

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, October 16, 2011

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 146, 205:1, 132, 367, 190:5-7.

Lessons: Exodus 11:1-10, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, John 1:14-37.

Sermon Text: Exodus 12:1-14

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The Children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. They were oppressed and burdened and had no freedom. That is just like all mankind. All humans are by nature slaves to sin, death, and Satan. They have no choice but to serve sin and Satan.

But in our sermon text today you heard how the Lord God Jehovah is preparing to free his people from their slavery in Egypt. The tenth and final plague upon the Egyptians would be the one that would lead to God's people escaping from Egypt, not with the willing approval of Pharaoh but by the great redeeming power of God. In the same way, Satan never wants to release his hold on us but Jesus Christ is more powerful.

From our Old Testament lesson you heard *"So Moses said, 'This is what the LORD says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt--worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.'"* Exodus 11:4-7.

Today let's see how

THE PASSOVER POINTS TO JESUS CHRIST

- 1. We see the preparations and the celebration for the Jews held in bondage in Egypt.**
- 2. We see that the Passover points to Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

The Lord God gave some very specific instructions to Moses for the descendants of Abraham at this time to prepare for their release from slavery in Egypt.

God told Moses to prepare the people for their Exodus from Egypt. The difference between Israel and Egypt and between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt was about to be revealed in a terrible judgment from God. The judgment would be the death of the firstborn, as you heard in our Old Testament lesson. The Passover celebrates the most important salvation act of the Old Testament. Four days before the Passover took place, a one-year-old male lamb or kid without a blemish was to be selected. This was to be a lamb without defect. The lamb was to be selected on the 10th day of the month and kept until the 14th day. This was to ensure that no hidden defect was found in the lamb, and in order to keep it from contamination and infection. It was to be a lamb born within the last year.

The blood was to be caught in a basin and then "struck" with a branch of hyssop on the two side posts and the upper doorpost of the house. Hyssop in ancient times was often considered to have cleansing properties. The blood of the lamb or goat was to be applied directly to the house which in essence made atonement for its inhabitants. Seeing the blood, Jehovah would pass over the house and spare the inhabitants of the house. The name "Passover" or "pascha" literally expressed the meaning of this observance. The word "Paschal" comes

from pascha, and points to the “paschal lamb” or the “Passover lamb”. The sacrificial meal consisted of the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of the afflictions in Egypt. The unleavened bread symbolized the removal of the sin, old corruption, and the need to leave in a hurry. Finally, the Passover lamb symbolized God’s great Old Testament act of act of salvation and the deliverance of His people from Egypt. The lamb was then to be roasted whole, not cut in pieces, no bone broken, and the entrails in place, although, of course, cleaned. Nothing was to be left over. In this way we see that nothing except the sacrifice of Jesus is needed to save mankind.

The blood on the door post would be a sign to the destroying Angel of Jehovah, but also proof that atonement had been made on behalf of the residents of this house. ***"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."*** Exodus 12:13. In this way the Lord Himself explained the meaning of the Passover. Wherever there was this sign of blood, as He had commanded, there He would pass over, or pass by, and death would not strike the people in this house. The slaughter would come only upon the Egyptians and not on God’s people.

About midnight, God’s judgment came upon Egypt. At that time Jehovah passed through the land of Egypt and a great cry went up because the firstborn of all Egypt had died, just as God had promised and threatened: ***"Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well."*** Exodus 11:5.

After this, Pharaoh then begged the children of Israel to leave. Now he couldn’t wait to get rid of God’s people. God had previously sent nine plagues upon the Egyptians and Pharaoh had said he would let God’s people go. But he always hardened his heart, and finally God hardened his heart, preventing repentance. Pharaoh even gave the Israelites the wealth of Egypt to leave Egypt immediately lest ***"we all be dead men."*** God’s salvation was to be a perpetual memory, as each year the Jews were to celebrate the Passover and explain the deliverance of God. Every year at this time, God’s people were to reenact the Passover meal that would bring to remembrance God’s great salvation act. When the children would ask, “Why are we eating this lamb and unleavened bread, and bitter herbs?” the parents would then tell them how God had delivered His people from Egypt. All of the lamb was to be eaten. Anything which was left over was to be burned. The observance of the Passover was to be followed by a “feast of unleavened bread,” lasting for seven days in which no leaven or yeast was to be found in their houses. All leaven or yeast was to be purged or removed from the households.

And so for the Israelites, the Jews, the Hebrews in Egypt the time of deliverance had finally come. Just as God in that same night of the Passover feast would strike down the firstborn of Egypt, he would deliver Israel, his firstborn son.

This chapter is especially important because it gives us one of the most important Old Testament types of our Savior Jesus Christ. A type is a sign or any event that represents something still to come. Scripture then identifies what these types point to. The Passover lamb is a type or picture of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. ***"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*** John 1:29.

In instituting this Passover festival, God continued his work of setting apart the people of Israel as his very own people. Listen to what Hosea says: ***"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."*** Hosea 11:1. God was now about to separate his people from the land of Egypt by delivering them from slavery in that land. He was adopting them as his children. Israel was God’s first born son, as he told Moses in Exodus 4:22: ***"Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son.'"***

The Passover festival was to be celebrated by the Israelites every year and was to remind them of their special place as God’s chosen people. The Bible reveals that the lamb which was killed was a shadow picture, or a symbol or a type of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Christ is called ‘our Passover Who was sacrificed for us.’ ***"Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."*** 1 Corinthians 5:7. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, Whose blood protects and

delivers us from eternal death. 1 Peter 1:19 says we were redeemed "***with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***"

In God's directions for preparing the Passover meal, we see step-by-step how the entire ritual points to Christ, our Passover lamb.

The Passover lamb was to be a one-year-old male, chosen from the sheep or the goats. John the Baptist, when calling attention to the promised Messiah whose way he was to prepare, pointed to Jesus and said "***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***" John 1:29. When writing to the Corinthians Paul declared Christ our Passover Lamb who has been sacrificed.

God commanded that this Passover lamb was to be without defect. Peter wrote to the Christians in Asia Minor that they were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. This is consistent with the principle that whatever is offered to God must be the best of its kind.

The Passover lamb was to be slaughtered as a sacrifice. Paul reminded people that Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. The writer of the book of Hebrews repeatedly refers to Christ as an offering and a sacrifice.

The Israelites were to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses. When on the night of the Passover feast God would pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn, he promised the Israelites 'when I see the blood I will pass over you'. No destructive plague will touch them when God strikes Egypt. In other words, Israel was saved from destruction by the blood of the Passover lamb. This points to the central teaching of Scripture that we are redeemed from the power of sin and death and Satan with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Later in the same chapter the Lord directed Moses concerning the Passover lamb 'do not break any of the bones'. After Jesus' death on the cross the soldiers did not break his bones as they did to those two men who were crucified with Jesus John writes that these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: 'not one of his bones will be broken.'

In all these ways we see how the Passover lamb clearly pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God, our only Redeemer, who gave his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Lord gave detailed instructions about how the people were to prepare the Passover lamb, how they were to eat it with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast, and how they were to be prepared to leave the land: quickly, with their cloaks tucked into their belts, sandals on their feet, and staff in hand.

Jesus is referred to as the "***lamb without blemish or defect.***" 1 Peter 1:19. It is the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God that redeems us from sin and death. Before Jesus died on the cross, He celebrated the last Passover with His disciples. It is called the last Passover because Jesus was establishing the "new covenant" or "new testament" through His death on the cross. Jesus' blood would deliver His people from death by giving them the forgiveness of their sins. Similar to the Old Testament Passover meal of remembrance, Jesus gave His believers a New Testament meal of remembrance. Jesus took the unleavened bread and the wine from the Old Testament Passover and gave them to His disciples saying, "This is my body. This is my blood shed for you." We are to partake of this meal in remembrance of Him; that is remembering what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross. That is why that event is called "the last Passover and the first Lord's Supper."

And so Christ is our Passover. Because of his blood, God forgives or "passes over" our sins. We learned from Scripture today the history of our Passover lamb, our Paschal lamb. Thanks be to God for that gift. Thanks be to God for giving us the wealth of history and the wealth of Gospel in this lesson and his entire Word. Amen.