

# Gospel and the Lamb of God

## Outline

1. Uniqueness of the Lamb (Exodus 5:1-2)
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### 1. Uniqueness of the Lamb (Exodus 5:1-2)

*Exod 5:1-2* Afterward, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.’”<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh said, “**Who is the Lord**, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and will not let Israel go.”

Pharaoh asked Moses a perfectly reasonable question that any unbeliever would ask, “Who is the LORD?” Or, “Egyptians worshipped many gods, so what’s so special about the Hebrew beliefs that he should obey the LORD?”

“The most unique thing about the biblical belief system **is centred on the bloody death of a helpless victim — a Lamb**” (Tim Keller). There’s no other religion like it. In Judaism, the helpless victim is the death of a spotless lamb. In Christianity, it is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God.

### 2. Power of the Lamb (Exodus 12:12-13, 22-23):

*Exodus 12:12-13, 23:* On that same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.<sup>13</sup> 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. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt...<sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssops, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and both sides of the door frame. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning.<sup>23</sup> When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door frame and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit **the destroyer** to enter your houses and strike you down.

We know if we break God’s creation design, whether of environment, human relations, body nutrition, cleanliness and rest — then harmful consequences follow. But the Passover night was unique. It was not the usual bad consequence of breaking God’s design. Instead, it was God’s judgment day brought forward for only one night on only one nation — Egypt, which at that time was the greatest superpower of the world. God sent the destroyer to enter every home in Egypt and kill the firstborn of every human family and the firstborn of every animal. And nothing will be able to stop the destroyer (the ultimate destructive force in the entire universe) except the blood of a helpless victim — a lamb. And God told the Israelites, who were held captive in Egypt, that the only way they could prevent the destroyer from entering their own house and killing their firstborn was to kill a spotless lamb, eat it with their family and put its blood on the doorpost of their own house. Furthermore, in Exod 12:22, they must remain in the house for Passover night with blood on the doorpost.

God’s judgement doesn’t worry most people today. But the Bible tells us that everyone will stand before

Him to give an account of their life. Death is sure for all of us. But so is judgment after death. God's judgment is final, and no higher court of appeal exists. If you hope for a favourable decision in God's court, put your hope entirely in Jesus Christ. Then rejoice that God's judgment on you will be based on the perfect life of His Son, Jesus, the ultimate Lamb of God — who will stand in your place. This is the gospel — the good news of God.

*Heb 9:27-28 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,<sup>28</sup> so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

### 3. Meaning of the Lamb (Exodus 12:22)

*Exodus 12:22: None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning.*

Now God meant **three** things by this verse:

- i. God was not just coming for the Egyptians. The destroyer was no respecter of persons, race or belief systems. Everybody is guilty of sin. Everybody knows they should love God with all their hearts and love their neighbour as themselves, but they fail miserably. Everybody knows how they should live but does not live by their moral standards. Even though the Egyptians were the oppressors and believed in idols, and the Israelites were oppressed and believed in the One True God, both were guilty of sin, and the destroyer was coming for them. In the final spiritual analysis, even if a person is decent, the destroyer will slay them out of the blood covering if they go out that Passover night. The only thing that could save anybody was to remain at home, hidden under the lamb's blood on the doorpost.
- ii. There is debt to be paid to God for sin — and the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). In Ancient Middle-Eastern culture, that debt was paid by the sacrificial death of the firstborn male of every family—that was their culture; that was their belief system, even though it was not of God. This is the context of God asking Abraham to sacrifice his firstborn son Isaac. God tested Abraham on his belief system (God would not have asked Abraham to sacrifice his wife Sarah because wife sacrifice was not what the early Hebrews believed). Here is an extract concerning the **firstborn** from the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE), *"All the data point to the conclusion that among the ancestors of the Hebrews, the sacrifice of the firstborn was practised, just as the firstlings of the flocks and the first-fruits of the produce of the earth were devoted to the deity"*.

But later, this barbarous practice was replaced by paying 5 shekels to the priest as the redemption price for every firstborn son (given in the Mishna, which is the oral tradition of the Jews). The ISBE says: *The custom of redeeming the firstborn son is preserved among the Jews to this day. The "Kohen" (a descendant of Aaron) asks the father which he prefers, his child or the five shekels; the father answers that he prefers his son and pays the Kohen a sum equivalent to five shekels. After receiving the redemption money, the Kohen puts his hands on the child's head and pronounces the Aaronite blessing (Num 6:22-27).*

Returning to the Passover night in Egypt, there was either a dead firstborn son in the Egyptian home or a dead lamb in the Israelite home. In other words, the lamb got what the firstborn son deserved in the Israelite home covered by the blood on the doorpost. And every Israelite firstborn son looked at the dead Passover lamb on the table and thought to himself, the only reason why he is alive is that the Passover lamb is dead.

- iii. Despite the lamb's blood on the doorpost, if any Israelite went out, the destroyer would slay them. So, God says, I am delivering you tonight from political and economic bondage, yet it is not the ultimate deliverance you need. You are still in debt of sin and need a deeper deliverance because you have deeper bondage to sin. Of course, this pointed to the death of the ultimate Lamb of God. The Holy Spirit prompted John the Baptist to say this as he saw Jesus in John 1:29, ***"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*** The Holy Spirit inspired John the Baptist to **see** that we are all

saved because God gave up His firstborn son Jesus to pay for our sins and set us free from sin's deeper spiritual bondage. This news is **the gospel**, the good news. Jesus lived the life we should have lived but didn't, and He died the death we should have died, but He died instead. Christ is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7).

#### 4. Behold the Lamb of God (John 1:29)

*John 1:29 Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

"Behold" means looking intently, deeply engaging your mind, and looking again because God wants to transform you. A God who says, I love you but doesn't have anything to demonstrate it—won't grip your attention and won't transform you. But seeing the incarnate Son of God dying on the cross for you as the Lamb of God will demonstrate His love for you, grip you, and transform you in at least two ways:

- a. It changes your heart. All human beings have sinned and deserve eternal punishment. You realise you are no better than anybody else, even no better than those you dislike or consider inferior. God loves you and other believers only in Christ. We are all on the same level. It humbles you.
- b. It changes your values. Without the cross, your value is based on how much wealth you have and how much you have achieved. At the foot of the cross, all your old value system means nothing. You realise your new value is to love God and love others (Gal 5:6)

**We will behold the Lamb in heaven.** The word "lamb" occurs 103 times in the Bible, 31 times (30%) as the title for Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation that speaks about the end-times and heaven. So, even after His resurrection and ascension into heaven, "the Lamb" is Jesus' favourite title. But I thought Jesus came as a lamb to die on earth, so why is He still the Lamb in heaven? Because even in heaven, the thing that enables you to enjoy heaven is the gospel. When you look at the Lamb of God, who loves you and gave His life for you, you will experience His infinite love for you. It will cause you to love, enjoy, and worship Him forever. You will realise that no good work can ever get you to heaven. Only trusting in His love for you, shown in the gospel, can get you there.

Many people think it is so narrow-minded to say that only people who believe the gospel will get to heaven. But without the gospel, there is no true worship. And without true worship, there is no heaven. So, when you deeply believe in the gospel and realise you get to heaven strictly by His grace—He died for you as the Lamb, as your substitute—you don't use God to get things from Him. Instead, you enjoy Him in worship forever. The gospel alone makes you want to thank, love, rejoice, worship and enjoy God for who He is, for His beauty. God's presence fills heaven, and you will behold the Lamb for eternity and never get tired of enjoying and receiving His love for you.

**We can behold the Lamb on the cross as we meditate on Phil 2:5-8.** *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"* Then, as we behold Him, the Holy Spirit gradually transforms us into Christlikeness (2 Cor 3:18 *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit*).

**We can behold Him in the Word of God:** It's not that every verse in the Bible speaks of Jesus, but every theme and every book in the Bible speaks of Him. On the road to Emmaus, the risen Christ appeared to two disciples and opened the scriptures to them, and their hearts were burning within them.

*Luke 24:27,32 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself...<sup>32</sup>They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"*

**We can behold Him in the Lord's Supper.** Robert Bruce (1551-1631), a famous Scottish preacher, said, *"You do not get any different Christ in the Lord's Supper than you get in the preaching of the Word; you do not get a better Christ in the Lord's Supper than in the preaching of the Word, but you may get the same Christ better".* **How so?**

Consider the relationship between a husband and wife. They may speak words of love to each other. But in addition, the gentle caressing, the squeeze as they hold hands, the touch, the smile, and the concern, are all visible signs between them that make their words of love more meaningful. These visible signs can never be termed as a ritual. Similarly, as we partake of the bread at the Lord's Table, we hear Jesus saying, "This bread, you know what it means? It signifies that My body was given for you because I love you. And this wine, you know what it means? It signifies My blood poured out for you because I love you" And as we hear Jesus saying these words to us when we partake of the bread and wine, our hearts are drawn to Him, and we can say, "Lord Jesus, I love You, and I open the door of my heart to You. Come, sup with me as I join You at Your Supper" (Rev 3:20).

Now when two lovers swear their love for each other—they seal it with a kiss. When two honourable gentlemen agree, they seal it with a warm and firm handshake. The kiss and handshake can be repeated often, confirming and strengthening the relationship. Likewise, we can view the Lord's Supper as a seal of the New Covenant. (1 Cor 11:25 *In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*). It is as if our Lord Jesus hands over **the document of the New Covenant** to us **sealed in His blood**, with all its promises that:

- He remembers our sins no more (Heb 8:12)
- We are adopted as children in God's family (John 1:12-13, 1 John 3:1).
- Every curse on us is broken (Gal 3:13) & every spiritual blessing given (Eph 1:3)

We should receive this **document** by faith as we drink the cup. Then the Holy Spirit (the actual seal) will testify the truth of this document to us (Heb 10:14- 15).

*Heb 10:14-15 For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.<sup>15</sup> The Holy Spirit also **testifies** to us about this.*

*Eph 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the promised Holy Spirit,<sup>14</sup> who is a **deposit** guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

Therefore, partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper must never be a ritual because they are precious visible signs and seal of the New Covenant between Jesus and believers. As we eat the bread and drink the wine with thanksgiving and faith, the Holy Spirit testifies to us the promises of the New Covenant (Heb 10:14-15). He enables us to behold the Lamb of God and deepens our love for Him. We begin to feel the presence of the Lord Jesus in our midst, and we are being transformed into His image.