He has put some food out of arm's reach from His children lest they eat it and die. For example in Deut. 18:9 he instructed the Israelites; "when you shall come into the land the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations." Those nations were the Canaanites which at the time of Moses and Joshua had an effete and sensual civilization. Permit me if you will to read a brief description of three Canaanite goddesses of this civilization from W. F. Albright's book, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel. He writes, "all three goddesses were principally concerned with sex and war. Sex was their primary function. In Egyptian text of the 13th century B.C. Anath and Astarte (two of the three goddesses) are called 'the great goddesses who conceive but do not bear,' that is the goddesses who are perennially fruitful without ever losing virginity. They are therefore both mother goddesses and divine prostitutes." Albright then describes the sensual role of these Canaanite goddesses. "Sacred prostitution," he says, "was apparently an invariable concomitant of the cult of the Phoenician and Assyrian goddesses.. As sacred prostitute the goddess was strangely enough from our point of view called the holy one....The Egyptian representative of Qudaken, "the holy one, SHOW HER ENFACE AS A NAKED WOMAN IN THE PRIME OF LIFE STANDING ON A LION WITH A LILLY IN ONE HAND AND A SERPENT (OR TWO SERPENTS) IN THE OTHER." After demonstrating that these goddesses were borrowed from Babylon he writes; "however the Canaanites lost no time in substituting carnality for the grace of the Babylonian originals. Both in these plaques and in later ones the female organs are accentuated in various ways, nearly all of them more direct and less restrained than is true of Babylonia. Moreover, in Mesopotamia the plaques nearly all obvious represent a mother goddess, whereas in Canaan most of them just as clearly portray a sacred courtesan." God forbade his people to learn about these perversions. Our civilization is rapidly approaching the state of the sensual and effete Canaanite civilization. As never before in the history of the American church must Christians be exhorted not to learn these abominable acts. God consistently warns his children not to fill their minds with the abominations of the unsaved. In Psalms 1, God said, "Oh the heavenly bliss of the man who does not walk in the counsel of ungodly men, and who does not stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful." In Ephesians 4:17-24, Paul writes, "now this I affirm and testify of the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the

ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become calloused and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. You did not so learn Christ!--assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life. It is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

One of the gravest dangers to Christians today is the TV set. This effective and attractive media of communication is filling Christians minds with Satan's poison. Frederick Wertham, a psychologist, did a study on violence on TV in the Los Angeles area. He watched his set for one week before 9:00 p.m. every evening, the time children would be watching. He reported in the Ladies Home Journal of March 1960 the following instances of crime during the span of time he was checking: 161 murders, 60 justifiable killings, 2 suicides, 192 attempted murders, 83 robberies, 15 kidnappings, 24 murder conspiracies, 21 jail breaks, 7 attempted lynchings, 6 dynamitings, 2 cases of arson, 2 cases of torture, and 11 cases of extortion. In a study for CBX, Gary Steiner reported that the average family has its set on 25 to 30 hours a week. Is it any wonder that leading psychologists warn us concerning the damage that TV is doing to our children? Mr. Wertham went on in his article to say that these programs are adding fuel to the fire of juvenile delinquency by teaching the children how to perform acts of violence and by hardening their minds to brutality. God warns His children against feeding their minds with such programs. We must exercise discipline in this area. The sad truth is that this most effective means of teaching is not feeding us with Lamb. But, God said that we should feed on the Lamb. Whereas he instructed the Israelites not to learn to do after the Canaanite abominations in Deut. 18:9, in Deut. 6:4 he did instruct: "Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and ye shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise, and you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall write them on the door posts of your houses, on your house and on your gates." Whereas in Psalms 1:1 he instructed us not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, in Psalms 1:2 he said the blessed man is one who meditates in his law day and night. Whereas he warned young Timothy to avoid foolish things, in Phil. 4:8 he wrote: "finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." We are to feed on every aspect of Christ. We are to think upon the things He heard, the way He looked at the world. We are to think on His hands and His feet, the places He went, we are to think on every aspect of Christ. Let me conclude by asking you, my friend, are you feeding on God's lamb or are you feeding on garbage? You are what you eat. The sad experience of many Christians is that they are emaciated, sick, ugly and inactive because they do not have a wholesome and balanced diet. Too many Christians are living on cokes and sugar donuts and coffee, that is, on superficially emotionally charged meetings, rather than feeding on the full orb'd diet of the whole counsel of God. The main dish of a well-balanced diet is lamb.

THE PASSOVER RITUAL

Message #9

Dr. Bruce Waltke

1

While Egypt slumbered, Israel was feasting. That statement summarizes my feelings as I present this message in a series of messages on the Passover Ritual. While Egypt slept on the night of the passover, indifferent or unaware that God's messenger of death would smite every oldest son in their land, the Israelites under the protecting blood of the passover lamb feasted in their homes on the passover meal. Christians today feel much the same way as the Israelites probably felt on that historic night. Like the Egyptians, most of the world seems to be asleep to the divine program of wrath upon this world; while like Israel, Christians under the safety of the blood of Jesus Christ feed upon the wonderful truths of God's Word. It is my hope that if you have failed to trust in Jesus to save you, you will awake and put your faith in Him before God's threatened judgment overtakes you. But, today in our series of messages we are inside the house of safety, under the blood, feeding on the good things of God.

In previous messages we pointed out that according to Exodus 12:8, the Passover supper had three dishes: the flesh of the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. We have sought to demonstrate that these dishes are symbols of spiritual truths upon which our souls must feed by meditation. In a previous message we studied the main dish, the lamb. We saw that the lamb represents the Lord Jesus Christ; thus the spiritual significance of this dish is that our souls must meditate upon the Lord and His Word. But, there are details with regard to the eating of the lamb which we did not consider. Today I would like to consider some of the instructions associated with the eating of the lamb.

First of all, notice that the lamb was to be eaten that night. As soon as the Israelites had applied the blood of the lamb to their homes, they were to begin feeding upon it. Likewise, it should be our experience that as soon as we place our faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, we should begin to feed on Him. Unfortunately, many Christians, including myself, after believing on Jesus Christ fail to feed immediately upon Him. As a result, Christians remain dwarfed and emaciated, sometimes even for years. Peter exhorts us in I Peter 2:2, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." A baby eats as soon as it is born; so should the Christian. If you are failing to feed on Christ, I exhort you to begin today; tonight spend some time meditating upon Jesus so that Christ will be formed in you. I also exhort you to attend immediately a church where the shepherd is breaking the Word of Life and feeding it to his flock so that you might attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Not only are we to feed on Christ immediately, but secondly, notice that according to Exodus 12:8, the lamb was to be roasted with fire. The passage reads, "and they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire." Again in Exodus 12:9, it is emphasized that the lamb should be roasted with fire, for there we read, "eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire." What is the point of this instruction? I believe that God is instructing us concerning the horribleness and the dreadfulness of sin. Let me explain why. The word translated "roast" probably means "to char" or "to scorch," or to "burn until black." The Samaritan community is the only community that still celebrates the Passover according to the instructions of Exodus 12. Many eye-witnesses of their ceremony have described the Passover ritual as the Samaritans celebrate it. All of these eye-witnesses, which I have read, are struck by the way in which the Samaritans burned the slain lamb until it is black like charcoal. God instructed them that the Passover lamb be charred black. But, why did God instruct that the representation of His Son, Jesus, be so

THE PASSOVER RITUAL

Message #9

Dr. Bruce Waltke

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defaced and marred? Is it not reasonable to suppose that God is picturing the defacements of Jesus upon the cross? Isaiah said concerning the disfigurement of Jesus upon the cross: "He had not form or comeliness that we should look at Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Now why was it that Christ was so marred at His death? The Scripture says that He died on account of our sins. It was sin that nailed our Lord to the cross. If you wish to see the horrible and dreadful effects of sin look at Christ upon the cross, look at the blackened lamb! Perhaps sin is appealing and exciting and attractive to you. If you want to see sin for what it really is, look at what it did to Jesus. A forest fire is exciting and attractive while it is raging, but does any sane man deliberately set a forest on fire to see the blaze? Of course not! But why not? Isn't it exciting and beautiful at the time? The answer to this absurd question is obvious: we don't set our forests on fire because of the dreadful and horrible consequences. The fire leaves behind in its wake scarred and grotesque acres, death and sterility. Sin is somewhat like a forest fire-- it is strangely attractive for a moment. But, it yields disfigurement and death.

Not only do I want us to notice with regard to the eating of the lamb that they ate it immediately and roast it with fire, but also that according to Ex. 12:46, they were instructed not to break a bone of the lamb. What is God teaching us by this symbol? I believe two things: first of all, He is instructing us concerning the unity of the body of Christ. He is not to be broken. The emphasis of verses 43-49 on the one hand falls upon the separation of the participants in the Passover supper from outsiders, and on the other hand upon the unity of the participants with one another. In verses 43-45 their separation from strangers who had not submitted their wills to God is emphasized. The passage reads, "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the Passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." On the other hand the unity and the oneness of the participants is emphasized in Ex. 12:46-49: "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." The stress on unity and oneness of the participants is apparent. The unity of the Passover lamb and of those feasting upon him symbolizes the unity of the Body of Jesus Christ and those who feed on Him. The theme here is very much the same as that of the apostle Paul in I Cor. 10:16-22. In I Cor. 10:16-18, Paul first emphasizes the oneness of the partakers of the Lord's supper; and then in I Cor. 10:19-22 he stresses their separation from foreigners. Time allows me to read only verses 16-17. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." There is then an organic unity of all believers. We may note in passing that an organic unity does not necessarily imply an ecclesiastical or organizational unity. Israel was divided into many families and yet there was a spiritual unity in feasting upon the lamb. There is not a suggestion that the many churches of

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the New Testament were organized under one government. But they were spiritually united by their participation in Christ.

The instruction that not a bone was to be broken not only symbolizes the unity of the body of Christ, but also demonstrates that Jesus is God's lamb. God provided Jesus Christ as the Passover lamb for the world; the Son willing submitted Himself to His Father's will. In Isaiah 53:9, we read: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him (referring to Jesus); He hath put Him to grief." John the Baptist cried out: "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Peter said in Acts 2:18 that Jesus was delivered to the cross by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. But, God's agent to carry out His purpose was the hand of sinful men. Thus Peter continues in Acts 2:18, "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him." Now, how could God demonstrate that His Son went to the cross in submission to His will and not in weak submission to the will of sinners? God demonstrated that He placed Jesus upon the cross by keeping all His bones. In his personal account as an eye witness of the crucifixion, John tells us that although the Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two malefactors who were crucified with Jesus, they did not break the legs of our Lord. He then explains why His legs were not broken. In John 19:36 he says: "For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of Him will not be broken." But what Scripture is John quoting? He is quoting Psalm 34:20. Beginning with Psalm 34:19, that passage reads: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth Him out of them all. He keepeth all His bones: Not one of them is broken." Do you see the point? The Scripture says: "God keepeth all His bones so that not one of them is broken." Once the wicked hands of men had accomplished God's purpose, they could touch the Son of God no further. Once Jesus had accomplished the work of offering His soul as a sacrifice for sin, God restrained the hands of men. He kept all His bones. In this way, then, God demonstrated that He was the One who offered up His Son upon the cross. He is God's Passover lamb.

The responsibility of the unsaved is to believe upon God's Passover lamb; the responsibility of the believer is to feed upon God's Passover lamb. Jesus is God's means of grace to a sinful world. Trust and feed upon God's lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Message #10

1

Most of us enjoy the customs and traditions associated with our religious holidays. We respond warmly to the Christmas traditions of stockings hung by the chimney with care, the gaily lit Christmas trees, and the jingling bells of a hundred Santa Clauses. Unfortunately, we all too often forget the cause or origin of these traditions. For example, where did Santa Claus come from? Santa Claus is a contraction for Saint Nicholas. Saint Nicholas was born 200 or 300 years after the birth of Christ. Later in his life he became a bishop and gained distinction in the councils of the early church. He became especially famous for giving unexpected gifts, and later became associated with the giving of presents during the season at the end of the year. He seems to have been first adopted by the Netherlands as the patron saint of the children. In the Netherlands, on St. Nicholas Eve, the children would leave their wooden shoes filled with hay for Saint Nicholas' white horse.

In this series of messages we are studying the traditions of an ancient holiday celebrated by Israel called the Passover. Unlike our customs associated with our holidays, however, these traditions were divinely instituted by God to remind and to teach His children spiritual truths. One of the traditions of this ancient holiday was the eating of unleavened bread which the Israelites, and the Jews even to this day, call *massahs*. The instructions for this custom are given in Exodus 12:8, "and the Israelites shall eat the flesh (of the Passover lamb) in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread." Previously we studied the spiritual significance of the main dish, the flesh of the lamb. Today, I want to consider the spiritual significance of the side-dish, the unleavened bread. Why did God instruct His people to observe this custom? What spiritual truth or truths was God teaching His children by this tradition?

In order to answer that question we should first notice at what stage in the Passover ritual the Israelites ate the unleavened bread. You will notice that they do not eat the unleavened bread until they are inside the house to which the blood of the Passover lamb had been applied. In verse 7 we read that they were to eat the supper, of which this side-dish was a part, inside the house. The unleavened bread was eaten by those who are under the blood, in the house of safety. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that God is not teaching us a truth concerning our salvation but concerning our sanctification. It is spiritual truth for saved people.

But, what precisely is the spiritual significance of the unleavened bread? What does it represent? Or to put the question in another light: "What was the cause or origin behind this tradition of eating unleavened bread?" In Exodus 12:29-34, we are instructed concerning the cause or origin of this tradition. The story reads as follows: "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people; both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, and their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders." "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds,

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even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual." Do you see the reason why they ate unleavened bread on this historic occasion? It reminded them of the bread they ate when they were expelled from Egypt.

Perhaps we can see the origin of this tradition more clearly if we tell the story in our own words and as though this event occurred in the twentieth century. After the angel of death had killed the oldest boy in every Egyptian family at midnight, the Egyptians immediately arose in the wee-early hours of the morning while it was still dark and compelled the Israelites to leave their land immediately. The Israelites had to leave that night in the dark. They went to their kitchen cabinets and grabbed whatever pots and pans they could lay hold of, and they went to their refrigerators and took whatever food was available. They took the dough for their bread, but no yeast had as yet been placed into the dough for they wouldn't put the yeast into the dough until they were ready to bake it lest the dough would sour and spoil. But they had no time to put leaven into their dough and bake it because they had to leave Egypt immediately, that night, while it was still dark.

Thus the unleavened bread reminded them that they left Egypt in haste, immediately. It teaches us that we too are to leave our old way of life immediately after our salvation. As soon as we apply the blood of Christ to our lives, for our deliverance from the penalty of sin, God desires that we abandon our old sinful way of living. Are you the slave of some sinful habit? Then purpose to rid yourself of it immediately, don't linger in Egypt; don't linger as a slave to sin. Are you employed in a way that is not fitting for Christians? Then don't linger in it; step out right away. Or are you continuing to fellowship with sinners in their sins? Are you in a church that is not preaching the Word of God and the blood of Jesus Christ? God does not desire that you stay in these old associations, but that you immediately leave your old way of life, and come out with the people of God. In II Cor. 6:2, God says: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Later on in that same chapter He says, "be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? . . . and what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? For we are a temple of the living God . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing."

The unleavened bread not only reminded them that they left Egypt in haste, but it also reminded them that they had made no provision for this journey. They had to step out into the wilderness by faith trusting God to feed them and supply their needs. It also instructs us that we too do not make provisions for the Christian life before our salvation. We step out by faith into a new way of life trusting God to provide for our needs. Sometimes people are afraid to take the step of faith of believing in Jesus Christ because they are afraid that they will not be able to live the Christian life. No one can make provision ahead of time to live the Christian life. Each one steps out by faith into this new way of life trusting God to enable him to live in a way pleasing to Him. God must make the provision. Sometimes people are afraid to leave their jobs or to leave their old associations because they will lose their incomes. But, God says we can make no provision for this journey. Like Israel of old we must march out boldly into this new life trusting God to feed us and supply our needs.

Finally, the unleavened bread reminded them that they had to deny themselves the comforts and pleasures of living in Egypt. Obviously, unleavened bread is not as delightful as leavened bread. But, having left Egypt in expectation of inheriting a far better land, they ate unleavened in the interim. In the parallel passage of Deut. 16:3, the unleavened bread is called the "bread of affliction." Likewise, when we step out from our old way of life to journey on the road to the promised land, we are called upon to eat the bread of affliction, the bread of self-denial. Christ calls us to discipleship. Over and over again he calls upon us to deny ourselves and to forego the comforts of this world. We are called upon throughout the New Testament to lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven and not on earth.

Are you eating unleavened bread? Have you left your Egypt in haste? Are you trusting Him to provide for your needs? Are you foregoing the pleasures of this world? Observe the Passover: eat unleavened bread. This side-dish is a vital part of God's well balanced diet for the Christian today.

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Message #11

1

Who of us has suffered and has not wondered why he was suffering? Undoubtedly there are some listening to this program who are suffering, and wondering why God has allowed this to happen to them, for man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. Suffering is, in the last analysis, one of the inscrutable mysteries of life. Even our Lord, when he hanged upon the cross, identified Himself with the sufferings of all men whom He came to redeem by crying out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Often, we never know the reason why we are suffering. But, rest assured there is a reason. But, sometimes, God does not reveal the reason to us in this life. Perhaps this is so because we are not able to understand it. Occasionally my wife and I have to take our little two year old girl to the doctor to get a shot: perhaps a polio shot, or a shot for measles, or a shot of penicillin, etc. Now, to our little girl, this is a very painful experience. When she sees the nurse, armored in white, coming at her with the bare needle point poised to strike her, our little girl screams as only a two year old girl can. Now, obviously, we are not doing this to hurt our little girl, but we are doing it in her best interests. We are acting out of love, and interestingly enough our little girl does not feel that mommy and daddy have abandoned her. All the while she is crying and pleading with us to deliver her from this pain, she clings to us the more tightly. You see, she does not understand the reason, although there is a very good one, but she keeps on trusting in us. Is that not a picture of our relationship to God when we suffer? We do not abandon Him, but rather we cling to Him.

But, the Bible also reveals reason why God allows the believer to suffer. In this series of messages we are considering the Passover ritual, and the Passover ritual instructs us that suffering is a part of a well balanced spiritual diet. In previous messages we have noted that the Passover ritual has two parts: the first part centers on the striking of the Lamb's blood on the house, and the second part centers on the supper of the Lamb. We suggested that the striking of the blood teaches us truths concerning our sanctification. The supper is eaten by those inside the house, under the blood, in the place of safety. We noted that there are three different dishes in this supper: the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. These three dishes, we suggested, belong to a well balanced spiritual diet. That is, they represent spiritual truths which a Christian must feed upon in order to grow into spiritual maturity. Today we wish to study the bitter herbs. Undoubtedly, as the name suggests, this implies the suffering that we must endure as Christians. But, like the truth that is represented, it is a mystery dish. The spiritual significance of the lamb is clearly revealed in the Scriptures: it is a picture of Jesus Christ. The unleavened bread is clearly explained: it teaches us that once we are saved we must leave Egypt, or our old way of life, in haste, with no preparation for the journey, and be willing to deny ourselves the comforts of this world. But the bitter herbs are nowhere explained. It is a mystery dish in the Word of God.

The bitter herbs, or suffering, are a part of a well balanced spiritual diet. Though we may not know the precise reason for our suffering, the Word of God instructs us that it is necessary for us to suffer before we can enter into the kingdom of God. Thus, we read in Acts 14:22, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

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The Scriptures suggest at least three reasons why we suffer. The sufferings that come to believers may be classified as exemplary, chastening, and perfecting. There are at least two illustrations of suffering used as an example in the Bible. One illustration is found in John 9. In John 9, verses 1-3 we read: "And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned or his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The man born blind was chosen a vessel by whom God revealed His love and power and grace. Another classic illustration of exemplary suffering is Job. It was Satan's theory that a man only serves God when God treats him well. But God affirmed that a true believer in Him holds fast his integrity. Job became the test case. God used Job to demonstrate this truth to all His creation. A true believer perseveres. Through all of his suffering, Job never denied God, but persevered in his faith. The arresting feature in this story is that Job never learned why he suffered. He was an example to the heavenly hosts of the truth that God's own hold fast their integrity. Some of God's most choice vessels on this earth are those believers who suffer throughout their lives, and never know why, but through whom God in some way is manifesting His works and His glory.

Not only is there suffering as an example, but there is chastening or corrective suffering. Just as a child who has done wrong receives a spanking, so do sufferings come to a believer if he has stepped out of the will of God. The outstanding chapter on corrective suffering is in the 12th chapter of Hebrews. Speaking of the difficulties that come to true believers, the Holy Spirit says, according to Phillip's paraphrase, "You have, perhaps, lost sight of that piece of advice which reminds you of your sonship in God: 'My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' Bear what you have to bear as 'chastening'--as God's dealings with you as with sons. No true son ever grows up uncorrected by his father. For if you had not experience of the correction which all sons have to bear, you might well doubt the legitimacy of your sonship. After all, when we were children we had fathers who corrected us, and we respected them for it. Can we not much more readily submit to a Heavenly Father's discipline, and learn how to live? For our fathers used to correct us according to their own ideas during the brief days of childhood. But God corrects us all our days for our own benefit, to teach us His holiness. Now, obviously, no chastening seems pleasant at the time: it is in fact most unpleasant. Yet, when it is all over we can see that it has quietly produced the fruit of real goodness in the characters of those who have accepted it in the right spirit. So take a fresh grip on life and brace your trembling limbs. Don't wander away from the path, but forge steadily onward. On the right path the limping foot recovers strength and does not collapse."

Finally, there is not only exemplary and chastening suffering, but there is also perfecting suffering. As a boy I used to love to watch caterpillars emerge from their cocoons to become beautiful butterflies. The emerging process seemed to me to take hours as the young butterfly painfully struggled to escape from his cocoon. I recall one afternoon in particular when I watched several of them going through this painful process of becoming full-fledged butterflies. Finally, as one young butterfly began the process, I decided to give him some help in order to ease his struggle. I took a pair of scissors, and cut away the opening so that the butterfly could emerge with ease. The butterfly did

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emerge quickly; it rested briefly on the edge of the cocoon; but, instead of opening its wings and flying away as the butterflies had, it fell to the floor, crawled a brief distance and died. You see, the butterfly had to be perfected through suffering. Like the butterfly, we, too, are developed or perfected through our suffering.

This was the experience of our Lord, as well. In Hebrews 2:10 we read, "for it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." In Hebrews 5:8 the writer amplifies this truth. Now he writes, "though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." One virtue, then, that suffering perfects in us is obedience. We only learn obedience when we submit ourselves to that which is distasteful and difficult in the will of God. When my wife tells our little girl to eat a piece of candy, our little girl learns nothing about obedience, because that is her will as well. But, when my wife instructs our little girl to swallow some medicine, then she ~~learns~~ learns obedience because she has to submit her will to the will of her mother. Likewise, we only learn obedience when we submit our will to the painful and difficult things in the will of God.

Suffering not only perfects obedience in us, but it also perfects steadfast endurance in us. In Romans 5:3 Paul writes, "and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience experience; and experience hope." The word translated "patience" might better be translated "steadfast endurance" It is the opposite of being a quitter. It is that quality of not looking back after putting our hand to the plow... a quality of spirit which is highly prized by the Lord. This virtue is perfected by suffering. When everything is pleasant, we do not learn to endure, but when we suffer we learn to endure and hope for the end. As a mountain climber steadfastly inches ahead in spite of great adversities in anticipation of reaching the mountain's peak, so the Christian steadfastly endures the outrages of this life in anticipation of the hope of seeing the Lord face to face.

Bitter herbs, then, are an essential part of a well balanced spiritual diet. Though we may be tempted not to eat them or to spit them out, we must eat our bitter herbs in order that God might fit us for His kingdom. James wrote, "my brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into various testings; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh steadfast endurance. But let steadfast endurance have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

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Message #12

On the TV program entitled "What's My Line?" a guest visitor attempts to stump a panel of experts with regard to his occupation. Frequently the panel will try to determine a visitor's occupation by asking questions about the dress he wears while he is working. For example, if the person wears a long black robe in his work, he probably is a judge; or if he wears a space suit in his vocation, he is probably a member of Gemini flight team. Often we can determine a person's occupation from his dress.

Let us try to guess the vocation of the Israelites by their dress worn while eating the Passover supper. Our text, Exodus 12:11, reads: "and thus shall ye eat the Passover, : with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste--it is the LORD'S Passover." You will note that their habit had three distinctive features: one, their loins were girded. That means that their long robes which normally hung down to their ankles were pulled up above their knees. The excess garment was then held up in place by a belt around the waist. This was the dress of one going on a journey--their legs were bared and not encumbered by the long flowing garments which they normally wore around the house. The second distinctive feature was that they were to have sandals on their feet; and third, they were to have a staff in their hand. Now, we don't have to be a panel of experts to guess their vocation by their dress, do we? Obviously they are dressed as pilgrims; that is, they are men and women who are about to take a journey. But where are they going immediately after eating the Passover lamb? The Bible says that on the night they ate the Passover lamb, they set out on their journey for the promised land. This was a people who were going some place. They had a destination, namely, the land God had promised to give them for their inheritance.

Likewise, after we have applied the blood of Jesus Christ to our lives, God calls us, as it were, to put shoes on our feet, to gird up our loins, and to take a staff in our hands. For we too are pilgrims, we too are marching toward our inheritance with Jesus Christ. We are called to be pilgrims. I like the way Dr. McGee expresses it: he says that we are called to be pilgrims and not tourists. The difference between a pilgrim and a tourist is this: a pilgrim has but one objective--and that is to get to his destination. But, a tourist is one who enjoys the trip; his objective is to enjoy as much as he can along the way as he travels toward his destination. God has called us to be pilgrims and not tourists. We are to live for our destination, for our inheritance.

But, perhaps, I am assuming too much when I say we are called to gird up our minds, as Peter expressed it, and to live as pilgrims or to live as disciples of our Lord awaiting our inheritance with Him. It is my observation that few Christians truly live as pilgrims in this life. Since this is so, perhaps, it would be well for us to re-examine the New Testament again and to see that God has called us to put on the pilgrim's dress. Let us look, then, at a few passages in the teachings of our Lord and in the teachings of the apostles that exhort us to gird up our minds, to put shoes on our feet, to take a staff in our hand and to live for our inheritance with Jesus Christ. The first passage I would like to read is Matthew 5:19 where our Lord says, "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; for where they treasure is, there will their heart be also." Again in Luke 12:33 He says, "sell that which ye have, and give alms, make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where

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your treasure is there will your heart be also." There are scores of such passages in the teachings of our Lord. He has called us to live as pilgrims, as disciples. This same theme rings throughout the teaching of the apostles. J.B. Phillips in his introduction to Letters to Young Churches, an excellent paraphrase of the epistles of the New Testament, lists four impressions that struck him most forceably while he was making his translation. One of the four truths that he found central in the teaching of the apostles was their emphasis that Christians ought not to live for this world but to live for the hereafter. He writes: "To the writers of these letters this present life was only an incident. It was lived, with a due sense of responsibility, as a preface to sharing the timeless life of God Himself." To these men this world was only a part, and because of the cumulative result of human sin a highly infected and infectious part, of God's vast created universe, seen and unseen. They trained themselves therefore, and attempted to train others, not to be "taken in" by this world, not to give their hearts to it, not to conform to its values, but to remember constantly that they were only temporary residents, and that their rights of citizenship were in the unseen world of reality. Today, when all of the emphasis is thrown upon making the most of this life, and even Christianity is only seriously considered in many quarters because of its social implications, this point of view is comparatively rarely held. Yet, as we read what they have to say we may perhaps find ourselves saying a little wistfully, "perhaps these men were right."

But, let us hear with our own hearts a few words from the inspired apostles on this subject. First let us hear Paul in Colossians 3:1-4. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." In II Timothy 2:4 the great apostle again writes: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The writer of Hebrews sets forth the Patriarchs as our examples of living the pilgrim's life. In Hebrews 11:13-16 we read: "By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for acity which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." "These patriarchs all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The apostle Peter exhorts in I Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The apostle John wrote in I John 2:15-17, "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Obviously, God commanded Israel of old and the Church of today to dress as pilgrims, to gird up their minds and to live for the promised land. The real issue then is--will we obey Him? Will we live as pilgrims? Will we gird up the loins of our minds? In a word, will we be obedient to God and to Jesus Christ, and to His apostles and to the Scriptures?

Dr. Tozer has recently written a disturbing tract entitled: "The Waning Authority of the Christ in the Churches." He writes, "the Lordship of Jesus is not quite forgotten among Christians, but it has been mostly relegated to the hymnal where

all responsibility toward it may be comfortably discharged in a glow of pleasant religious emotion. Or if it is taught as a theory in the classroom, it is rarely applied to practical living. The idea that the Man Christ Jesus has absolute and final authority over the whole church and over all of its members in every detail of their lives is simply not now accepted as true by the rank and file of evangelical Christians. What we do is this: We accept the Christianity of our group as being identical with that of Christ and His apostles. The beliefs, the practices, the ethics, and activities of our group are equated with the Christianity of the New Testament. Whatever the group thinks or says or does is Scriptural, no questions asked. It is assumed that all our Lord expects of us is that we busy ourselves with the activities of the group. In so doing we are keeping the commandments of Christ.

To avoid the hard necessity of either obeying or rejecting the plain instructions of our Lord in the New Testament we take refuge in a liberal interpretation of them. Casuistry is not the possession of Roman Catholic theologians alone. We evangelicals also know how to avoid the sharp point of obedience by means of fine and intricate explanation. These are tailor-made for the flesh. They excuse disobedience, comfort, carnality and make the words of Christ of none effect. And the essence of it all is that Christ simply could not have meant what He said. His teachings are accepted even theoretically only after they have been weakened by interpretation." So writes Dr. Tozer.

Is Dr. Tozer correct? As I examine my own life, I find I am myself very much involved in the situation he here deplures. May we all join in the prayer of Ezra when he included himself among the wrongdoers: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God? for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heaven." Having confessed our failure, may God give us the grace to put on the pilgrim's habit even while we eat the Passover in haste.

THE PASSOVER RITUAL

Dr. Bruce Waltke

Message #13

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Some things always go together. For example, some foods are inseparable. Here in the South, cream potatoes and English peas are a must with Southern Fried Chicken. In the north, lamb and mint jelly are always served together; and everywhere hamburger goes with everything on it. Or take our holidays: Christmas and Santa Claus are inseparable, aren't they? And what would Thanksgiving be without a turkey dinner? There are other things that go together as well. As the song writer expressed it: "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage. This I tell you brother, you can't have one without the other."

In ancient Israel two festivals always went together: they were, passover and the feast of unleavened bread. It was impossible to think of one without the other. In fact the feast of unleavened bread began with the eating of the passover supper. In Ex. 12:1-13, we have instructions for the celebration of the passover; in Ex. 12:14-20, we have instructions with regard to the feast of unleavened bread. Now they both began on exactly the same day. In Ex. 12:18 we learn that the feast of unleavened bread began on the 14th day of the first month. For here we read: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread until the one and twentieth day of the month at even." You may recall that it was on this same day, that is, on the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening, that the passover was eaten. For we read in vs.6: "And ye shall keep the passover lamb up until the fourteenth day of the first month." And then the instructions were given to eat it that evening. There is no question then that these two feasts were inseparable. They went together like apple pie and cheese or Fourth of July and firecrackers. They were inseparable.

Now what is the significance of the relationship of the celebration of passover with the feast of unleavened bread? In previous messages we have sought to show that these feasts were symbols or pictures of spiritual truths. You may recall that the passover lamb was a picture of Jesus Christ. The death of the lamb for the salvation of Israel at this historic occasion was a picture of the death of Christ for our salvation. So then the slaying of the passover lamb and the sprinkling of its blood is a picture of our salvation. The unleavened bread, on the other hand, is a picture or a symbol of our leaving Egypt in haste; that is, forsaking our old way of life. In brief, the feast of unleavened bread is a picture of our lives being lived apart from sin. These two feasts go together. As soon as we are saved by trusting the blood of Jesus we are to live by God's grace apart from sin. Paul shows the significance of the relationship of these two festivals in I Cor. 5:6-8. In this passage he writes, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (That is, a little yeast makes the whole lump sour.) "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover lamb is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." These two festivals go together in the Christian's life today even as they went together in the celebrations of ancient Israel.

Today I want to study more closely the feast of unleavened bread which teaches us truths concerning our Christian walk after we have been saved - after we have come under the blood of the passover lamb. There are three things about the feast of unleavened bread which I want us to notice. First of all, notice that whereas the passover was celebrated on one evening the feast of unleavened bread lasted seven days. Concerning the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of its

blood we read in Ex. 12:6,7: "And ye shall keep the passover lamb up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses wherein they shall eat it." This symbolizes our salvation. It happens instantaneously. As soon as the Israelites applied the blood of the lamb to their homes, they were safe from the threatened judgment. There was no long drawn out process or gradual growth into salvation. The issue was simple: apply the blood and you shall be saved. Likewise today salvation is not a gradual, growing process. It is instantaneous. As soon as any man or woman, boy or girl places his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior he is saved. But now notice that the feast of unleavened bread extended over a seven day period. Thus we read in Ex. 12:15, "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread." Now the number seven in the Bible symbolizes completeness, perfection. It represents a full cycle, even as there are seven days in a week, even as God created the heavens and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. It is the number of completion. Thus the point here is that we are to live out our entire lives apart from sin after we have been saved.

Now there is a sense in which we are already without sin. Once we are saved, we are positionally in Christ and without sin. As we have seen in another message, when we believed in Christ, we put on Christ with all His perfection. Figuratively, then, once we are saved we become unleavened bread. Thus Paul wrote in I Cor. 5:7 concerning the church at Corinth, "Even as ye are unleavened bread." That was their position in Christ. But now we are exhorted to make our position in Christ our practice in life as well. Thus, to read the whole verse in I Cor. 5:7, Paul says, "Purge out (that is in your practice, in your living) therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened (that is, in your position)."

Not only do I want us to notice that the feast of unleavened bread lasted seven days, but, secondly, I want us to notice that not the least bit of leaven was to be present in the houses of the Israelites. The Scripture is most explicit on this point. Not only were the ancient Israelites not to eat leaven during this feast, but also not the least bit of leaven was to be found in their presence. Thus we read in Exodus 12:19, "Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel whether he be a stranger, or born in the land." I am told that even today in Orthodox Jewish homes in preparation for this feast, the mother lights a candle and ritualistically searches every corner and crevice of the house to be sure that no leaven is present. By this instruction then, God is teaching us that we must not tolerate the least bit of sin in our lives, or in our Christian communities. The reason is given: a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Paul stated the principle very plainly in I Cor. 5:6, didn't he, when he wrote, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Every cook knows that it takes just a little lump of yeast to raise a whole batch of dough. I am more familiar with the process from observing sacks of potatoes. It takes just a little, bad speck on one potato to ruin the whole sackful. It is interesting, isn't it, that all the good potatoes never rid the one potato of its little speck. It just doesn't work that way. All the dough not contaminated by yeast never purifies the portion containing yeast. It is always the other way around. A little yeast sours the whole lump.

Sin is like that. We must not tolerate even the smallest sins in our private lives or in our churches. Our human natures are like dough: all the good in our natures never rids us of the evil, but if we tolerate the smallest sin it defiles our entire nature. I have observed that when we compromise with ourselves and fail to purge out some old habit or sin, we fail to achieve God's best in our lives. Likewise, in our

Christian communities we must be careful not to tolerate sin. God instructed with regard to ancient Israel that if any soul ate leavened bread, that soul was to be cut off from Israel. When Paul instructed the church in Corinth to purge out the old leaven, he had in mind an individual in the church who was living in immorality. The elders at Corinth treated this man's sin with indifference. Paul said, "Your glorying is not good, know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge ye out therefore the old leaven." He observed the same principle in operation in the church at Galatia. One heretic, or perhaps a handful of heretics, had spoiled this church; for to the church at Galatia Paul wrote in Gal. 5:7, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." We all have the responsibility of being sure that no sin is tolerated either in our private lives or in our groups.

Finally I want us to notice not only that the feast lasted seven days totally apart from leaven, but also I want us to notice the reason for the celebration of this feast. They were to keep the feast of unleavened bread because God had saved them through the passover lamb. I take my point here from Ex. 12:17, "And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread because in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt." Again, in chapter 13:7,8 we read, "Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters." Nor notice verse 8: "And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, this is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt." You see, they were not to keep the feast of unleavened bread in order to be saved, but because they had been saved.

Likewise we are to live out our lives as holy to the Lord and apart from sin not in order to be saved but because we are saved. Keeping the feast of unleavened bread, that is, trying to live our lives apart from sin will never save us. Christians seek to live in a way pleasing to the Lord because of the salvation He has given them already. His grace, His love demands our holiness. For example, in the book of Ephesians, in the first three chapters, Paul spells out the great plan of salvation and thanks God for our salvation. Then in chapter 4:1,2 he says, "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Now that you are saved, walk as those who are unleavened bread. Let me ask you my friend, have you in your experience purged out the old leaven? Wherefore, keep the feast of unleavened bread.