

## INTRO

We are continuing our series from the book of Exodus called **Epic Journey: From Where We Are to Where God Wants Us**. We're studying how God brought the people of Israel **out** of slavery in Egypt and **into** the Promised Land. And we're looking at how their physical journey **back then** is a reflection of the spiritual journey that God wants to take us on **today**.

So far, we've seen:

- The **raising up of Moses** from **adopted prince** to a **desert fugitive** and now to a **chosen deliverer**
- The **hardening of Pharaoh's heart** and the **resulting devastation** upon Egypt

And now today, we come to **one of the most important events** – not just in **Exodus**...not just in the **Bible**...but in all of human history. It's an event that we call **the Passover**: the night where the LORD God **passed over** and spared the Israelites from the final plague of death upon the Egyptians.

### Exodus 12:1-13, 21-27

While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the LORD gave the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: <sup>2</sup>“From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you. <sup>3</sup>Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month **each family must choose** a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household. <sup>4</sup>If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat. <sup>5</sup>The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

<sup>6</sup>“ **Take special care of this chosen animal** until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight. <sup>7</sup>They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal. <sup>8</sup>That same night they must roast the

meat over a fire and eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast.

<sup>9</sup> Do not eat any of the meat raw or boiled in water. The whole animal—including the head, legs, and internal organs—must be roasted over a fire. <sup>10</sup> Do not leave any of it until the next morning. Burn whatever is not eaten before morning. <sup>11</sup> “These are your instructions for eating this meal: ***Be fully dressed, wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency,*** for this is the LORD’s Passover. <sup>12</sup> On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! <sup>13</sup> But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

**Jump down** to Verse 21:

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses called all the elders of Israel together and said to them, “Go, pick out a lamb or young goat for each of your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. <sup>22</sup> Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning. <sup>23</sup> For the LORD will pass through the land to strike down the Egyptians. But when He sees the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, the LORD will pass over your home. He will not permit His death angel to enter your house and strike you down.

<sup>24</sup> “ Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. <sup>25</sup> When you enter the land the LORD has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this ceremony. <sup>26</sup> Then your children will ask, ‘What does this ceremony mean?’ <sup>27</sup> And you will reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. And though He struck the Egyptians, He spared our families.’ ” When Moses had finished speaking, all the people bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

**SIDEBAR: Perhaps you’re wondering: What makes the Passover so important for**

## us as believers in 2023?

### 2 Reasons:

#### 1. The Passover is a spiritual “museum piece” that points us to Jesus.

We’ll cover this in more detail later on, but for now, think of the Passover like this old telephone.

#### ILLUSTRATION: BELL TELEPHONE

This is an experimental telephone that was built by Alexander Graham Bell back in 1876. How many of you have used this model of telephone in the past week? Yeah, I thought so...

But how many of you have used a smartphone or a landline this week?

If you have used a smartphone or landline, that piece of technology has a **direct tie** back to this old phone from 1876. It’s true that other phones have **far surpassed** the technology of this phone; but that doesn’t change the fact that this experimental Bell phone is still a **significant part** of our **technological heritage**.

In the same way, the Passover is a **significant part** of our **SPIRITUAL heritage**. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we as New Testament believers no longer have to commemorate the Passover in the exact same way that the Israelites did... **but, even though the Passover is no longer a REQUIREMENT, it is still an important RELIC that has deep ties to our relationship with Jesus today.**

#### 2. The Passover teaches us how to find hope in the Lamb.

The subject of Passover is so broad and so deep that we could do an entire sermon series just on the two chapters that we’re going to cover today. There are all kinds of angles that we could approach this from; **but this morning, we are going to study the Passover from the angle of hope.**

Here's the main idea that we want to build around today:

**MAIN IDEA: In the darkness of uncertainty, the Lamb is our certain hope.**

**Just as the Passover Lamb gave the Israelites hope on one of the most terrible nights in history, Jesus wants to give US hope amidst the uncertainty in our world TODAY.**

We're going to cover 4 Aspects of the Lamb and Hope:

1. **The Reason for the Lamb (the Cry for Hope)**
2. **The Regulations for the Lamb (the Conditions of Hope)**
3. **The Receiving of the Lamb (the Course of Hope)**
4. **The Remembrance of the Lamb (the Call to Hope)**

**TRANSITION to POINT 1**

Let's look at that first one together: **The Reason for the Lamb**

### **1. THE REASON FOR THE LAMB (THE CRY OF HOPE)**

In **Exodus 12**, God's people are in a desperate place. Pharaoh has tortured the Israelites not only physically through slavery, but emotionally and psychologically by promising their freedom and then renegeing on that promise.

Because of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, Egypt is in a desperate place too.

- The plagues have left the whole land in ruins
- The economy has been destroyed
- The whole nation is on edge

**And if that wasn't bad enough...the crisis in Egypt is about to go from bad to worse.**

Let's **backtrack** to **Exodus 11:1**:

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will strike Pharaoh and the land of Egypt with one more blow. After that, Pharaoh will let you leave this country. In fact, he will be so eager to get rid of you that he will force you all to leave.

**Jump down** to Verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> Moses...announced to Pharaoh, "This is what the LORD says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die. <sup>6</sup> Then a loud wail will rise throughout the land of Egypt, a wail like no one has heard before or will ever hear again. <sup>7</sup> But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. **Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.**

**Pay attention to the second half of Verse 7** : "Then you **will know** that the LORD makes a **distinction** between the Egyptians and the Israelites."

**In the Bible, Egypt is often portrayed as a TYPE (a literary, symbolic picture) of life without God.** Egypt represents:

- Sin
- Godlessness
- Outer luxury, but inner rot
- Outer opulence, but inner emptiness

**Egypt is a microcosm of our fallen world – a world that has rejected God and settled for the slavery of death.**

So in Verse 7, God is telling Moses: "The LORD makes a distinction between the **Egyptians** (people who follow after sin and death) and the **Israelites** (people who follow after the voice of God)."

**That distinction between life and death is something that God defines very explicitly throughout Scripture:**

- **Deuteronomy 30:19** – “Today I have given you the choice between life and death... Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!”
- **Ezekiel 18:31b-32** – “For why should you die, O people of Israel? I don’t want you to die, says the Sovereign LORD. Turn back and live!”
- **Romans 6:23** – “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**There is a distinction between life and death.**

There is a distinction between those who have **hoped in Jesus** and those whose hope is **misplaced** in something else.

**Each one of us has been internally hardwired with a cry for hope. And the only way to find hope is to turn to the Lamb. Not just any lamb...THE LAMB. Death is the reason that we all need a Lamb.**

**TRANSITION to Point 2**

That leads to the Second Aspect that we’re going to study today:

**The requirements for the Lamb (the conditions of hope):**

## **2. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LAMB (THE CONDITIONS OF HOPE)**

In order to **escape slavery** and **escape the impending judgment** on Egypt, **God’s people had to place their hope in a very specific lamb.**

Let’s take another look at Exodus 12, verses 3 and 5:

**Exodus 12:3b, 5** – “...each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household.... The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.”

**Just as Egypt is a type of sin and godlessness...The Passover Lamb (along with other lambs in Scripture) is a type of Christ.** Each requirement for the Passover lamb is ultimately fulfilled in the life, death, and saving work of Jesus.

We could do a whole sermon just on that topic, but for now, here are **4 Quick Connection Points** between the requirements for the Passover lamb and the finished work of Jesus.

#### **4 CONNECTION POINTS BETWEEN THE PASSOVER LAMB AND JESUS**

**A) The Passover lamb had to be without defect (12:5) (no broken bones/sickness/deformity/had to be absolute best of the best);** in the same way, Jesus had no defect. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5 that Jesus “**had** no sin and **knew** no sin”. He did not have the “**sin defect**” that you and I are born with.

**Jesus is the only non-defective hope that we have on this side of eternity.** If we try to find hope in anything else, our hope will be broken and betrayed.

- You might say, “I’m a **good person**; my hope is in my good deeds.” Hope in your own good deeds will prove defective. Your own righteousness cannot get you into heaven, nor will it sustain you on this side of eternity.

- You might say, “I’m an **ambitious person**; my hope is in my success.” Hope in your own successes and wants and dreams will prove defective. You can have a six-figure salary, dream job, impressive social status, and climb your way to the top of every mountain you set your sights on.... **But the top that you’re seeking will not provide the hope that you’re missing.**

**If we truly want hope in this life, and the assurance of eternity in heaven for the next life, Jesus is the only non-defective hope we have.**

**B) The Passover lamb had to shed its blood; (12:6b-7, 13);** The Bible says in Hebrews 9 that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin...and just as the Passover lamb shed its blood to protect Israel from the judgment of Egypt’s sin, Jesus shed **His** blood on the cross so that we could be protected from the judgment of **our** sin.

**BIG QUESTION: Have you placed your hope in the shed blood of Jesus?** Have you asked Jesus to forgive you, to cleanse you, and restore you to right relationship with Him?

- **If you are a non-Christian...** If you have not asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, here's the truth: you are separated from God, separated from hope, and you are exposed to the judgment of death that comes to those who reject Jesus.

- **On the flipside of that, if you are ALREADY a Christian...** Maybe you need to be reminded of the hope that Jesus' blood gives you. So many of us are weighed down by old sins, old memories, and old scars that distract us from Jesus and suffocate our hope. If you are a Christian who is being tormented by your past, I fully believe that the blood of Jesus can and will give you fresh hope today.

**C) The Passover lamb was intentionally chosen (12:3);** Isaiah 42 calls Jesus "the Chosen Servant", sent by God to bring light and freedom to a hopeless world. Just as the Passover Lamb was not chosen by accident, Jesus was not chosen by accident; Jesus was chosen to be the Savior by intentional decision of God the Father.

**BIG QUESTION: Have YOU made an intentional decision about Jesus?**

Notice how **Exodus 12:3** says that "Each family must choose a lamb...". That lamb was not to be chosen recklessly or arbitrarily; **each family had to make a specific decision about the Lamb** in order to avoid the judgment of death.

- This morning, you and I must make our own intentional decision in regards to Jesus. We cannot choose Jesus by fluke accident or random chance; we must make an intentional decision to follow Him and trust His sacrifice.

**D) The Passover lamb had to be specifically protected;** **Exodus 12:6** says that the lamb was be "taken special care of", up until the right day and the right time of the sacrifice. Compare that with **Galatians 4:4-5**, which tells us that God sent Jesus to "buy freedom for us" "when the right time came."

**Not a single part of God's plan was ill-prepared or left to chance; the plan of salvation through Jesus was all deliberately and divinely protected by God.**



## **BIG QUESTION: What are you doing to protect your hope in Jesus?**

In Verse 6, the words “**take special care**” are all one word in Hebrew; a word that means “**to keep, care for...to attend to something with concern and so keep in a good or better condition.**”

***I would ask you today:***

***- How are you protecting your hope in Jesus?***

- How stable is your relationship with the Lamb?

- What messages and mindsets are you allowing to influence that relationship?

***- Because how we protect our relationship with Jesus will affect how we experience hope.***

## **TRANSITION to POINT 3**

Jesus is the one who fulfills the requirements for the Lamb.

And now in **Exodus 12:11**, we see how the Israelites were to **receive** the Passover Lamb...how to navigate the course of Hope.

## **3. THE RECEIVING OF THE LAMB (THE COURSE OF HOPE)**

Here's what the verse says (**Exodus 12:11**): “These are your instructions for eating this meal: **Be fully dressed, wear your sandals,** and **carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency,** for this is the LORD's Passover.”

Each one of those instructions can teach us as believers how to access the hope that Jesus promises us.

## **4 INSTRUCTIONS FOR RECEIVING THE LAMB**

## A) "Be Fully Dressed..."

Clothes in that day and time spoke of identity. Working as slaves in Egypt, the Israelites likely would've worn nothing, or next to nothing, with only a loincloth.

Now as they prepare to receive the Lamb and exit Egypt, God instructs His people to be fully dressed. **"Get ready to leave behind your old identity of slavery in Egypt; get ready to change clothes and dress in the new identity of people who are free!"**

**Do you know that the Bible has a lot to say about clothes and our identity?**

- **Ephesians 6:13a** – "Put on every piece of God's armor..."
- **Colossians 3:12b** – "...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."
- **Luke 15:22** – When the prodigal son came home, the first thing his father did was to clothe him in the "finest robe", showing a change in identity from "lost prodigal" to "found son".
- **Jesus in Revelation 16:15** – "Blessed are all who are watching for Me, **who keep their clothing ready** so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."

**Your clothes will affect your capacity for hope!**

Ask yourself: What are you wearing today?

- Are you wearing what the world wears? **Anger? Conflict? Deception? Mistrust?**

- **Are you settling for the nakedness of Egypt/slavery, or are you putting on the clothes of righteousness, newness, and hope that Jesus offers you?**

**B) "...wear your sandals..."** Sandals for the Israelites (and shoes for us today) were necessary for traction and protection – traction for the immediate escape, and protection for the long journey ahead. They needed their sandals in order to make progress.

**How are YOU making progress in your spiritual journey with Jesus? Are you**

**slipping, sliding, and kind of all over the place? Or are you making progress day by day, as you anchor yourself in the hope that Jesus has promised you?**

C) "...carry your walking stick in your hand..." The walking stick provides support. Super important question: **What spiritual support systems do YOU have in place to receive Christ's hope?**

Am I finding support through prayer and the Word and spiritual disciplines that point me to Jesus?

Do I have a trusted network of godly friends, wise mentors, and a proactive church family who will encourage me in my faith and hold me accountable as a believer?

### **ILLUSTRATIONS of SUPPORT**

In my own life:

- One of my supports is my Dad...
- Another support I have is my journal.
- **What's your walking stick on your journey of hope?**

D) "...eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD's Passover." **Remember that the Israelites were in a time crunch; the visit of the angel of death was a matter of WHEN, not IF.** In order to receive the hope of Passover, the Israelites had to obey quickly and move with urgency. It was a literal matter of life and death.

In the very same way...

**TIME IS RUNNING OUT ON THIS WORLD!** Just as the Israelites had to receive the Lamb before the judgment on Egypt, **you and I must receive the Lamb** before the final judgment of eternity. We must approach our relationship with Jesus from a place of urgency and priority.

**As we receive the Lamb according to these instructions...**

- **embracing** our new identity
- **embarking** on progress with Jesus
- **engaging** in spiritual support

- **and prioritizing Jesus...** these instructions will keep us locked in on the course of hope, no matter what comes our way.

#### **TRANSITION to POINT 4**

As we think about the reason for the Lamb, the requirements of the Lamb, and the receiving of the Lamb... there is a fourth and final aspect of Passover that we need to consider today, and that is **Remembrance of the Lamb (the Call to Hope)**.

#### **4. REMEMBRANCE OF THE LAMB (THE CALL TO HOPE)**

**God knew that the escape from Egypt would not be the last hardship that Israel would go through.** There would be plenty more difficulty, adversity, and tests of faith awaiting them on their journey. There would be critical breaking points where **remembrance** of God's faithfulness and the comfort of hope would be all that they had to hold onto.

That's why God through Moses instructs Israel to hold on to **Remembrance of the Lamb**.

**Exodus 12:24-27:** <sup>24</sup> "Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. <sup>25</sup> When you enter the land the LORD has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this ceremony. <sup>26</sup> Then your children will ask, 'What does this ceremony mean?' <sup>27</sup> And you will reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. And though He struck the Egyptians, He spared our families.' " When Moses had finished speaking, all the people bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

**The tragic irony in all this is** that later on in Israel's journey, when their morality went off the rails... **Nearly every major sin in the wilderness was connected to a direct lack of remembrance.** As hardships arose, instead of **remembering the Lamb and the comfort of hope**, the people **rebelled**.

- "**Moses is taking too long** on the mountain? **Forget God/hope**, and let's build this golden calf..."

- "**No food? Forget God/hope**, let's complain!"

- **“Giants in the Promised Land? Forget God/hope, let’s go back to Egypt!”**

It’s a **stark contrast** from their posture at the end of Verse 27, where the text says that “**...all the people bowed down to the ground and worshiped.**”

That should pose a challenge to us: **In the midst of our own uncertainty, will we turn to rebellion or to remembrance?**

- Will we rebel? Will we take matters into our own hands, and express contempt towards God?

- Or will we **remember**...and declare in faith...

**That even in the darkness of uncertainty, the Lamb is our certain hope.**

## CONCLUSION

**When I read about the Passover in Exodus...I am deeply moved by the reality that the Israelites did not have the same benefit of hindsight that you and I do.**

They had never read the book of Exodus before; all they had was the instruction that God had put in front of them through Moses.

**It’s haunting to me to imagine the emotions and the questions that must have flooded through their hearts and minds as midnight got closer.**

- **Would the blood on the doorposts really work?**

- **Would the Passover meal be enough?**

- **Would God really come through** on His promise of Israel being peaceful, even as Egypt was **engulfed** by screams in the night?

- **Would Israel really get out of Egypt this time?** Their hearts had been broken and their trust betrayed so many times before...would this time be different?

**So many questions; so few answers. Yet even in the midst of deepest uncertainty – the Israelites chose to place their hope in God.** They trusted in the certain hope

of the Passover Lamb – a Lamb whose blood would cover them and give them a reason to find hope in the midst of uncertainty.

**We too find ourselves facing uncertainty in the world around us.**

- We see **nations**, **governments**, and **culture** becoming more hostile towards the things of God.
- We see an **increase** in **natural disasters** and **political unrest** sweeping the globe.
- Especially in the light of Covid, we see a whole world on edge, ready to detonate at the next impending virus, crisis, or calamity.

**In the midst of all the death and darkness – will we look to the Lamb for hope?**

**\*DISCLAIMER:** This manuscript was written and preached by Jon Engler for the weekend of August 20, 2023 at EAG Church in Rocky Mount, NC. This manuscript is solely owned by EAG and has been published online for reflection and deeper study. The reproduction and/or distribution of this manuscript, either in part or in full, without the author's express written consent, is strictly forbidden.