

## The Passover Lamb

### 1. Intro

- In Australia, on 26<sup>th</sup> April we commemorate ANZAC Day
  - It's a day where we pause to remember one of most significant times in Australian history
  - It's the day we remember the sacrifice of Australian and NZ soldiers at Gallipoli during WWI to give us freedom
  
- It's right as Australians we remember and commemorate ANZAC Day
- For
  - without the sacrifice of those soldiers
  - without their willingness to lay down their lives
  - without their utter selflessness ... we most likely would not
    - have the freedom we enjoy
    - have the life we live
    - have the hope for the future we do
  
- All cultures do this
  - The most significant events in a culture's history are commemorated to ensure future generations remember those events and what they represent to that culture
  
- The Passover Lamb that we've just read about in Exodus 12 is THE most significant event in the history of the Jews
  - So significant they still commemorate it to this day
- Like
  - ANZAC Day for Australians
  - Independence Day for Americans
  - Bastille Day for French

- For like ANZAC Day
  - Passover Lamb is a sacrifice to ensure others could be saved
  - It involved the laying down of a life to ensure God's people had freedom and have a hope for the future
  
- However, when you properly understand the Passover Lamb you will see that this is not just a sacrifice and a rescue for the Jews
  - It's a sacrifice and a rescue for the for the whole world ... including us
  - And therefore the Passover Lamb is something that we ought to remember and commemorate ... even more so than ANZAC Day!
  
- This sounds sacrilegious ... however when we understand scope of the freedom, rescue and hope that the Passover Lamb provides ... we'll see it's a far greater thing to remember, celebrate and commemorate ... even for us Aussies
  
- Why? Here's the answer
  - Provision of the Lamb
  - Necessity of the Lamb
  - Beholding of the Lamb

## **2. Provision of the Lamb**

- Over the past couple of weeks as we've looked at the OT book of Exodus ... we've seen how God's people, the Israelites are enslaved in Egypt
  - They'd migrated down to Egypt from Canaan 400 yrs earlier during a famine
  - Over years and decades that followed they prospered and grew in number
  - However, the Egyptians became worried that God's people would become too numerous and overthrow them
  - So they forced the Israelites to become slaves for Pharaoh

- God's people cried out to God to save them, and God raised up Moses to rescue his people
- Moses repeatedly called on Pharaoh to let God's people go so they could go and serve and worship him but Pharaoh refused
  - So God sent a series of 9 plagues on Egypt
    - Frogs, flies, gnats, disease, locusts etc
  - Every time ... Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let God's people go
- In Exodus 11:1 the LORD had said to Moses
  - *"I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely.*
- The final plague would be the death of the firstborn
- It would be the final act of judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptians who repeatedly shook their fist in God's face
- But in order to spare his people from the judgment that God was going to bring on the land, God provided a means of rescue
- The Israelites were to take a lamb .... a perfect lamb / lamb without defect
  - Sacrifice it and daub its blood on the door frame of the house
  - When God came to bring judgment on Egypt, he saw the blood and 'passed over' that house
  - Those who were inside those houses protected by the blood of the lamb, did not die > God spared them
- However, that night there was great distress in Egypt for there was not a house among the Egyptians without someone dead
  - From least to the greatest
  - No household was spared > no one was exempt > not even Pharaoh

- That tenth plague was the last straw for Pharaoh and his people
  - They urgently insisted Moses and all the Israelites leave Egypt
  - So Moses led them out of Egypt > through the Red Sea towards the Promised Land

### 3. Necessity of the Lamb

- What's the significance of all this?
  - As we dig a bit deeper ... the first thing we see is the **necessity of the lamb**
  - The lamb was absolutely crucial for the salvation of God's people
- The first clue comes in v13
  - *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.*
- The blood on the door was a sign
  - It was a sign for God and it was a sign for the people
- How was it a sign for God?
  - He would see the blood on the door and pass over that house and ensure the firstborn of that house hold wouldn't die
  - It was like a big 'No Entry' sign written on the door in the blood of the lamb
- But it was also a sign for the people
- How so?
  - It was a sign to assure them ... give them confidence ... give them comfort ... that they would be saved
- **Illustration – Boy at Passover**
- There's a lovely little story of a Hebrew boy saying to his father that night as he's going to bed ...
  - "Father ... have you done the thing with the lamb yet?"

- Later around 9:30pm he comes out of his room and again asks his dad ... "Have you done the thing with the lamb yet?"
- Then later than night, around 11:30pm when everyone is asleep ... the boy comes out of his room > down stairs > opens the door > sees the blood of the lamb > breathes sigh of relief and says "I'm safe"
  
- The blood of the lamb was sign to God to pass over them; and
- It was a sign to assure them and comfort them that they were safe
- In effect God was setting the Israelites apart to be his
- And so when the angel of death moved through the land ... God's people were rescued through the death of a Passover Lamb
  
- But there's another clue that helps us to understand the necessity of the lamb and it's there in v22
  - *Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning*
- You see ... the warning here
- God is saying to the Israelites ... "don't go out from under the blood of the lamb"
- Why not?
- Because if God is to set the Israelites apart to be his ... they need to be holy
- But the reality is they're **not** holy
  - The story of Genesis makes that abundantly clear
    - The story of Abraham and his descendents is littered deceit, hatred, revenge, jealousy, scheming and favouritism
  
- You see when it comes to sin ... God is saying to the Israelites ...
  - You're just as culpable as the Egyptians
  - Yes ... you're the oppressed, they're the oppressor
  - Yes ... you worship the one true God, they worship idols
  - But you are just as culpable for sin ...

- And if you go out of your house and outside the protection provided by the blood of the lamb ... you too will face judgment
  
- When God says don't go out ... he's saying
  - "Just because you're a Hebrew will not help you"
  - "You can't take shelter in your heritage tonight"
  - "I don't care how good a Hebrew you are ... that won't save you if you meet the judge outside on the street"
    - "Your morality won't save you ..."
    - your heritage won't save you ...
    - it's not your pedigree
    - it's not your culture ...
    - it's not your family
  - that will save you from the judgment of God ... its only by the sheer grace of God - the blood of the lamb
  
- But when you sit under the blood of the Passover Lamb ...
  - God judgment passes over you ... because the lamb was sacrificed in your place
  - The lamb dies as a substitute!
  - The lamb is judged instead of us!
  - He dies in our place

#### **4. Beholding of the Lamb**

- You might be thinking
  - "That's interesting for the Israelites ... but how's that relevant for me"
  - "Are you saying I need to go and sacrifice little lambs to make me right with God?"
  
- No! ... because when you follow the trajectory through the rest of the Bible you come to another Passover Lamb that was sacrificed not just for Israelites ... but for the whole world

- We see this right at the start of John's gospel - John 1:29
  - John the Baptist is out in the Jordan river baptising people ...
  - And John sees Jesus and the disciples coming towards him and says to everyone who's there with him
    - *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
  
- What's John saying here?
  - Here is the lamb of God
  - Not just **A** lamb of God ... but **THE** lamb of God
  - He's saying that Jesus is **the true Passover lamb**
  - Jesus is like the lamb who will be sacrificed to spare people from God's judgment
  
- I don't know if you know this ... but Jesus' crucifixion coincided with the Jewish Passover
  - You see Jesus knew the religious leaders hated him and wanted to kill him
  - And so he deliberately timed his arrival in Jerusalem for the Passover Festival where he would be arrested and sentenced to death
  - For not only would there be thousands of people who had travelled to Jerusalem for the festival who would therefore see what was about to unfold at the cross
  - But most significantly ... Jesus death at Passover would help the people ... and help us, to understand the significance and meaning of the cross
  
- Why would he do this?
  - Why would Jesus deliberately turn up in Jerusalem at Passover knowing the authorities were going to arrest him and put him to death
  
- This was Jesus own understanding of his whole coming to earth
  - It was to be the true Passover Lamb

- And this is what he wants to teach his disciples that night where they share their last meal together
- On the night before Jesus died, he instructed his disciples to prepare a Passover meal for them to share
  - As they share the Passover meal together ... Jesus re-appropriates the Passover meal > he reinterprets it and helps them to see that his impending death is actually the fulfillment of the Passover
- So as they share the meal together Jesus says to his disciples
  - "This is my body which is given for you"
  - "This is my blood which was shed for you and the forgiveness of sins"
  - The disciples are no longer to remember the Passover and the sacrifice of the lamb ... but to remember the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus
  - He's telling them in advance how to interpret his death on the cross the following day
- In effect he's saying "behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"
  - For he is the true Passover lamb
- Can you see the links?
  - Passover lamb was to be a perfect lamb, a lamb without blemish
  - Jesus was a perfect man, a man without sin
  - Passover lamb was to be sacrificed for the sake of the Israelites
  - Jesus was sacrificed for the sake of the whole world
  - Blood of the Passover lamb was shed on the wooden doorframe
  - Blood of Jesus was shed on a wooden cross
  - Death of the Passover lamb meant those who trusted in God would be spared his judgment and made holy
  - Death of Jesus meant those who trusted in him would be spared God's judgment and made holy



- The Passover lamb enabled those who trusted in God to be rescued from slavery to the Egyptians
- The cross enabled God's people who trust in Christ to be rescued from slavery to sin and death
  
- You see the Passover in Exodus ... was pointing forward to an even greater sacrifice and an even great rescue
  - It was the sacrifice of Christ, his blood-shed for you and I for the forgiveness of sin
  
- **Application**
- A lot of people object to this
  - "I don't believe this"
  - "I object to all that"
  
- What are those objections?
- Two objections
- First is this
  - "I don't need to be forgiven by God"
  - "I'm morally upright; I live a pretty good life"
  - "I'm not a bad person"
  
- OK lets run with that
  - Let's just say we put aside the truth about God and the Bible and we're all judged according to our own moral values
  - Forget about the 10 commandments or Love God and love your neighbour
  - Say we put a invisible digital recorder around your neck for you entire life and it recorded every instance you say things **that other people ought to do**
  - It only picks up standards and morals that you call other people to

- If at the end of your life we were to take off that recorder and say
  - “Let’s evaluate your life according to what’s on the recorder”
- There’s not a person on the face of the earth who could do it!
  - Not a person who would be able to live up to even their OWN moral standard ... let alone God’s standard
  - No one has
  
- Second objection is this
  - “Okay, I know I’m not morally perfect, but why do I need my sins forgiven?”
  - “Jesus death on the cross, was it really that necessary?”
  - “Surely if there is a God and he’s all loving ... then surely he could just forgive me? God can just forgive can’t he?”
  
- No! ... he can’t just forgive without the sin being paid for
- You think about it because this is how we operate when people sin against us
- See ... what happens someone wrongs you
  - There is a debt between you and the person who has wronged you that needs to be paid / needs to be forgiven
  - And it can’t be wished away, it can’t be ignored ... you can’t just forgive and forget
  
- Only two things you can do with the debt
- Either ...
  - You can make them pay it off
    - In other words you can retaliate, you can hurt them, berate them, find ways of making them suffer
    - As that happens your sense the debt being paid off until a certain point its gone

- Or ... you can forgive them [right thing to do]
  - But forgiveness also has a cost
  - Why? Because you're paying the debt yourself
  - It hurts to forgive because you have to absorb all the pain and hurt you're experiencing
  
- You see, there's no such thing as a serious wrong without payment
  - Either you pay or they pay
  - Either way someone has to pay or the barrier remains
  - There's no such thing as a wrong that can just be forgiven without somebody paying
  
- And we know that's true for us and our imperfect moral standards ... how much more is it true for God as at cosmic and eternal level
  
- And so ... whether it's by the 10 commandments or the 2 great commands of Jesus or the digital recorder standard ...
  - there's a debt to be paid
  - there's sin to be forgiven
  
- And that's why you and I need the Passover Lamb to die
  - To atone for sin and make you holy
  
- Which means ... in the final spiritual analysis God says to even the
  - Most moral person
  - Most religious person
  - Most theologically correct person
  - He says ... if you go out and you try and face judgment on your own .. and do not sit under the blood of the lamb
    - Your race
    - Your successes
    - Your wealth

- Your moral goodness
  - Your religiosity
  - None of that will help you
- 
- And so to *Behold the lamb God* is to trust that when you sit under the blood of the Passover Lamb ...
    - God's judgment passes over you ... because the Christ, the Passover Lamb was sacrificed in your place
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- **Illustration - Charles Spurgeon > 19<sup>th</sup> Cent**
- British Baptist preacher > powerful voice for preaching > no microphones in those days > project your voice
  - Church being renovated > rented the huge Crystal Palace, London > preached to 23,000 ppl!
  - Spurgeon went in a day or two before-hand to see where the platform should be set and to test out the acoustics
  - And he got up on the platform and the way he practiced was he boomed out at the top of his lungs "Behold the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world"
  - Way up in the rafters, away from the platform, unable to see the platform, was a workman
  - And he heard this incredible call ... and it came to him like a message from heaven to his soul, and he dropped his tool and he came under a deep conviction of sin
  - And he went home and he prayed and thought and went through a great agony of soul and became converted as he found life and peace by beholding the lamb of God
  - A few weeks later presented himself for baptism at Spurgeon's church and told him the whole story

- You see ... beholding the lamb of God is to trust that when you sit under the Lamb ... you have life and peace that comes with knowing God will pass over your sin
- Another thing it means to 'behold the lamb of God' is the teach your children
- Just like we teach them about ANZAC Day
  - *Exodus 12:26-27* <sup>26</sup> *And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' <sup>27</sup> 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.'"*
- When Jesus said go and make disciples of all nations... that has got to start with our kids
  - Part of discipling our kids is helping them 'behold the lamb of God who takes away their sin'
  - Helping them to see they're saved not by
    - Your faith
    - Their attendance at church or youth group
    - By being good
  - But only by the blood of the lamb
- And not that they would just 'know' this truth, but they would 'behold' Jesus
  - They would delight in Jesus > love Jesus > be in awe of Jesus
  - That he would lay down his life and shed his blood for them and their eternal salvation
- So teach your children to behold the lamb

## 5. Conclusion

- It's right as Australians we remember and commemorate ANZAC Day
- For
  - without the sacrifice of those soldiers

- without their willingness to lay down their lives
- without their utter selflessness ... we most likely would not
  - have the freedom we enjoy
  - have the life we live
  - have the hope for the future we do
  
- Friends ... it's right that those who sit under the blood of the lamb remember and commemorate the cross
  
- For
  - without the sacrifice of Jesus
  - without his willingness to lay down his life
  - without his utter selflessness ... we most **definitely** would not
    - have the freedom we enjoy
    - have the life we live
    - have the hope for the future we do
  
- But friends ... when you behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
  - Then you have freedom from sin and death
  - You get to live the ultimate life both now and forever
  - You have the sure and certain hope of a most glorious future
  
- If you were to grab an Israelite as they were walking through the wilderness after they escaped from Egypt and ask them
  - "Who are you and who are all these people?"
  
- You know what they would have said?
  
- They would say
  - "I was a slave in Egypt under the penalty of death, but I took shelter under the blood of the lamb and now God is in our midst and he's taking me to the promised land"

- And if you were to ask a Christian the very same question
  - “Who are you and what are you about?”
- The Christian would say the very same thing
  - “I was a slave ; I was under the penalty of death
  - Now I see
    - it’s not my goodness,
    - it’s not my culture,
    - it’s not my family,
    - it’s not my pedigree,
    - it’s not my religiosity,
    - it’s not my achievements ...
  - but I took shelter under the blood of the lamb
  - and he has saved me from slavery to sin and death
  - and he is now dwelling within me
  - and he’s taking me to the promised land”

**PRAY**