

## **Behind closed doors: The Passover (Tabor Baptist Church – 10/05/2020)** Henry de Oliveira

Pastor Andrew has asked me if it would be possible for me to continue with the series, ‘*Behind closed doors.*’ So, in following with the series we will consider what is one of the most foundational stories of the Old Testament: The story of the first Passover. And from it; it would do us good to gaze in wonder at our Passover Lamb, Christ Jesus our Lord. As 1 Corinthians 5:7 states – “...*For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us*”

Let us open our Bibles and read Exodus 12:1-13.

*Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without<sup>[a]</sup> blemish, a male<sup>[b]</sup> of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup> And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. <sup>8</sup> Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. <sup>10</sup> You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. <sup>11</sup> And thus you shall eat it: <sup>[c]</sup>with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.<sup>12</sup> ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

How many of you have been amazed at the Bible, the Word of God? You take some verses, you read it and you delight in it, you read it again and you marvel at it, then you meditate on it and it astonishes you. Just a simple read of the Bible may give you a drop for your thirst, but why settle for a drop, when the Word of God is a bursting well, an oasis in a dry land, a bright light in the dark, a soft voice in the tempest, and a thunder in our lethargy. To the onlooker the Bible may look like a little puddle, with some semi-precious stones you could reach in and take out for yourself. But just jump in and you will find the scriptures will widen and deepen, its edge is unapproachable, and its depth is unreachable. Great is this ocean, the Word of God. In fact, the more you study God’s Word, the less you will appear to know them. These past two months, as we have been advised to stay in our homes; with the Bible in front of me, I have found myself mourning at how little I know, but I have also rejoiced in knowing that there is so much more to understand. When studying God’s Word, I have found there to be a fascinating point and purpose to them; and that is that the scriptures have an unvarying disposition to show us Christ: To reveal to us through all its pages the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ. For instance, the Old Testament, is filled with types and shadows either of Christ’s experiences or His offices. But in all the types and shadows revealed to us, perhaps one of the most beautiful ways in which Christ Jesus is made known to us in the Holy Bible, is the Passover Lamb. And so, let this take hold of all your attention this Sunday morning. “*For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*”

When we open the book of Exodus, we are quickly introduced to a people who are oppressed, dealt shrewdly with, a people afflicted with heavy burdens, forced to serve with rigor, to work as slaves. Their lives were made bitter with hard bondage. This was the oppressive state the children of Israel were suffering under the fearful might of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. So hopeless was their situation that the thought of deliverance had long left the Hebrew people. To be saved and to be delivered certainly seemed unattainable. The Israelites had been enslaved in Egypt for about 400 years and in that time they had lost faith in the God of their fathers. Yes, they still believed He existed and they even worshiped Him, but they doubted that He could, or would, break the yoke of their bondage. But, as we carefully read through the beginning chapters of Exodus, we begin to see the unfolding of God’s great plan of deliverance and Salvation for His oppressed people. God had finally aroused to avenge His elect, He had at last determined to strike a blow against the

King of Egypt and the nation of Egypt. You see, despite the peoples lack of faith, God, the Great "I AM" had not forgotten them. He had seen the affliction of His people, He had heard their cry, He knew their sufferings and now the time had come. God had come down to deliver them. It may be hard for us to understand the dire straits of the children of Israel, but we who are Christians could surely remember that time when we were delivered from the bondage of sin, when we were oppressed in our spiritual Egypt. Where Satan, the ruler of this world, who like Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would snuff out any hope that would be born to us. And when is demons, who like the Egyptian taskmasters, would afflict us with our burdens, demanding us to make bricks for our lives without any straw for stability. Our sin was our burden, our sins were our daily labour. Working hard to make ourselves better but finding it to be ineffective and futile. Those of you who are Christ's, think back to that time when our lives were made bitter with hard bondage. Now, waken that instant, recall that blessed moment new life was received in your soul. When Jesus Christ was given to you as your sacrifice; consider how soon you were taken out of your sinful Egypt, and how certain you were never to return. Here we have it, the Passover lamb, the sacrifice that saved the children of Israel, that sacrifice that ushered in their great deliverance. Yes, they would go on to the wilderness, fight the Amalekites, go through a refining fire, but they have never since returned to Egypt the place of their bondage. Such is the saving covenant of the Passover Lamb, the Christian, may sometimes foolishly desire the food and pleasures of Egypt, but the Christian will never again be brought back into Egyptian slavery, or shall I say, slavery to sin. Here is where a study through the first 11 chapters of Exodus could be of profit in understanding the history of the Passover. But that would require much time. So, we shall, just as it is the purpose of scripture, to look at the Lord Jesus Christ, and see how He is the Passover Lamb, as written about in the 12th chapter of Exodus. There are three things that immediately jumped out in my first reading of this passage, and they were – the necessary qualities of the lamb, the necessary sprinkling of the lamb's blood and the necessary feeding on the sacrificial lamb. And so, with the remaining time we have this morning these three necessities will serve as our points.

Firstly, consider the necessary qualities of the Passover lamb. Jesus Christ is here represented by the Passover Lamb. The Passover lamb is an unmistakable and beautiful picture of Christ Jesus. Jesus is the Passover Lamb slain for the deliverance of His chosen people. There is no other person, there is no other Messiah, there is no other being that fits and meets all the qualifiers and characteristics of the sacrificial paschal lamb. Take verse 5 of Exodus 12 – "*Your Lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.*" A lamb without blemish. Is that not Christ Jesus? Surf through history, unpack all the archives, look for any other man described as perfect without blemish. I assure you with all certainty that only one name will keep coming up. The man Jesus. There was no other in the history of the world who was so perfect, blameless, sinless, and righteous as the man Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter. A lamb without blemish. No other lamb would be an acceptable sacrifice. For a Hebrew household to slay any other lamb, even a lamb with a single dot as a blemish, would welcome in the destroyer to slay the first born. Christ Jesus is our Lamb without blemish. Even through His earthly birth, Jesus was so unblemished. Born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, no sin would ever taint Him. He was pure, spotless, white as snow, in Him was no sin. Immaculate from birth, His entire life remained the same. As the Epistle to the Hebrews so declares, "*In all points He was tempted as we are, yet without sin*". Jesus was one without blemish. Even standing accused in the courts of Pilate, He remained guiltless, Pilate saying to the chief priests and the crowd, "*I find no fault in this Man*" What about the sin He died for? "*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us.*" The sin He bore was not His own, it was our infirmities and our wrongdoings that He bore on the cross. You who trust the Lord Jesus as saviour, do you not acknowledge that Jesus Christ is a Lamb without blemish? Can you find any fault in Him? Can you accuse Him of any wrongdoing? Can you charge him with lies? Have any of His promises failed? Have any of His words been broken? Has He ever left you? Answer in truth. Of course not, He remains with His own, His words continue to speak, His promises are fulfilled, His truthfulness stands, He committed no wrong, no fault can ever be assigned to Him. He is the pure, unblemished Lamb. Proclaim it as did John the Baptist "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" So, we have so far established Christ Jesus as a Lamb without blemish, but that is not the extent of it. V5 continues, "*Your Lamb shall be without blemish...what more?...a male of the first year.*" Why is such a detail so pertinent? Well, at one year old, the lamb is at its best, it's at its prime and its strength is unexhausted. The lamb is mature enough to be full-grown, but not old enough to consume more resources than it will return. God desires the best for a sacrifice. By this God is saying, "Don't bring the lamb that does not matter, don't bring the lamb that is unprofitable to you, don't bring the lamb that you

would have killed anyway". The best is required for the Lord. Was that not Christ when He was offered up on the cross? Was He not the fairest of the sons of men? At 33, He was at the prime of manhood, mature in body and mind. His body was strong, His stature was erect, His mind was prepared. He was not a boy, nor a young man, He was a full man in the flower of His age. This was Jesus Christ, a lamb of the first year. Christ gave Himself in His very prime. Any younger, He would not have become all that He could be, any older, His body would be given to the decay of age. Christ offered up Himself at His absolute best. This is Christ, a Lamb without blemish and a lamb of the first year. Yet another quality for a lamb can be observed, but I'll only make a quick mention of it. It is the fact that the lamb was to be killed at the appointed time. See for yourselves verses 3 and 6. The lamb was chosen on the tenth day of the month but was kept until the fourteenth day of the month. The four days would prove the suitability of the lamb. The lamb would be kept apart for four days, and subject to constant inspection assuring it was a lamb without blemish, without hurt and injury. Now take a look at the Gospels and it is remarkable that even at this point Christ proves to be our Passover Lamb. As the Passover lamb was to be separated four days before it was slain, Christ Himself entered Jerusalem four days before His Passover sacrifice. During those four days, Jesus was clearly set apart as being distinct from mankind, look at the four Gospels and there is recorded for our profit much of what Christ did and said in those four days prior to His crucifixion. But not just what He had done and said, we are also told of all the scrutiny and examination Jesus received by people of all classes during those four days. And in them you will find nothing that would disqualify Jesus as the last Passover Lamb. To define all the necessary qualities of the Passover Lamb, and to examine His perfection is all important. For in the quality of the Lamb, lies the power of His blood.

This brings us to our second point – the necessary sprinkling of the Lamb's blood. It is the blood of Christ that saves, it is the blood of Christ that purifies, it is the blood of Christ that needs to be poured out on us. Note, the blood has to be poured on us. On the night Jesus was betrayed, in the midst of celebrating the Passover with His disciples, Jesus taking the cup of wine said, "*This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" It is through His blood that our sins are all forgiven, this is the power of His blood, the blood of the perfect, spotless Lamb, the Son of God. Blood had to be shed. According to God's law "*things are purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.*" At the first Passover the blood of a lamb would save a household, then for centuries bulls and goats were sacrificed for the sins of the people, "*but it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*" But God had come, Christ the perfect body prepared, Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, the last acceptable sacrifice, His blood was shed once and for all who in Him would trust. Just the choosing, and the presence of the Lamb was not enough. To Satisfy God's anger over sin, the Lamb had to be slain. For this is why we who are Christ's proclaim, "*For Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*" Listen, He wasn't just slain, Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. What benefit do we gain from His sacrifice? Firstly, by His blood sprinkled on us, we have redemption, and secondly, by feasting on His flesh, we have regeneration and sanctification. How is the blood to be sprinkled? V7 – "*take some of the blood and put it on the door posts and on the lintel of the houses*" Not on the threshold, but on the posts and lintel. The blood is too precious to be walked on. This is the blood of salvation, have it on your right hand and on your left hand, have it cover you, but don't trample on it. The Hebrew people could have covered everywhere else of the house with the Lamb's blood, but that would not deliver them, the destroyer would have come in and slain the firstborn in that house. The blood had to be put on the door posts and on the lintel. And so, must Christ's blood be sprinkled on our hearts. If Christ's blood does not touch our hearts, we continue dead in sin. Let that be our want and our need to have Christ's blood sprinkled on us. It is not enough that the blood was shed on the cross. The blood must be sprinkled on our hearts, that how the blood saves. V23 of Exodus 12 - When the Lord passed through Egypt, and when He saw the blood on the door posts and lintel, the Lord passed over the door and did not allow the destroyer to come into the house to destroy. Is your heart and soul sprinkled with Christ's blood? These are the hearts the Lord passes over, these are the souls that are delivered. You may say, I don't know whether my heart has been sprinkled in the Lamb's blood. Well, my friend, it is by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that the heart is sprinkled. The Children of Israel, believed the Word of God. It was by faith that they sprinkled their door posts. They knew their sins were not lesser than that of the Egyptians. They knew that by not putting faith in the Lord they would suffer the destruction of Egypt. God's terror and mighty anger was going to be poured all over Egypt. Their deliverance that first Passover wasn't just salvation from the Egyptians. Their greatest deliverance that night in ancient Egypt, was deliverance from God's just anger, that was the salvation they needed, to be saved

from God. And so, this was the grace of God upon His chosen people. The Israelites that night were saved by grace through faith. They heard the Lord, and they sprinkled the blood on their door posts. Sinner, do you not desire this great deliverance for your lives; To be delivered from the just anger of God? My friends, through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus, have your heart sprinkled with His blood. It is not sufficient to say that Christ loved the world and died for the world. You must say, "He loved me, and His blood was shed for me." Be warned, there is another hour coming, where we shall all stand before the judgement seat of God. Where the destroyer will once again draw out his sword. There the Lord will once again separate His chosen people and those who are not. The sheep from the goats. The saved from the lost. What do you think will be the deciding factor? What do you think will be the mark on them who will be separated and taken beyond the court of judgement and into their heavenly dwellings? It is the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ is the seal in the heart of all who are His, the blood of Christ is the assurance, the salvation of all whose home is with God. If your heart is not sprinkled with blood, fear the sword of the Almighty, fear the final strike of the destroyer who will banish forever those whose hearts are not cleansed by the Lamb's blood. They will be cast away into everlasting punishment, into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. A great number will that day be ushered away from God's presence and into eternal punishment. Exodus 11:5 – "*and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh even to the firstborn of the female servant, and all the firstborn of the animals.*" Some say there will be surprises on that day. But be not surprised. That number will not consist of just murderers and thieves. There will be kind people, good people, giving people, church goers, Sunday school teachers and church pastors cast into the abyss. Why? because their hearts were never sprinkled with the blood of Christ. My friends, love your soul and seek that sprinkled blood of the Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner.

This takes us to our final point. The necessity of feeding on the Passover Lamb. Now, the Christian who has his heart sprinkled does not settle for just the blood. The blood saves, but the Child of God, desires more of the lamb. He also feeds on the lamb. Jesus is not only a Saviour for sinners, He is also the food for them that are saved. It is His body that the redeemed sinner lives on. This is how you can know if your heart is sprinkled by the blood, do you also eat the Lamb? V8 – Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. The whole lamb is used, not just the blood, but the body also. All this is necessary. All this is part of our redemption. You cannot just have one or the other. Suppose one of the Children of Israel, sprinkled the blood but did not eat the lamb, the destroyer would have found him out and known his heart. This disobedient Israelite and his household would have been smitten. Dear friend, you may think you have the blood sprinkled, you may think you are just and that is enough. But as it is written, "faith without works is dead." Yes, we are justified by faith alone, but it is not a faith that is alone. The evidence of our faith is in our works. Are you living on Christ, in Christ and by Christ? Is love and obedience to Him your priority? By faith, do you continue to feast on Christ? It is by that and only that that we are sanctified. Jesus said, "*Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.*" When many of Christ's disciples heard Jesus say that, they said, "This is a hard saying, who can understand it?" and many from that time stopped following Christ. They would not feed on Christ. But you who are Christ's, do you not understand it? Isn't Jesus your daily food? Some of you who are true Christians may find that you are far too often living on your changing feelings and emotions. Your frame and state of mind somewhat dictates your relationship with Christ. That is all wrong. That is like a child of God surviving on tokens and nuggets they received at church or from the preacher. The Christian lives solely and only on Christ. No matter his frame, not matter his state of mind, no matter the weather, he feeds on Christ daily. Make sure to eat the Passover Lamb and nothing else. The world will offer much food, and most of it will have a desirable appearance. But the Christian who tastes Christ daily would certainly hate the food of this fallen world. It may be tempting to him, he may go as far as reaching out, touching, and bringing it to his lips. Oh, but he would hate it, he would spit it out, throw it out and have nothing to do with it, warning all others of its deceitful appearance. Jesus is the manna in the wilderness, He is the bread of life. You who are hungry, by faith feed on the Passover Lamb, and be filled. Feed on His blood, and righteousness and atonement.

Now, let me come to a conclusion. While you have been behind closed doors these past two months, how have you been? What are your fears, where lies your hope? All those years ago in Egypt, there was a great cry, all the firstborn sons, from Pharaoh to the servant girl, were slain by God's righteous judgement on a

sinful people. Salvation came only to those who by faith and obedience, sacrificed a lamb without blemish, a lamb of the first year, sprinkled its blood on their doorposts and lintel, and then feasted on the roasted body of the lamb. Friends, are you hoping to be saved? There is only one Saviour and there is only one Lord, and He is Christ Jesus the Passover Lamb, the Son of God. Some are resting on their good works for salvation, some are banking on the stability of their lives, their family, their friends and their finances. Others are relying on their religiosity and their own self-denial. And many count themselves righteous enough to stroll past heaven's gate by their own merit. The destroyer would slain all of these. There are others, who would follow Christ, they know His teachings, they agree with His work, they may even carry about a cross around their neck, however, they will not have the Lamb's blood sprinkled on them. They will not eat of its body. They refuse to smear their doorposts and lintel with this saving blood. They refuse to feast on His flesh daily. The truth is, these are already condemned. You may be as righteous as you see fit, you may be religious in all areas, but if Christ's blood is not sprinkled on your heart, all these avail to nothing. It is blood that saves. It is not blood plus something else. It is blood that saves. It is Christ's blood that delivers. This is the way of salvation, to have Christ's blood cover your hearts and soul. Have it sprinkled on you. Desire it now and surrender to His saving grace. Trust in Jesus Christ's precious blood. Let your hope be in Him, whose blood is the seal of salvation. To have no blood is to already be condemned. And so, I urge you all, to call on the name of the Lord. And think further on these things. For indeed, Christ Jesus, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us.

Let us pray