

The New Israel's Passover

by T. Austin-Sparks

T. Austin-Sparks explores the profound significance of the Lord's Table as the new Israel's Passover, emphasizing Christ's victory and our identity as His people.

Scripture: Exodus 12:13, Matthew 26:26-28, John 12:31, John 17:16, Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 11:26, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 12:23, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 5:9-10

Topics: "The Lord's Table", "Spiritual Victory"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of the Lord's Table as the new Israel's Passover, highlighting its universal presence in Christianity and the danger of losing its profound meaning. He explains that the Lord's Supper represents not only what Christ has done for us but also the implications of our participation in His victory over evil. The sermon draws parallels between the Passover in Exodus and the Lord's Table, illustrating how the blood of the Passover Lamb signifies our deliverance from judgment and our identity as the Church of the First-born. Sparks urges believers to recognize their separation from the world and the Lord's absolute authority in their lives as they partake in the communion. He calls for a deeper spiritual understanding of the Lord's Table, reminding us of our commitment to Christ and the victory we celebrate.

Transcript

Read: Exodus 12.

This evening I am going to say just a little to you about the Lord's Table. This is perhaps the most universal of all the features of Christianity. Almost every section of Christianity in some way or another has the Lord's Table. In the different sections, of course, it goes by different names. The Roman Church calls it by one name. And other bodies call it by other names. We call it "The Lord's Table." But in some form or another, by some name or another, it is an almost universal characteristic of Christianity. It is so general and so often observed that we are in danger of losing something of the greatness of its meaning. It has become something that we do as a part of our order of things, perhaps every week. And there is, as I have said, a peril attached to that. We preserve something of its value. We rejoice in something of its meaning. But, as I have said, the peril is that we may lose something of the greatness of its meaning.

I think we all understand that the Lord's Table or the Lord's Supper is the new Israel's passover. The Lord's Table is the successor of the Jewish passover. When the Lord Jesus began to form the new heavenly Israel, He put the Lord's Supper in the place of the old passover. But although the form of it was

somewhat changed, the meaning was never changed. The Lord Jesus took over the spiritual meaning of the passover into the Lord's Supper. I am just going to speak a little about the passover as it is found in the Lord's Table. I think perhaps we are a little apt to forget that there are two sides to this matter. And we spend most of our time on the one side, which is, what the Lord has done for us. Now we can never make too much of what the Lord has done for us. And this table of the Lord does speak of the wonderful thing that the Lord has done for us in His Cross. So that we are quite right in being very largely occupied with praising Him for all the love that He showed in dying for us.

If I say that is only one side, I do not mean to take anything away from it, but there is another side to this. It is what this involves us in. On the one side, it is what the Lord has done for us. On the other side, it is the greatest possibility that it brings upon us. Of course, this evening we ought to have read the twelfth chapter of the Book of Exodus, but there is no time to do that. As you are all the Lord's people, I take it that you know that chapter. It is there that we have the account of the first great passover in Israel. That great passover night, when Israel went out of Egypt. And you will remember that passover was the climax of a mighty conflict between God and all the gods of the Egyptians. All the gods of the Egyptians represented the prince of this world, the great kingdom of Satan, which had set itself against the redemption of the people of God. God had determined to redeem His people from that evil world. And all the gods of the Egyptians said, 'They shall not go.' It was not only Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the Lord said it was the gods of the Egyptians - the evil spiritual forces behind the Egyptians and Pharaoh. And God entered into a great conflict with those forces of evil. He sent judgment upon judgment on them. Nine terrible judgments He poured upon the gods of the Egyptians. But still the battle went on. Then God said, 'I am going to finish this. One more judgment, and we shall have victory.'

You remember that last tenth judgment. It took place on this passover night. Now the point that I want you to notice here, first of all, is that the passover marked the climax of a great spiritual conflict. When Jesus took up the meaning of the passover in His Own Person, to give His Body like the passover lamb, and His Blood, He entered into this great conflict with all the power of evil. AS HE WENT TO THE CROSS, He cried, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). And Paul says, "He stripped off principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His Cross" (Col. 2:15). THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS WAS THE CLIMAX OF A GREAT BATTLE WITH THE POWER OF EVIL. That was the first meaning of the passover. And that is the first meaning of the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table means that we have been brought into the great victory of the Lord Jesus over all the power of evil. We sometimes forget that, if ever we remember it, when we come to the Lord's Table. In this table we are celebrating the victory of the Lord Jesus, and we are brought into the good of that victory. Let us remember that! Whenever we come to the Lord's Table, we are celebrating the victory of our Lord. And when we take of the symbols of His body and blood, we are saying, 'We stand into the good of His victory.'

Now the second thing about the passover. The focal point of the passover, was the first-born son. The Lord said, "I will go over the land of Egypt, and I will slay all the first-born in Egypt." Now the first-born in those days was always the representative of the whole family. Really, the first-born was the family. If the first-born son died, it was as though they had lost everything. All the fathers' hopes were gone because they were centered in the first-born. The first-born son was the priest of the family. He represented the family before God. He functioned as a priest for the whole family. We, in our day, do not understand how important the first-born was in those times. The Lord was going out with this final judgment to kill the first-born in every family in Egypt.

But He gave a sign to the people of Israel. It was in the blood of the Passover Lamb. And He commanded them to sprinkle that blood on their door posts. He said, 'When I come to Egypt to smite all the first-born, when I see the blood, I will not smite the first-born in that house. I will preserve all the first-born alive.' You see, the focal point of the whole thing was the first-born. In the Letter to the Hebrews, which has so much to say about this matter, the writer called the Church, the Church of the First-born ones. This means that judgment and death lie upon all those who are not protected by the blood. But the blood of THE PASSOVER LAMB has saved the Church of the First-born ones from judgment and death. This is a great thing that the passover means. If this has its true meaning in our lives, then we belong to the Church of the First-born ones. All that I said about the First-born is true of us; we represent the whole family of God. We are made priests unto our God. Ours is a place of great honor in the Father's house. We are in that position because of the blood of the Lamb. And that, again, is something that could occupy a great deal of time.

And another thing about the passover, there is a picture behind this passover in Exodus twelve. It is the picture of the rightful King coming to claim His rights. He is coming to a country where His authority and His rights have been rejected. In New Testament language they have said, 'We will not have this Man to reign over us.' They have refused to recognize His position as King. And they have refused to recognize His right amongst them. So the King comes to claim His rights and His place. And He brings His executioner with Him. Now He has sent a messenger before to tell the people that if they will put a certain sign on their door, He will not send His executioner in there. So He comes with His executioner. And as He passes through all the streets, He is looking at every house. He is looking for this sign on the doorposts. And when He sees this sign, He says to His executioner, 'Do not go in there, leave them alone, they are My loyal people, they recognize My authority.' But where He does not see the sign on the door, He says to the executioner, 'You go in there and slay the firstborn.'

That is the picture that is behind the story of the passover. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. You shall be delivered from judgment and from death. That is the meaning of the precious blood of Jesus, being taken by us and being put upon our lives. That sign of the precious blood is our salvation, our deliverance from all the power of judgment and of death. That is what is meant every time we come to the Lord's Table. We are a people who have been delivered by a mighty deliverance from all the judgment of God, and all the power of death. Why is that? Because we have taken, by faith, all the virtue of the precious blood of Jesus. And in taking the blood of Jesus, we have said we are the Lord's people. We are on the Lord's side! We own Him as King! We recognize all His rights! He is our Lord. He is our King. That is the meaning of the Lord's Table.

One other thing for now. The passover marked the absolute divide between the people of God, and this evil world. It was an absolute separation. Though sometimes when Pharaoh was having a bad time under those judgments, he relented a little. And he said, 'Well, some of you can go out. Leave your women and your children behind. Just some of you men go.' What did Moses say? He said, "We shall go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds." When we go, we go absolutely. We will not leave anything behind at all. It has to be an absolute separation from this world. 'This whole world', says the apostle, 'lieth in the wicked one.' And we do not belong to it. The passover, then, marked a complete and absolute separation of the people of God from this world. And you know how the Lord put that into effect. First of all, He smote all the first-born in Egypt. And when later Pharaoh repented and pursued the Israelites, the Lord drowned all the army of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and put the Red Sea between the Lord's people and Egypt.

The passover marked a very clear-cut division between the Lord's people and this world. And it is so clear that is what the Lord Jesus meant by the Lord's Table. As He was praying as the High Priest before He was about to offer Himself as the sacrifice, He said to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world... I pray that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil one." That is another meaning of the Lord's Table. When we come to the Lord's Table, do we mean this? Do we mean, I am of the people whom God has absolutely separated from this world? I have been delivered from this evil world. I do not belong to it. The only thing that I am going to do while I am in it is to testify for the Lord Jesus. So we remember or testify to the Lord's death every time we come to the table.

Now I think you understand what I meant when I said at the beginning, we are in danger of forgetting something of the great meaning of the Lord's Table. While we rejoice exceedingly in all that He has done for us in His Cross, we must remember that it involves us in something. It involves us in recognizing the Absolute Lordship of our Lord over us. It involves us in recognizing that we are not of this world, because Christ is not of this world. May the Lord give us spiritual understanding. And, the next time we come to the Lord's Table, may we remember these things.

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