

Liberation
September 17, 2017
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Exodus 12:1-13

You can learn a lot about a person's identity and passions by what they wear, what they stick to their car, and what they display at their house.

What are some examples of how people show off their identity or passions? If I came to your house what would I learn by what's on display?

Exodus chapter twelve describes a pivotal event in the lives of the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt. It was an event that meant liberation from slavery, and the beginning of their journey into the Promised Land; an event so pivotal it literally reset their calendar. The Hebrew word for this event is "pesach" (*peh'-sakh*) the Lord's Passover. It's not only a major moment in the story of the deliverance of the children of Israel, but a picture of deliverance for us today.

Big Idea: God provides deliverance for those willing to trust Him. That deliverance comes because of Jesus' death on the cross.

Exodus 12:1–13 (ESV)

The Passover

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,
² "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the

whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷ “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³ 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

- Let’s start with a basic, “softball” question: The Passover meant deliverance for the Hebrews. **What does it represent for us today?**
- Verse two: **Why do you think God chose to literally reset the Hebrew calendar by the Passover event? How could you and I apply that to our life if we are a follower of Christ?**
- This story begins with a “perfect lamb.” The Old Testament system of sacrifices always required an animal without blemish or defect.
- **Why did God require animal sacrifices in the Old Testament? How was this a picture of Jesus?** (Open book quiz – here’s a good explanation: <https://www.gotquestions.org/animal-sacrifices.html>)
- Note: “...every man shall take A lamb (v3.)” The sacrifice was for all.
- A small family was to share THE lamb with another family (v4.) Everyone could share in the sacrifice.

- Verse five says, *“YOUR lamb shall be without blemish.”* The sacrifice was personal to each individual.
- **“A lamb without blemish -” Why do you think God had them choose the lamb on the 10th day of the month and wait until the 14th?**
- Wiersbe comments: *“From the tenth to the fourteenth days, the people watched the lambs to make sure they were satisfactory; similarly, Christ was tested and watched during His earthly ministry, especially during the last week before He was crucified.”*¹
- It makes the point again that the sacrifice had to be without defect.
- Verse seven: The first nine plagues God brought were only against the Egyptians. The Hebrew people were never touched. **How was this plague different making the sacrifice of a lamb necessary?**
- Verse eight describes the elements of what is known as the “seder” (SAY der) meal still observed by Jews in the observance of Passover today.
- **Why do you think the lamb was roasted not boiled or raw? (See Lev.17:10-12) Why unleavened bread? What do bitter herbs signify?**
- Maxie Dunham writes, *“There is significance in the fact that they were commanded to eat the sacrificial lamb. In Scripture, eating signifies two things: appropriation and fellowship. Of course, a journey lay ahead for Israel and food was needed to strengthen them, but by eating the lamb, more was being said. Israel was appropriating the power God alone provided, and they were sharing in a fellowship, an identity, a covenant, that thenceforth would give them their characteristic sense of being. It is not a long leap in our minds from this lamb that was to be eaten by ancient Israel, to the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” and refers to Himself as “the bread of life” (John 6:48).”*²
- Verse eleven may be the first recorded evidence of “fast food.” They were to eat with their belts fastened, sandals on, and their staff in their hands. Literally, “eat and run!”

When the angel of death had passed, God's people would need to make a quick exit from Egypt. They wouldn't be staying in Egypt much longer. We're also just pilgrims in this world and we need to have that same mindset that this isn't our home forever.

- Verse twelve spells out the frightening truth of what was to come: *"...I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and..."* (this is significant) *"...on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord."*
- Those last four words tell us why God was doing everything He did in Exodus: to make it clear that HE is THE LORD.
- This plague wasn't about punishing the Egyptians for their treatment of God's people; this was judgment for their sinful worship of false gods.
- The ESV Study Bible: *"The events of the Passover are the ultimate demonstration of God's holy judgment of Egypt in its stubborn rejection of Yahweh, of God's great love for his people Israel, and of his power that is infinitely greater than all the power of Pharaoh and his kingdom (cf. Rom. 9:17, 22–24)."*³
- Humanly speaking we don't like to talk about judgment. It's jarring to think of first-born sons and male animals dying because of the sins of their masters, but a holy God cannot co-exist with sin. Romans 6:23 tells us, *"the wages of sin is death."* Hebrews 9:22 says, *"...under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."*⁴
- Some think judgment was just an "Old Testament thing" and the New Testament leaves the concept of divine judgment behind. **Why is that inaccurate?**
- Quoting Maxie Dunham again: *"Those who don't study the Bible seriously nonchalantly suggest that when you leave the Old Testament and come to the New, the theme of divine judgment fades almost to nothing. That isn't so. Even a cursory reading of the New Testament reveals God's action as judge. In fact, the entire New Testament is*

overshadowed by the certainty of a coming day of universal judgment which was set forth by Jesus Himself. It's not easy to forget that picture, the powerful imagery of it—the sheep separated from the goats, the righteous on the right hand of God and the unrighteous on the left, the righteous invited into the presence of the Lord, the unrighteous condemned to eternal punishment where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12).”⁵

- Verse thirteen was not only for the children of Israel but for us today:

¹³ 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

- The Preacher's Commentary points out three things present in this sign (token) of blood on the doorposts: protection, cleansing, and substitution.
- Protection: *“...according to Arthur Pink. The word is pesah, (Passover) closely resembles the Egyptian word pesh, which means “to spread the wings over” or “to protect,” thus suggesting such “sheltering and protection as is found under the outstretched wings of the Almighty God.... It was not merely that the Lord passed by the houses of the Israelites, but that He stood on guard protecting each blood-sprinkled door.”⁶*
- Cleansing: *“That's not easy to grasp: “The blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanses.” Many people still don't like that language. If you don't like the language, you'll have to argue with God. It's the language of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is only when we are cleansed from what is repugnant to divine holiness that we can really be one with Christ.”⁷*
- Substitution: *“The lamb is the clearest representative type of Christ in the Old and New Testaments. The beloved disciple John called Jesus “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). John the Baptist*

designated Him “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).”⁸

- Jesus died in our place as the perfect lamb, the sacrifice for our sins. His blood protects us from eternal death, cleanses us from sin, and is the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. He paid a price we could not pay. We call that “substitutionary atonement,” or the Great Exchange: Our Sin for His Righteousness. He died so we could live forever.
- The day the Hebrews applied the blood to the doorposts marked the first day of their new life. The day we applied the blood of Jesus to our hearts through believing in Him as Savior and Lord was the first day of OUR new life. **How should remembering that date change the way we live?**
- As you reflect on this powerful story of the Passover, and on Christ’s sacrifice, think about how we can respond this week. When I think about all this, the words of an old hymn come to mind: *“There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name!”*⁹
- **Before we close, any further thoughts?**

So, What’s the Takeaway?

I summarized it in three paragraphs:

Exodus chapter 12 tells the story of the tenth plague against Egypt, a plague of death that could only be avoided by the blood of a perfect sacrificial lamb. It was the night of liberation from slavery for God’s people and the first day on the calendar of their new life. It became the celebration of protection from judgment by the substitutionary atonement of blood. It is the Lord’s Passover.

The sign of blood on the Hebrew doorposts meant freedom from bondage and oppression, and a path to the Promised Land. God’s mercy spared them from death by the substitution of an innocent sacrifice. It’s a picture of what He’s done for us through Jesus. Bloodstained doorposts meant the beginning of new life for them. A bloodstained cross opens the door of new life for us,

but only if the blood of Jesus is applied to our hearts by believing that HE is our perfect lamb.

The color of the doorposts of my heart not only determines where I will live when I die; it determines HOW I should live BEFORE I die. It serves as a reminder that I've been bought with a high price and should live to honor the one who paid that price. What color are YOUR doorposts?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 12:1–5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Dunnam, Dr. Maxie D.. Exodus: 2 (The Preacher's Commentary) (p. 150). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

³ Crossway Bibles. ESV Study Bible (Kindle Locations 21775-21779). Good News Publishers/Crossway Books. Kindle Edition.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Heb 9:22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁵ Dunnam, Dr. Maxie D.. Exodus: 2 (The Preacher's Commentary) (p. 137). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ https://hymnary.org/text/down_at_the_cross_where_my_savior_died