**The Gospel According to Moses**

**The Lord’s Passover**

**Exodus 12:1-13**

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We are working our way through the Old Testament book of Exodus in our sermon series, The Gospel According to Moses, looking at the last plague in 12:1-13 today, as we consider The Lord’s Passover. Exodus 12:1-13:16 is a unit, like a sandwich with instruction on both sides of a description of the Exodus. 12:1-28 are instructions regarding Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread. 12:29-42 describes the Exodus. Then 12:43-13:16 are more instructions about Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the consecration of Firstborn. My big idea is that the Passover Lamb protects Israel from God’s judgement and redeems them. I see four ways this redemption is expressed.

**The Passover Lamb Gives us a New Beginning**

First, we see that the Passover gives Israel a new beginning marked by God giving them a new calendar (1-2). The Exodus is so significant that God is resetting their calendar by starting their year out celebrating the Passover, a yearly reminder of the Exodus. For 400 years, their lives were dictated by someone else but now God is giving them a new beginning, a new timeline, with new rhythms of life that will remind them of the Exodus and instruct future generations. Do you need a new beginning? Do you have daily rhythms, spiritual disciples, that remind you and reorient you around what God has done for you in Christ? The Passover God gives us a new beginning, and secondly, in the Passover God gives Israel a new identity.

**The Passover Lamb Gives us a New identity**

Notice how Moses describes Israel, the congregation of Israel (3 & 6). This is first time Israel is called a congregation, but it becomes a very common way to describe Israel in the Old Testament. God is shifting Israel’s identity as a people bound together by covenant. Israel is no longer primarily an ethnic group, the descendants of Jacob, they are now a community, a congregation, shaped by their common experience who are moving in a common direction together.

Passover expresses this unity and identity (3-6). Each household is to kill an unblemished lamb at twilight and if the family is too small to eat the whole animal, they are to join with other households, so there are enough people to eat the whole lamb. Eating together expresses their unity and oneness as a congregation, one lamb eaten together because they are one people united by God in a common redemption. The New Testament word, church, conveys this same idea, God has redeemed us, made us his church, one people from every tribe and nation. When you come to faith in Jesus Christ, and belong to a church, it becomes your community, your congregation, your tribe. Our unity comes from our common experience of what God has done for us in the gospel, giving us a new beginning with a new identity because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Maybe you are looking for a new beginning, wanting to leave your past behind you. Maybe you don’t want to be defined by something you did when you were 5 or 10 or 20 or 50? The Passover gives us a new beginning, a new identity, and a new freedom.

**The Passover Lamb Gives us a New Freedom**

God instructs Israel to east the Passover meal quickly, prepared to leave at any moment (11). Have you ever considered how much faith this took for a people conditioned by 400 years of slavery? They were on the verge of freedom yet as you read your Old Testament, you see Israel often complained about their freedom. They did not like freedom, because though slavery was horrible, it was all they knew. So when their newfound freedom brought new difficulties, they longed to return to slavery. Many would rather have the bondage we know rather than trust the God we cannot see and live in the freedom he provides. Israel will soon be free from Egypt but not free of Egypt.

Freedom for Israel comes with judgement on Egypt and their false gods, because he is the Lord (12). The big idea of the Exodus is God is making himself known, making his glory public to the nations. God has crushed all the gods of Egypt under the plagues and stripped Egypt of every god they relied on. Egypt had a god for everything in life and in death. In this last plague God says, I hold the keys to life and death, hell and hades. Those who are united to Christ by faith have no need to fear death because Christ conquered death. The Passover God gives us a new beginning, a new identity, a new freedom, and finally, a new forgiveness.

**The Passover Gives us a New Forgiveness**

Israel’s greatest need, just like us, is forgiveness. They had hard hearts just like Pharoah. If Israel is to be protected from the destroyer, then a sacrificial lamb must die in their place. This is why it is called the Passover; I will pass over you. So God instructs them to smear the blood of the lamb on the door frame of their houses. They are to roast the whole animal over fire and eat it that night as they wait (7-10). Eating the lamb represents their participation in God’s redemption (Jn 6:47-51). They are to eat it ready to flee with their robes tucked into their belts so can move quickly, with staff in hand and wearing their sandals (11). This is not a leisurely meal but much more somber and serious, trusting God will protect their firstborn from being struck down like those in Egypt. The blood is a sign for Israel, when God sees the blood of the lamb, he will protect them from the destroyer (13). They live because the blood was shed on their behalf. The blood testified that their guilt would be taken away, which is called expiation. And the blood testified that God’s judgment and wrath against sin would be taken away too, this is called propitiation. Israel needed the shedding of blood for their sin ( Heb 9:7, 22, 14; Mat 26:28).

This And series is called The Gospel according to Moses because Exodus points us to the gospel. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he declared, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). A sacrifice for human sin, your sin and my sin. If you are going to be safe from God’s judgement and wrath, you must trust the lamb of God to take away your sin and redeem you. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb (Rev 7:10). Salvation, safety from God’s judgement, is found in no one else. Jesus Christ is the better lamb, who fulfills the Passover (1 Cor 5:7) swallowing it up in who he is and what he did. He who believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Do you need a new beginning, a new identify, a new freedom or a new forgiveness ?

Life Group Questions:

1. Summarize the big idea of Exodus 12:1-13 in your own words.
2. How does God wanting Israel to follow a new calendar point to a new beginning for them?
3. What is the purpose of the plagues and the Exodus?
4. How does calling Israel a congregation point to their new identity? What is the significance of the church being called a congregation?
5. How many parallels can you see between the Passover lamb and Jesus Christ?
6. How does God passing over Israel point to a new forgiveness for them?
7. Where do you need God to do something new in you?
8. What does this teach us about God, humanity, and us?
9. What does this teach us about following Jesus in discipleship?
10. How is God asking you to respond to this passage?