

Passover

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon on Passover highlights the significance of the Passover lamb as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ and the importance of the blood for salvation.

Duration: 33:33

Scripture: Acts 20:26-27, Hebrews 9:22, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "Passover"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher explains that the judgment on Egypt in the Bible is a type of the judgment that will come upon the world. The main distinction made by God is not based on race, nationality, or any other human characteristic, but on whether a person has the blood of the lamb sprinkled on their doorpost. This blood represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is referred to as the lamb of God in the New Testament. The preacher emphasizes that it is only through the blood of Jesus that anyone can be saved and protected from judgment.

Transcript

Of all the chapters in the Old Testament, if you get commentators and experts to argue, what's the most important chapter in the whole Old Testament? Not the one you like the most, not the most poetic one. A lot of people would pick Psalm 23, the Lord is my, but what's the most important chapter in the Old Testament? Anybody? Just think about that for a second. Most important chapter in the Old Testament to understand.

Most important chapter in the whole book, in the whole Old Testament. Well, I'll tell you what it is. In my mind, it probably is.

It also is the chapter that helps us to begin to celebrate Easter. But did you know there's a holiday before Easter which is connected to Easter? And I'm not talking about Good Friday. No, before there was Christianity, there was Judaism.

And in the same period of March, April, that we celebrate Resurrection Sunday, Jews all over the world will be celebrating Passover. Passover. As a child, I had interracial, eclectic group of friends from different backgrounds.

I grew up in Brooklyn, not far from Church and Flappish Avenue. And I had some very close Jewish friends and my friend, he said to me at Passover time, hey, Jimmy, would you come to my house and be a part of our Passover Seder, our meal? I went, yeah, free food, I'm in, you know. And I sat there and I saw the whole thing acted out, eaten, and all of it.

And it's true, unless you understand Passover, you won't understand the first time I saw Jesus was the first time I saw love. So the setting is we're in the book of Exodus and God has sent Moses to Pharaoh, let my people go for 430 years. The Israelites have been abused for the most part.

They're now in slavery, hard slavery. There's been an attempted genocide, genocide made against them. And now one of the babies that escaped, Moses, is a grown man, 80 years old, in fact.

He's gone back to Egypt and he tells Pharaoh, let my people go. And Pharaoh says, who is this God that you serve that I should let? You're valuable workers, I'm not letting anybody go. And then there becomes a battle between God and the gods of Egypt.

And God begins to pour plagues upon Egypt because Pharaoh keeps going back and forth. He's fluctuating. He says, yeah, they can go.

No, they can't go. And then a plague comes and he says, okay, you can go. But then he changes his mind.

And then another plague comes. And nine plagues have happened. The plague of darkness, plague of frogs, plague of dust covering the whole land.

And now there's one final plague that's gonna come. And it's gonna be the death at midnight of the firstborn males of every family in Egypt and of the animals too. As we're gonna see, this is a picture of a lot more than just what happened back in Egypt.

Let's look at Exodus and read it together. Exodus chapter 12, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, this month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the 10th day of this month, this new first month, each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of money each lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animal you choose, animals you choose, notice wasn't one animal, an animal for each house, must be year-old males without defect.

And you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the 14th day of the month so they hold them for four days and look at them and examine them. And when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight, then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and the top of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.

And that same night, they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast will be done as they celebrate Passover by serious observing Jews to this day. Do not eat the meat raw. You can't cook it in water either, but roast it over the fire, head, legs, and the inner parts.

Do not leave any of it till the morning. If some of it is left till the morning, you must burn it. This is how you're to eat it, with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand.

Eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. On the same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn, both men and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. Verse 21, then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop.

Hyssop was a little bush, small, very frail, leafy branches, about this big, flimsy kind of thing. Take your hyssop and dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the door frame. So if this was the door, it would be here, it would be here, it would be here, not on the base.

Nobody would walk on the blood. No trampling of the blood. It would be on the door, posts, and the top.

Not one of you shall go out of the door of his house, go out the door of his house until morning. Stay all night in the house. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and the sides of the door frame and he will pass over that doorway and he will not permit the destroyer.

God will not permit the destroyer to enter your house and strike you down. At midnight, the Lord struck down on all the firstborn in Egypt, verse 29, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. And Pharaoh and all of his officials and the Egyptians got up during the night and there was a loud wailing in Egypt for there was not a house without someone dead.

This message is rather bold and crude in the sense that we're preaching from God's word and it's about death and blood, death and blood. A lot of people shy away from that and even now Christian churches are shying away from it because it sounds so crude and who wants to think about death and then blood? Why do we need blood for? Why is this such a bloody thing? This Passover lamb and all that blood in the basin and then Jesus dying on the cross with all that blood. So let's think about it because it is the word of God.

So now the 10th plague was gonna come and just as Pharaoh and Egypt tried to kill all the firstborn of the Hebrews, what a man sows that shall he also reap. So now the table was turned and now judgment was gonna pass through Egypt. We wanna learn about this and what it has to do with us.

But let's just summarize what happened. God said, all right, you have a calendar but you change your calendar, no more of that calendar. This is no longer the seventh month, this becomes the first month.

March, April is the first month of the religious calendar of the Jewish people. They have a civil calendar but the first month of the practicing Jew is this month. Why? Because this is the first, this is the month where you celebrate that I redeemed you.

Life begins really when God saves you. Oh, how many can look back on your old life and you don't even wanna think about it? How many know you really began to live when you found Jesus Christ? Can we put our hands together? Don't wanna go back, don't wanna think about that. So the new year begins.

On the 10th day of that first month, you go and find a lamb, no defects in the lamb. The lamb has to be around one year old. It's gotta be young and tender, can't be an old lamb.

And it can't be with defects, can't be blind, can't be limping, can't have any kind of disease. The lamb has to be perfect, spotless. You wait for four days and you keep the lamb with you and you examine him and make sure there's no defect.

And then on the 14th day of the month, that's gonna be D-Day. What you do in Egypt now, all those thousands of years ago, is you slay the lamb. What's interesting about that, they put twilight, some, the translations put evening, but literally in the Hebrew, it means between the evenings.

And there were two evenings to the Hebrew mind back then. There was an evening that began around 2.30, three o'clock in the afternoon, because remember, no electricity, so the day ended early. And then there was the later evening that began much later.

And some people think that the lamb was killed right around three o'clock, which is be right around the time that Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, died on the cross. Be that as it may, the lamb was to be killed. And the blood was to be poured into a basin.

Next week, by the grace of God, we'll talk about the meaning of the meal, and eating it, and why roasted, and bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, and all of that stuff. But right now, we're just focusing on when I see the blood, I will pass over you. So then the blood was put in the basin.

And then someone had to be sure that they took that hyssop branch and leaf, and they got it filled with blood, and they went outside the house, and they put it on the top, and they put it on the right, and they put it on the left, nothing on the bottom. And God said, when the death angel comes, when the plague of death, when judgment falls on Egypt, even though you're Jewish, even though you're children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you put the blood on your door, and you stay in the house all night, and you eat that food, and you get ready to move, because that's the night they moved out. Because when the death, judgment of death came on Egypt, Pharaoh finally and his men drove the Israelites out and said, get out of here, we never wanna see you again.

Which Moses, of course, had predicted, you'll drive me out when God has his final word. So that's what the Jewish people did. They stayed in the house, they ate the meal, and they were ready to move, and they ate the lamb, and the bitter herbs, and the unleavened bread.

And God said, I give you my word. When I pass through Egypt, the death angel, not God himself, but when this messenger of death and judgment comes, he'll be looking, and when he sees the blood sprinkled on the doorpost, that's the only thing that will save you. Not your money, not your education, not how good a life you've lived, or how bad a life you've lived.

Only one thing will save you. When I see the blood, nothing more. Nada mas.

Just that. Now, this won't take long, but let's apply it. We know that Jesus Christ is the lamb of God.

All through the New Testament, he's called the lamb. So we know that what happened on Passover night was a prefigurement, a type, a symbol of what Jesus would do. He's called the lamb.

Remember when he came to the Jordan River to be baptized at about 30 years old, John the Baptist saw him, and by revelation from the Holy Spirit, he said, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And when he said that, and when he said that, everyone knew, lamb, lamb, everyone thought, or to the Jewish mind, lamb meant Passover, Passover lamb. Paul says in one of his letters, Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed.

Our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Now, let's celebrate the feast, which we'll talk about next week, God willing. So, Peter calls him in 1 Peter chapter one, for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you folks in the Brooklyn tabernacle were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but no, you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, a what? A lamb without, just like the lamb that had to be examined for four days, no defect, because it was gonna be a substitute, an innocent, perfect substitute for the guilty one that deserved the judgment.

And in the book of Revelation, more than in any other place, John writes, lamb is mentioned more times in Revelation than any other book in the New Testament. The Bible says that there's such a thing as even the wrath of the lamb, that people will run and hide from the lamb when he returns, because he's not coming to die again. He's coming to judge the living and the dead.

The Bible talks about the throne of the lamb. The lamb sits on a throne. We hear that the song in heaven is worthy is the lamb, lamb, lamb, lamb, lamb, and they bow before the lamb, and they worship him.

Worthy is the lamb, for he has redeemed us. He shed his blood. He put away our sins.

So we know that Jesus is the lamb, and we also know that Egypt here is a type or a picture or a symbol of the world, and the judgment that God has promised on the world that rejects him and that mocks him and that lives any way it wants, even though in conscience and through the word of God, God has said, don't do that. Don't do that to one another. Don't hurt one another like that.

Don't abuse your body like that. Don't violate my commandments like that. But the world mocks and laughs.

And God says there'll be a judgment. Jesus talked about there would be a judgment. So now we know that this judgment on Egypt is a type of the judgment that's coming on the world.

Notice how God separates the whole world. To God, there are no black people or white people. There are no Baptists or Presbyterians.

There's no people from France or from Brooklyn or from any place. God's main distinction is this. There's blood sprinkled and unblood sprinkled.

When God passed over Egypt, the only question was education, color, background, personality, money, talent, nothing, nothing mattered. Only one thing mattered when push comes to shove. When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

So the whole country was divided only two ways. Blood sprinkled, no blood sprinkled. Houses with no blood, houses with blood.

Houses with no blood, judgment, doom. Houses with the blood, saved, delivered, why? Because of the people? No, because of the blood. Come on, let's put our hands together.

Because of the blood, only the blood. So as God passes through Egypt, notice this division that he has, and that's the division at the end of the world. That's the division happening right now in this building.

As God looks down, how do you think God sees us? You think he sees our ties and our suits and our dresses or people with how much money we have? Do you think he's interested in any of that? As he looks down here, it's just, how many of you have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ? How many of you know Christ as your Savior, really? Not go to church? Go to church doesn't get the blood on you. Only faith in Jesus Christ gets the blood on your life. Come on, let's put our hands together, say amen.

We see here this primitive separation by God of people. Who has the blood? And in the end of the world, listen, this, Paul said in Acts 20 to the Ephesian elders that he ministered among, he said, now before I'm never gonna see you again. Somehow he knew by the Holy Spirit he would never see them again.

And he says, I wanna tell you now, I've preached everything in the word of God to you, everything that would help you. And he said, I'm free from everyone's blood. I don't have any of your blood on my hands because I told you what you needed to know.

Ministers have to be careful. You can lead people into yourself. You can try to get their money.

You can try to get famous. But in the end, you better make sure you tell everyone what they need to know because on the day of judgment, what if you come looking for me and said, you never told me. You did all that preaching, we heard all that singing and no one ever told us it's the blood or nothing.

Imagine what's gonna happen in eternity when people are gonna find out what? Going to church wasn't enough? I thought I got married, I gave some tithes. I read the Bible once in a while. You mean that wasn't it? No, it was the blood, only the blood.

I want you to notice here and think about this, that it was only the blood that made the difference. God said, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Jewish people didn't put blood in their house, they die.

You die, you're judged. Because we know from Joshua and an interesting portion in Ezekiel that the Jews were practicing idolatry while they were in Egypt. While they were slaves, they picked up the idols of Egypt and they were being idolatrous while in Egypt.

So it wasn't their good behavior that saved them. It was only one thing, the blood. It wasn't their ethnicity that saved them.

You could have been circumcised. You could have had a big Old Testament Bible if it would have been possible back then, which it wasn't. You could have had just come from the temple, but there was no temple.

In other words, religiosity meant nothing. Your track record meant nothing. Your offerings meant nothing.

Your tithes meant nothing. Your Bible knowledge meant nothing. Singing in the choir meant nothing.

Preaching in the pulpit meant nothing. Doing this for decades means nothing. In the final analysis, God says, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

The only thing that saved anyone that night was to have the faith to obey God. What faith? To obey God. To have the faith to kill the animal, get the blood, sprinkle it on the door, and stay in the house.

Don't move. Now, you can imagine, when they were doing this, how they were mocked by the Egyptians. What are you doing? Where's that stuff you're putting? That's not paint, that's what? What is that, blood? What are you, sick? What are you putting blood on your door for? No, because God said that at midnight, he's passed.

Oh, come on, what are you, nuts? What are you, a fanatic? What are you, crazy? It took faith, it took courage to obey God. They were laughed at, they were mocked, but no one was laughing or mocking at midnight. Then a wail went up, and as the wail was going up and crying like never before or since in Egypt, the Israelites were leaving safe and sound.

God was delivering them out of that whole judged land. So that's the only thing that matters. What if you had a big, beautiful house? You know, like 11 bedrooms, 14 bathrooms, 21 acres.

What if you had something really big? No blood, you die. What if you have a hovel? What if you're just living in a shack? The angel wasn't looking at what type of house. He's only looking for one thing, blood.

I can't touch it, I can't touch it. There's no judgment there. I know it's a shack, but they're safe.

Why are they safe? They got blood. Blood, I can't touch anything that has blood on it. Oh, praise God.

Can we put our hands together and just thank God for that? How about education? How about education? You could have had two PhDs. No blood, you're doomed. You could have been a third grade dropout.

Blood, you're saved. You're redeemed. It's not by education.

It's not by talent. Pharaoh himself, his firstborn was punished. And guess what? If you were covered with blood, the door, you were saved.

But you had to be under the blood and stay in the house. Moses would have died. Aaron would have died.

Miriam would have died, the sister. Every Jew would have died unless they obeyed God and made sure they were in a house with the blood over the doorpost. Only the blood.

No, but I'm Moses. I'm Moses. You spoke to me out of a burning bush.

I'm Moses who I was saved in the Nile River. Yeah, you better get under the blood or you won't be Moses for much longer. Oh, come on.

Can we put our hands together? That's grace. That's grace. There's equality.

You know, people, when I was growing up, that's what everyone was talking about more than today. Just the blood. Plead the blood.

Stay under the blood. Am I right? The blood of Jesus. And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb.

They overcame Satan. So, let me close. How was the only thing that mattered? Not wealth, nothing.

Well, wait a minute. What if people had done bad things and they were in the house? Was there blood on the door? They're saved. But what if a guy had tried to live the best life possible? This is what self-righteous folks like us, we have, we struggle with.

What if a guy tried to live the best life possible and his son forgot to put the blood on the door? Judgment. God doesn't save good people because there are no good people. There is none righteous, no, not one.

Let's take one other instance. Aaron, let me just have your seat for a second. Just sit here on the edge.

What if there's a guy in the house and there's blood on the door, but he's not sure and he's nervous? And he's going, wow, midnight. It's 11:41, woo. Gotten 19 minutes, oh man.

And the father says, son, don't worry. No, listen, dad, you weren't the firstborn. I'm the firstborn.

Why'd you have me first? Couldn't you have had somebody else first beside me? Son, don't worry, you're under the blood. We put the blood. God said, just put the blood.

I know, but he would lose his peace, but he wouldn't lose his salvation. See, by doubting, we lose our peace and our joy, but we don't lose the blood. If the blood, oh, praise God.

If the blood is there, come on, let's just clap our hands. We've all lost our peace. Well, let's take one last instance.

What if somebody was in the house and said, I don't have to worry about this blood. Hey, I go to church all the time. I read the word.

I'm fast-forwarding this to the way we could think. I'm not like other people. They don't think I'm a drug addict.

What do you think, I'm some kind of degenerate? I do good works. I take care of my family. I support, I pay.

I even pay tithes. I don't need the blood. What do you want, some animal? What do you think, I'm some degenerate person? Doomed, doomed.

If you're here today and you're trying to put anything else over on that door but the blood, you're doomed. And a lot of us have tried to put something other than the blood. Tried to put some good works.

Come on, good works. How about feelings? You're not saved by feelings, you're saved by the blood. You could have negative feelings.

You could be depressed. You could be thinking wrong and not understanding how much God loves you. But as long as the blood is there, you're saved.

You could be full of positive thinking and be speaking words. If there's no blood, you're doomed. Only the blood, only the blood.

Okay, so where's this leave us? Leaves us here. While the whale was going up, crying of family's judgment come. Like Jesus said, they'll be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Look, I didn't say that. I would never tell you those things. Why would I wanna say to you, they'll be wailing and gnashing of teeth one day for some people? You think I would make that up to ruin your day or scare someone? No, but I mean, if Jesus said it, even what I'm talking about is true, or Jesus is a total fraud and liar.

He lied about himself. He lied about the future. Do you think Jesus is a fraud and a liar? Study his life and his words.

Tell me if you think that's a crazy person. No, first time I saw Jesus, first time I saw love. Now, if the blood of animals saved them that night, how do you think we stand today that when God comes over us and looks at us, he doesn't see the blood of some crazy one-year-old lamb? He sees the blood of his own son.

And notice, you might not understand the meaning of the blood. You don't need to. God didn't say, when you see the blood, I will pass over you.

He said, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Wait, wait, wait. The value of the blood is a mystery to me.

I don't, look, I know he was God-man. I know he was the precious lamb. He's the Lord of glory.

He shed his blood. And in that shedding of blood, if we trust him, there's forgiveness of sin. How does that work? Do you think I understand that? Do you think any of us understand it? You don't have to understand it.

God understands the value of the blood. Look, the lamb's blood was a symbol for his life. For the life is in the blood, the Bible says.

So when that innocent lamb's blood was seen, the death angel said, nope, someone already died for them. I'm passing by. Someone innocent died, an animal, albeit.

And now today, we don't have to kill, oh, we don't have to kill any animals here today. We don't have to be sprinkling anything over our doors. We can have confidence, we can worship, we can sing, we can pray.

Why do we have access to God? Why are our sins all washed away? Because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Come on, he shed his life, he shed his blood for us. Now, one last thought that I've never read any commentator talk about, but it's become real to me.

And I wanna close with it. If you're here today, and you're a Christian, and the blood is sprinkled on your heart, the door of your heart, and you've received Christ as your savior, rejoice. Don't let the devil get over on you and bring you into condemnation.

Overcome him by the blood of the lamb. No way, Satan, you're not taking my joy and my peace. Yeah, but look at your life.

Yeah, but look at the blood, how about that? You want me to look at my life? I'll tell you to look at the blood. So let's rejoice. The plague will not come near us.

The judgment will not come near us, because could God punish me for my sins twice? Would he punish his son and then me too? That's impossible, no. Now, for those of you, if you have even 110th of 1% of a doubt, am I a born-again Christian? Has the blood of Christ washed away my sins? Have I repented of my

sins? Have I turned, made a U-turn, and said I'm not living my old way? I'm gonna go by what the Holy Spirit's convicting me. I'm turning away from it, and I'm gonna put my trust in Jesus.

I plead the blood, Jesus, cleanse me with your blood. I make you my Savior, my Lord. If that hasn't happened in your life, please do not leave.

Don't go out in the street. Don't go anywhere today. I'll pray with you.

Takes a second to do this. But you have to be sincere. You have to do from your heart.

See these people behind me? If you knew every sin that was committed by everybody in this choir, oh my goodness. But they're all clean. They've all been washed.

They're all perfect in God's sight. Come on, can we agree with that? Because of the blood of Jesus. And that goes for me and the other pastors.

None of us are perfect people, right? Any of us parading around here like we've never made a mistake? Come on. We're Christians because of the blood. The blood, only the blood.

Listen, when you go to heaven, you just, it's just the blood. No, look at me. No, it's the blood.

Don't look at me. Look at the blood. Now, anybody here though, you've had experience with the Lord, but you're tempted to leave the house.

They were only safe while they were in the house. God told them, don't leave the house. If the blood was sprinkled, but you went out in the streets, you're gone.

What's that speak of? What's that mean? It means you gotta stay trusting only in the blood. And sometimes we get a little haughty, don't we, and a little self-righteous. Oh, I'm somebody.

I don't need that stuff like, oh, the blood, and oh, the cross where Jesus died, or the blood that Karen's gonna sing about here with the choir. No, no, I don't need that anymore. Yes, you do, stay in the house.

Don't you go out in the street. You're only safe under the blood.

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