

Exodus 11:1-13:16 // Passover - A Meal to Remember

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Preacher: Jonathan Middleton

[0 : 00] This passage can be found on page 68 of your church Bibles in the chairs in front of you. We're reading Exodus chapter 12 verses 1 to 28.

Starting at verse 1. 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. We tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this 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 neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

The animals you choose must be a year old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members 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 tops of the door frames of their houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

[1 : 17] Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire with the head, legs and the internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning. If some is left till morning, you must burn it.

This is how you are 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 that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people 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.

This is a day you are to commemorate. For the generations to come, you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast.

[2 : 16] On the first day, remove the yeast from your houses. For whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day until the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day, hold a sacred assembly, another one on the seventh day.

Do not work at all on these days except to prepare food for everyone to eat. That is all you may do. Celebrate the festival of unleavened bread because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt.

Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month, you are to eat bread made without yeast from the evening of the 14th day until the evening of the 21st day.

For seven days, no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel.

Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread. 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.

[3 : 23] Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out the door of your house until morning.

When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway. And he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land, the Lord will give you as he promised. Observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, what does this ceremony mean to you?

Then tell them, it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians. Then the people bowed down and worshipped.

The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron. Well, thanks so much, Andrew, for reading.

[4 : 28] And let me add my welcome to Darren's. It would be a great help. Indeed, if you'd keep your Bibles open. We're in Exodus chapters 11 to 13 this evening.

And so let's ask God for help. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would minister grace into our hearts this evening.

Would you help us to see the profound significance of the Passover for our Christian lives? We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, a number of you were here last week here in church nursing some bruises and bashes, some bumps and bruises, some bruised eagles perhaps as well after an excursion to the roller disco last weekend.

Now, the reason why there's roller skating today, well, one of the reasons at least, is I've got a friend whose claim to fame, a friend whose family's story is that his ancestor, his great-great-grandfather, whatever it was, his ancestor, came over from the Netherlands and introduced roller skating to the UK.

[5 : 49] So the story goes. And so there's this story of him setting up the Albert Hall as a skate rink, a roller skating rink, and teaching high society how to roller skate in top hats and tails and long, frilly dresses.

What a sight it must have been and some sartorial inspiration for you perhaps for your next St. Silas excursion. Well, tragically, my friend's ancestor died in a transatlantic voyage, and I think he was probably trying to introduce roller skating over the other side of the Atlantic.

But his ship sunk, and he left behind a pregnant widow from which the rest of his descendants came. Well, that's his family story retold year after year at family gatherings, at Christmas dinners, that kind of thing.

And perhaps you've got your own family stories, the kind of thing that your great-aunt trots out at the Christmas table, that kind of thing. Well, if you've been following along in our series in Exodus, we've been saying all along that it's the big story of rescue in the Old Testament.

It's the defining family story of God's people. And if you're here this evening exploring the Christian faith, looking in from the outside sort of thing, then this gets right to the heart of what the Christian faith is all about, right to the heart of what Christians believe.

[7 : 23] And if you're here and you are a Christian, as many of us are, then we need to be reminded, don't we, of this story. We need to be reminded of the gospel of grace.

And for some of us here this evening, very particularly, we need to be reminded that we're forgiven in Christ. And some of you perhaps are struggling with just that this evening.

And so we need to hear this message this evening. We need to taste that again this evening. We need to be reminded of the gospel.

And we're going to see it's a story of rescue through judgment. And it's a story of rescue from judgment. And we'll see that as we go along.

But we've got three headings this evening on the screen. Firstly, the deadliest plague. And then secondly, the blood of a lamb. And then finally, a meal to remember.

[8 : 27] So firstly, the deadliest plague. Well, as Darren just prayed for, millions of people this week in central Florida are reeling in the aftermath of the deadly storm that came in from the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Milton, which caused staggering amounts of damage, one of Florida's worst storms on record.

We saw last week that God inflicted a series of plagues on Egypt, including its worst storm on record, in order to compel Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery and oppression.

But no matter how many times Moses spoke to Pharaoh, no matter how many times God sent plagues, no matter how bad the next plague was, Pharaoh's heart was hard and he ignores all the warning signs and he just wouldn't let them go.

So it was necessary for God to send one last plague. So if you turn to chapter 11, verse 1, Now the Lord said to Moses, chapter 11, verse 1, I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go. And this is the deadliest one of all. So Moses went into Pharaoh, verse 4, and said, This is what the Lord says, About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.

[9 : 57] Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, From the firstborn son of Pharaoh to the firstborn son of the female slave. There will be loud wailing throughout the land of Egypt.

No one would be unaffected. It was loud wailing in Egypt, verse 34, For there was not a house in Egypt without someone dead.

Every firstborn son. I wonder who here fits that bill, Who's a firstborn son here this evening.

I'm a firstborn son. Why don't you stand up if you're a firstborn son? Let's see who we have here who's a firstborn son. Stand up in solidarity with one another.

Well, quite a few of us. You can sit down there. So let's just feel some of the terror of that night. The terror of God's judgment.

[10 : 59] The whole nation waking up to horrific scenes. Blood curdling, screams harrowing, wails of anguish. Age reverberating in each and every household throughout the land.

From Pharaoh's palace down to the poorest of the poor. Every parent's worst nightmare. And with this final plague, God's judgment falls on Pharaoh and on Egypt.

And justly so. The death of the firstborn, An act of justice, Because of the infant genocide back in the start of Exodus.

So if you're here for that, you might remember, Exodus began with an earlier Pharaoh commanding That all the baby boys born to the Hebrews Should be cast into the river.

So Exodus began like that. And so the loud wailing in verse 6 Is God's retribution For the wailing of his oppressed people Back in chapter 3.

[12 : 05] God's perfect justice. God's judgment. A terrifying prospect. But it's a reality We must all face up to.

And we've said all along, All through our series in Exodus, That the rescue in Exodus points forward To a greater spiritual reality. We're not rescued from Egyptian slavery, But from slavery to sin And death and judgment.

And the Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews That we're all destined to die And after that, to face judgment. So we want to be wise to that.

We don't want to be burying our heads in the sand. We don't want to be ignoring the warning signs Hardening our hearts like Pharaoh. Judgment is coming. And at the end of the Bible, That's just what the people do.

Another insight into the hardness Of the human heart. And when the book of Revelation warns Of coming judgment, It picks up the language Of the plagues in Exodus.

[13 : 14] Now we're not going to go there This evening, But you get the sores breaking out In the people. You get the rivers and seas Turned into blood. The land plunged into darkness. Something that looks like frogs.

A plague of gigantic hailstones. It echoes Exodus Right at the end of the Bible. Judgment is coming. But here's the thing.

Salvation for God's people Is through the judgment on Egypt. So back in Exodus In chapter 11 And verse 6 On page 68 There will be loud wailing Throughout Egypt Worse than there ever has been Or ever will be again.

But this will be What finally does it. This will be What finally compels them To let the people of Israel go. So judgment's coming And for God's people It's a rescue Through judgment.

But we're going to see now It's also a rescue From judgment. And so that leads on To our second section The blood of the Lamb. And the shock here In this final plague.

[14 : 26] The shock is that The people of Israel The people of God Are not exempt. They don't automatically Get a pass. They're not automatically Exempt From God's judgment.

In the plagues Running up to this last one We're told the Lord Makes a distinction Between the people of Egypt And the people of Israel. So that God's people Are left unscathed.

And it's with Laser guided precision That hailstones Rain down On the land of Egypt But not where The Israelites live. And the whole country Plunges into darkness But the people of Israel Have light Where they are.

Here however In this final plague The distinction Is not automatic. This time the people of God Find that their lives Too Are in danger.

And there's A destroyer An angel of death Going through To the land Of Egypt And if they don't Take the necessary Precautions They're in just As much danger As the Egyptians Verse 22 End of verse 22 None of you Shall go out Of the door Of your house Until morning You know what This means.

[15 : 45] It means that The Israelites They're The oppressed ones The Egyptians Are the oppressors But if they Go out There tonight If they leave Their house And face The destroyer If they try to face God's wrath On their own In and of themselves They're no better Than the Egyptians That's what God's saying To his people You go out there And try to meet Judgment On your own merit Then you're lost That's what it's saying They too were sinners Who deserved God's judgment So something has to be done To avert judgment But God in his mercy Provides a way To be safe There are instructions About a lamb And blood And the instructions Go like this In 12 verse 3 On the tenth day Of the month Each man is to choose A lamb For his family One for each household It must be Verse 5 A year old male

Without defect Without broken bones We're told later on In verse 46 Four days later Verse 6 The lamb is to be Slaughtered At twilight His blood Gets dobed Across the doorposts And everyone gets To sit down To enjoy A roast lamb With rosemary Garlic And salt Perhaps that's The Jamie Oliver version They get A roast lamb With bitter herbs At least That same night Verse 12 While everyone's Tucked up in bed On the same night The Lord will pass Through Egypt And strike down Every firstborn Of both people And animals And bring judgment The firstborns Of Israel Sleep safe and sound But it's only Because of the blood Verse 13 The blood Will be a sign For you In the houses Where you are And when I see

The blood I will pass Over you So there's no question If you're an Israelite You're not going to forget About the blood And it's not just going to be A light touch A sort of little spot Of blood Here and there In the doorpost Delicately administered Like that In the door frame You're not going to be Spattering it In a delicate manner You're going to go Whole hog Splashing blood All over the door And the frame And you're going to be Throwing buckets about it It's going to be Like a work of modern art By the time you're done with it One of those activists Throwing tomato soup Over the Van Goghs But make no mistake You're going to be Absolutely certain That the door Is covered in blood Blood all over that door You see in each household It's either the lamb Or the firstborn That dies And this is the idea Of substitution The lamb in place Of the firstborn

So in every single house In Egypt that night It's either a dead son Or a dead lamb It's one or the other In other words The lamb got What the son deserved The lamb was a substitute Judgment falls on the lamb So the firstborn is spared The lamb paid the debt So the firstborn didn't have to And so as each family Chose a lamb And slaughtered it And smeared the blood On the door frame They'd all know That this lamb Had died in place Of their own firstborn child The child had been saved Redeemed By the blood Of the lamb And amazingly They all did it They all followed The Lord's instructions So that when the whales Go up in Pharaoh's palace And all throughout The land of Egypt And he sends the people Out of Egypt

We're told Verse 37 That 600,000 men Plus women And children About 2 million people In all Up sticks And walked out Of captivity The original Mass exodus Last section A meal to remember The exodus Is a rescue story The big rescue story In the Old Testament It's a rescue Through judgment God bringing judgment On Egypt To bring his people Out of slavery It's a rescue From judgment God providing A substitute To avert judgment Falling on his people And it's a rescue That's so significant In chapter 12 Verse 2 That God Reorients Time Itself And the Jewish calendar Gets a reset This month Is to be for you From now on The first month Of your year But more than that It's a rescue That the Lord's people

[20 : 50] Are never to forget This is a day To commemorate For generations to come You shall celebrate it As a festival To the Lord A lasting ordinance The Passover That first night The Passover Was a one-off event But it was remembered Each year At the Passover feast So it's a roast lamb Every year From now on And there's something About the repetition And something about The reenactment Something about The taste And the smell That's intensely Evocative Of memories And it's in Its repetition The Passover meal Becomes a kind of monument A tangible reminder A tangible way To remember The signature Flavors and aromas Transporting the people Of God Back to that most Significant night In their history And meals of course Can be deeply

memorable The most memorable meal

That Well one of the most Memorable meals I've had Was on an island In the middle of Lake Como in Italy In Isola Comacina And there's a restaurant There serving Exactly the same food Every single lunchtime And it has done so Since 1947 And it's not That the chef's Just lazy And can't be bothered Coming up with New ideas Sort of thing I don't think Or even that the food's So good That it couldn't Possibly be bettered But it's that It's all part Of the theatre And over the course Of a long lunch The host Tells the story Of the island And the master craftsman Of the island Who are famed For building monasteries All over medieval Europe The Maestri Comacini Well in the In the Passover meal It's the job Of the host Belongs to the father Of the household It's his job Every year To lead

The church family focus In verse 25 When you enter the land That the Lord will give you As he promised Observe this ceremony And when your children Ask you What does this ceremony Mean to you What's its significance Then tell them It's the Passover Sacrifice to the Lord Who passed over The houses Of the Israelites In Egypt And spared our homes When he struck down The Egyptians And then Immediately after The Passover Came the week long Feast of the unleavened bread Reminding them That they needed To get their skates on And hot food Out of Egypt And so this In this way The story of God's Big rescue Was passed down Through the generations Passed down Through the centuries By way of this Significant Ritual feast But what's this Got to do With us Some of us Don't get to eat Lamb that frequently Anymore

Some of you know My wife went to do A season of lambing In North Uist And became Too affectionate With the little creatures So don't get to Eat them anymore Off the menu But what's it Got to do with us What's the Passover Got to do With us Well Jesus Christ On the night That he was betrayed On the night He was betrayed He celebrated The Passover Meal And he asked His disciples To get together On the day That the Passover lamb Had to be sacrificed So let's turn Now to Luke chapter 22 On page 1057 Luke chapter 22 From verse 7 Jesus asks his disciples To get ready So that they can Celebrate the Passover

Together And so they get together And Jesus takes on The role of the host It's his job To explain The meal Here's what it gets Interesting What he says Is astonishing He reinterprets The Passover What do the disciples Expect him to say They expect him to say This is the bread Of affliction That reminds us What the Lord Did for us When he brought us Up Out of Egyptian slavery Instead Luke 22 Verse 19 Jesus took the bread Gave thanks And broke it And gave it to them Saying This is My Body Given For you Do this In remembrance Of me Do you see What he's saying What he's saying Is This bread Is my body I'm going to be

[25 : 53] Broken For you To free you From the slavery To sin And death Takes a cup of wine Saying This is my blood Poured out for you The blood was supposed To be from the Passover lamb Which had to be sacrificed Do you see what he's saying There's three things At the Passover meal Three elements There's the unleavened bread Here's Jesus Breaking the bread And there's the cups of wine Here's Jesus With the cup And then there's The lamb With the bitter herbs But there's no Reference To the lamb Here in Luke You know why?

Because the lamb Was at The table Jesus is saying Tonight I'm The Passover Lamb I'm the lamb That every Passover lamb Ever Pointed to I'm The substitute Who's going to die In your place Tonight The terror Of God's judgment Will fall On him That's what Jesus Is saying That's why John the Baptist Says when he sees Jesus at the river Behold The lamb Of God He takes away The sins Of the world The reason why In John Chapter 19 Verse 33 He points out That Jesus' bones Are not broken Why?

Because the lamb Had to be unblemished With no broken bones Passover meal Told the story Of rescue From slavery Through the blood Of a lamb The Lord's supper Tells the story Of rescue From sin Through the blood Of Jesus The lamb Of God This is our story This is your story If you take shelter In Christ This is a story Of God's grace In your lives This is the story Of God's grace Of being forgiven Of being set free This is the heart Of the gospel Of grace And we don't just Get to hear it We get to taste it So throw yourselves At Christ's mercy Cling to the cross Of Christ And plead his blood In place of your sins Let's close like this Tim Keller A pastor In New York Died a year or two ago

Tim Keller Puts it this way Do you know If you stopped An Israelite In the desert Of Sinai And you said Who are you guys And what are you doing Do you know What they'd have said They'd have said Well I was a stranger In a foreign land Under the penalty Of death But I took shelter Under the

blood Of the lamb And even though I couldn't save myself I was saved So now I've been Brought
out And God is taking me To the promised land And do you realise That's exactly What a Christian
says Exactly What a Christian says Let's take shelter Under the blood Of the lamb Let's pray Father
we thank you For your son Our Lord Jesus Who died In our place As our substitute The lamb of
God Who came to take away The sins of the world And Lord Jesus
We thank you so much For your precious blood Poured out for us To wash away Our guilty stains
We thank you For your sacrifice We thank you For the gospel of grace Those here Who are
struggling In one way or another Those here Who are heavy burdened Would you draw them To
yourself Would you heal Their wounds Would you forgive Their sins We ask it in your name Amen
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