

Series: John the Baptist #1704

Title: John 1.29; Exodus 12
The Lamb Applied

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Open your Bible, if it is handy, to the Old Testament Book of Exodus, chapter 12. (Exodus 12.) Last time we continued to learn the incredible meaning behind this title that John the Baptist gave Jesus Christ. "The Lamb of God." And what we are doing is moving together across the landscape of Scripture to learn about the rich meaning of the lamb. We're following theologian A.W. Pink as he writes about the lamb in Scripture being typified, prophesied, applied, personified, identified, magnified, and glorified. We've already covered the meaning of typified and prophesied, and today we come to applied. This is *really* striking.

If you have not read and understood Exodus 12, you will need more time to capture the significance of the Jewish Passover, but let me see if I can at least lay down some foundation. Let me highlight for you the key points in Exodus 12 as it relates to the lamb. Here's the background. The Israelites, God's people, have been serving as slaves to the Egyptian Pharaoh in Egypt and God, who is going to set his people free, summons Moses and his brother Aaron and commands them to go see the Pharaoh.

They are to report the Word of the Lord, "**Let My people go that they may serve Me.**" Each time that Pharaoh refuses, God sends a plague on the Egyptians. At the point we pick up the story in Exodus 12, there have been nine plagues. Water is turned to blood, then there is an outbreak of frogs over the land, followed by gnats and flies. Then the livestock are diseased. The sixth plague is really bad, if you ask me, boils! That's right. Exodus 9 and verse 10 says, "**boils breaking out with sores on man and beast.**" Imagine that!

Pharaoh is still hardened and will not let God's people go, and so down comes hail. Then the land is swarmed with locusts. The ninth plague is darkness. Thick, black darkness for three days! And that brings us to the tenth and final plague: the death of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, including the firstborn son of the Pharaoh. (Even the firstborn sons of Egyptian cattle were killed.) God is serious. Now, how will the Israelites be protected from having their own firstborn killed in this plague that will get God's people out of Egypt? The answer to that is in the blood of the lamb.

In Exodus 12 God instructs Moses and Aaron to speak to His people. Let's pick up here by reading in Exodus 12 and verse 3: "**On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household.**" Did you hear that? A lamb for each household. Now, verse 5, "**Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old...**" Notice again: unblemished. God seeks a perfect lamb. Any small defect means that lamb cannot be used. I continue reading in Exodus 12, verse 6, "**You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.**"

This may seem like a simple sentence, but think about this: twilight was in the late afternoon for these Jews, and God is specific that He wants the lambs to be killed by all of Israel at that same time. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that in his day it was common for the Passover Lamb to be killed at about 3PM. Did you know, Jesus Christ died at about 3pm on His cross? I take this to be a reference to Jesus Christ, tucked into Exodus. Exodus 12 is all about Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God! It is right here: God commands these lambs to be killed at twilight and God's Son Jesus Christ – who is the Lamb of God – is killed precisely at, according to Jewish time, what can be considered twilight! My! How *powerful* is this?

Now we come in verse 7 to the key. This is Exodus chapter 12 and verse 7, "**Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.**" God commands them to take some of the blood of the lamb and paint it on the two doorposts and then on the lintel – which is just the beam above the open doorway, you know the space between the two doorposts above one's head. This is what God wants every household of the Israelites to do. But why, this seems odd?

I am reading now down in Exodus chapter 12, verse 23, **“For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.”** Ah, now we see why! When God is striking down the firstborn of the Egyptians in this tenth and final plague, He will “pass over” the homes; he will not kill the firstborn in the homes where there is the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel. Hence, the name Passover. And the Passover *lamb*. God also said this in verses 12 and 13 of Exodus 12 as well.

Just to finish our summary of the true story. This is exactly what happened. God followed through on His pledge and killed the firstborn of the Egyptians. But the blood of the Passover lamb saved the lives of the Israelites, God’s people. Please do read the whole of Exodus 12 on your own time.

Remember why we are reading it today. Our theologian friend Arthur Pink is calling this the lamb applied. And what he means is this. The blood of that unblemished, perfect Passover lamb saved their lives. The blood applied to the doorposts and lintel was lifesaving. Well, the New Testament makes this connection. Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb. His blood shed during His death on the Cross is what saves our lives. Not blood from an animal lamb on doorposts and lintels of homes, but blood from the “Lamb of God” on the wooden cross!

Not only is this what John the Baptist said, as we well know by now. Listen to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 7, **“Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”** Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. That’s 1 Corinthians 5.7. Listen also to the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 19, **“With precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”** Peter connects the lamb animal of Exodus 12 and its blood to “the blood of Christ.” And again, again notice the emphasis on unblemished and spotless – perfection! Just like Jesus. So both Paul and Peter support the testimony of John the Baptist: Jesus is the “Lamb of God.”

Do you see why I am making such a big deal out of John the Baptist’s statement? Oh, we must. Because God Himself does! The lamb is a theme that runs straight through Scripture. We’ve seen the meaning of the lamb in Genesis 4, in Genesis 22, and now in Exodus 12. And we’re not done.

As we continue we find that, next, in Scripture the lamb is personified. The lamb is personified. Turn with me to Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 7. I want to read from there in a moment. Isaiah 53.7. As I read, listen for the pronoun “He,” because He is referring to none other than Jesus Christ. And Jesus is, of course, a person. Hence, the lamb is now personified! So this is Isaiah chapter 53, and verse 7. **“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.”**

Isaiah is a prophet. And what he is doing here is to foretell the crucifixion of Jesus in the distant future. When we read the crucifixion narratives in the New Testament Gospels, we see Isaiah’s prophecy is exactly correct. I am tempted to run us over to the Gospels now to compare what Isaiah has said to what actually happened but that’s not our purpose right now, and time is of the essence.

The point I want you to see here is that the lamb animal that was sacrificed for the sins of the Jewish people, like we saw earlier, was only symbolic. But Jesus, the perfect Person, makes the sacrifice literal, real, eternally effective, and everlasting. God required His Son – the perfect *human Person* to die; to be sacrificed for our sins. A lamb animal was never adequate for the forgiveness of sins. The lamb animal is merely a symbol of Jesus. Jesus is literally the lamb. And his death takes away sin! The Old Testament lamb animal only represented Jesus. The lamb is a Person. The lamb is Personified!

Next time I will remind you of this and then we will see the Lamb, in Scripture, is identified, magnified, and glorified. All of this comes out of the Baptist’s statement: “Behold, the Lamb of God.” Please be with us, as together, we continue to discover who God Is.

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