

THE PASSOVER LAMB AND BAPTISM

Matthew W. Bassford

The story of the first Passover is familiar to most of us. In Exodus 12, Moses instructs the Israelites to take an unblemished male lamb, slaughter it, eat it as part of a ritual meal, and apply its blood to the doorposts and lintels of their houses.

This strange ceremony had a vital purpose. God was going to send a destroying angel throughout the land of Egypt, and He would kill the firstborn of both men and animals in each house. The angel would pass over only the houses that were marked with blood.

There are several elements to this story that are worth noting. The first is that the coming catastrophe would be universal. God did not single out the firstborn of the Egyptians for doom. Instead, unless some action were taken, every house would be visited by the destroyer.

God did not intend for His people to face this destruction. However, He did not automatically spare them either. Instead, He gave them instructions that, if followed, would turn aside the destroyer. If the Israelites did not follow those instructions, their firstborn would perish along with those of the Egyptians.

Following those instructions had no intrinsic merit. The destroyer did not approach the houses of the Israelites and say, "Wow! I am so impressed with the artistic application of that blood! I could never destroy the firstborn of such gifted people!" The blood was effective for only one reason, because God had decreed that it would be. Even though the Israelites had to act, they still were saved not by their actions, but by His mercy.

All of these things are true of baptism under the covenant of Christ. We, too, are faced with universal catastrophe. On the day of judgment, the condemnation of God will not be limited only to Hitler and the other really, really bad people. Instead, every sinner will face it, and all of us have sinned. Unless we act, all of us are headed to the fires of hell.

God desires not to destroy us but to save us. However, salvation does not come automatically. As He did for the Israelites, He has given us instructions that we must follow. The Scriptures teach that we are forgiven of our sins when we are immersed in water in the name of Jesus. Unless we are baptized, we will perish.

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THE HUMILITY OF DESPERATION

Jacob Hudgins

Jesus briefly departs from the land of Israel to Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 15:21-28). He is approached by *"a Canaanite woman"* (21) – a description with strongly negative connotations to students of the Old Testament. *"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon"* (22). The woman is in deep need because of her daughter's condition. Jesus is surprisingly silent. Finally, He responds: *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (24). This is getting uncomfortable.

She kneels and begs Jesus. Again, He answers brusquely: *"It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs"* (26). She answers, *"Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"* (27). She is willing to accept being called a dog if Jesus will help. Jesus blesses her great faith.

The focus of this story is how desperation leads us to humility. This woman does not balk at being ignored, insulted, or summarily dismissed. Where most of us would have been offended and hurt (or walked away feeling ejected), she persists. Her desperation is so great that she will endure any kind of insult to get what she needs.

Often, our pride stands in the way of us getting what we need. We serve Jesus as long as we don't have to do anything too drastic. We confess sin as long as it's not too specific or embarrassing. We serve others as long as we have time to do what we like (and are appropriately thanked). This woman shows us that our struggle with pride may be about taking ourselves too seriously – and not taking our need seriously enough.

Am I desperate enough for Jesus' help and healing?

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Like the blood on the doorposts, baptism has no intrinsic merit. It is not a good work that convinces God that we deserve eternal life. Rather, baptism saves only because God has said that it saves. As with belief, repentance, and confession, it is one of the conditions that we must fulfill before God will extend His mercy. We are rescued not by magic water, but by a gracious Creator.

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**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's/Women's Studies

@ 6:30 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

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We understand how foolish it would have been for the Israelites to refuse to apply the blood yet loudly proclaim their confidence that God would save them. Sadly, millions today make the same mistake with baptism, and if we follow their example, we will lose our souls.

However, if we act in faith as the Israelites did, we too will be rescued by the mercy of God. How marvelous it is that He has provided so great a salvation for us, and how tragic it would be for any of us to reject it!

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 15

APRIL 16TH, 2023

"YOU KNOW THE GRACE"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

"For our sake,"

He chose to give, not take.

He sacrificed all of heaven's worth

To dwell with mankind on this humble and lowly earth.

"He was rich,"

But decided to switch.

Setting aside eternal grandeur,

Jesus chose the way of the downtrodden and poor.

"Poverty:"

From which He set us free.

We were destitute in guilt of sin,

But He enriched us with the hope of heaven

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2nd Corinthians 8:9).

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