



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Lord's Supper; Exodus 12:1-8

The First Passover

TRANSCRIPT

In case you do not know the individual who has made the announcements to us, he is Mr. Merle Weaver. Mr. Weaver has had a most interesting Christian experience, and one of these days we'll let him talk about. But he was for many years a minister in the Methodist church, and then was converted. [Laughter] And I was 25 years in the Presbyterian church, and it's possible that some of you, one of these days, will get up and say I was in Believers Chapel for 15 years and then I was converted. We want you to know, however, we are trying to make you unable to say it was not my fault we didn't hear the gospel.

The subject for today is the First Passover, and this is the beginning of our series of studies in the Lord's Supper. And this is where we ought to begin, and so we're turning to Exodus 12 and reading the first thirteen verses of that chapter for the Scripture reading. It would be nice if we read through verse 28, but for the sake of time we're going to stop reading at verse 13. I suggest that during the week you read through verse 28 in order to get all of the background of this first Passover ritual.

We read in Exodus chapter 12 and verse 1,

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. (That incidentally, should be a clue to us right at the beginning that there is something in the Passover account that is designed to represent the beginning of life). Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the inward parts thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.”

It's rather striking – I won't say anything about this in the message because it doesn't pertain to specifically the subject we want to develop in this series of messages – but you'll notice that the Passover lamb was to be eaten in haste. They were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet and their staves in their hand. And the reason for this is that, again, this is the representation of the beginning of life, and it illustrates beginning of the spiritual life, and when we by grace are brought to faith in Jesus Christ it begins our spiritual pilgrimage. We become strangers and sojourners in this world, and

we, too, are the antitype of what he is speaking about. We eat the Passover lamb with loins girded, shoes on our feet, staves in our hand because we are on our way to the city of God. And we are sojourners and strangers here on this earth.

Now the specific instructions of verse 12 and 13 are very important. He says,

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite 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. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

We stop here in our Scripture reading. May the Lord bless this portion from the reading of his word. Bow with me now in a word of prayer.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] This is the first in our series of studies on the Lord's Supper, given not only because I would desire to do that myself, but also at the request of the elders. When one begins the study of the Lord's Supper, the proper place to begin, providing that we are not going to deal with it minutely, is the first Passover account. For it is out of the Last Passover that the first Lord's Supper arose, and there is obviously a relationship between the Passover and the Lord's Supper in a spiritual way.

The Lord Jesus left the church two ordinances to observe until he comes again: Baptism, which emphasizes one's entrance in the church, the body of Christ, and the Lord's Supper, which emphasizes the continuance or life in the body of Christ. An ordinance, incidentally, is a symbolic rite that sets forth primary facts of Christianity, primary facts of the Christian truth that are universally obligatory upon non-believers.

Now, the ordinances are for believers. That is evident when we realize that if we were to observe one of the ordinances being carried out, we should never understand the meaning of them if we were not believers. If we saw, for example, some individuals gathered around a river or a body of water as they gathered in the early days to practice the rite of baptism, and saw one individual immersing other individuals, and others about, we would think that either they were playing a game or just having fun swimming. But if we understand spiritual truth, then we understand what is taking place and realize that in the immersion there is an identification of the individual with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

If we were to enter into a meeting where the Lord's Supper was being observed and saw individuals taking of some of a loaf of bread and drinking some wine, we might surmise that they were having a common meal together, although we also might think they seem to have precious little food to enjoy, but we would not understand the significance of the taking of the bread suggested of the giving of the Lord's body for us, and the wine, which reminds us of the joy which flows out of the shedding of his precious blood. So, ordinances are for believers.

It is true that there is a large religious organization that has added a number of other ordinances to these two basic ordinances. For example, the ordinances of ordination, the ordinance of confirmation, the ordinance of matrimony, the ordinance of extreme unction, and the ordinance of penance. But as far as the general testimony of the Christian church is concerned in its evangelical wing, these ordinances have not been recognized as ordinances.

There are various terms that are used in the New Testament for the Lord's Supper. It is called, for example, the Communion in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Again in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 it is called the Lord's table. It is called in Acts chapter 2, the breaking of bread. And it is called in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, the eucharist, or the giving of thanks. Now, the giving of thanks or the eucharist is not a very common term for the

Lord’s supper in the Protestant wing or even in most of the evangelical churches. But nevertheless, it is a common term in some of the wings of Christianity, and even in some which may be called evangelical. Eucharist is simply an English word derived from the word *eucharistia*, which means “the giving of thanks” in Greek. So, it is the thanksgiving. But usually, in evangelicals, the term, “The Lord’s Supper” is common. Now that’s a very suitable term because he is the host and we are the guests. We’ll say more about the rendering “supper” later on, but the Lord’s Supper is a very useful term, and certainly true to the Scriptures.

The Lord’s Supper the Bible teaches us should be the highlight of the corporate worship of the church. We’re inclined to think that the highlight of the corporate worship of the church is the sermon. But in the New Testament I do not think that really is true. The highlight is the observance of the Lord’s Supper. We read in Acts chapter 20 and verse 7 when Paul and his companions were at Troas – incidentally, they came there and waited seven days for the observance of the Lord’s Supper; it must have been something important to them that they would wait one week in order to participate in it – and there it is said “on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread” – it was the purpose of their coming in that passage is stated to be the breaking of bread. So it was a very important feature of the corporate life of the early church.

In fact, it is the only act of worship for which the Lord gave special direction. One of the reasons may be that it is one of the things that please him which evangelical Christians most often neglect. Some observe the Lord’s Supper every six months, some observe the Lord’s Supper every quarter, some observe the Lord’s Supper once a month. The early church – and the evidence is overwhelming – observed the Lord’s Supper weekly. They observed it every Sunday. They thought it was important and personally of course, I think it is important too. The Lord gave special direction for it. But unfortunately we so often neglect that which we know pleases him, doing things that we

think may be pleasing to him. How much easier it is to do things that he says are pleasing to him.

Sometimes, I confess, I have doubts about the spirituality of people who talk about how spiritual they are and neglect the things that we know are pleasing to the Lord, and which we know any of us can do. It's amazing how many Christians for example neglect to be baptized with water after they have been converted. Because, it is true, many people have confused baptism with salvation. And it's amazing how many people neglect the observance of the Lord's Supper.

The roots of the supper extend back into the Old Testament to its parallel account, the Passover. The Passover, remember, was a memorial of physical deliverance by means of a blood sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of spiritual deliverance by means of a blood sacrifice. Just as Israel was cautioned and commanded to remember the way that God brought them out of Egypt through the blood sacrifice, giving them spiritual deliverance from the Egyptians, in the New Testament we are told to remember how we have been given spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Passover is an anticipation of the future fulfillment of its rite. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel observed the Passover “till he should come.” When he came, the one of whom the lambs spoke, when he came, the Old Testament ritual was done away with. It no longer became a valid ritual. So we, observe the Lord's Supper – we take the bread and we drink the wine, until he comes. And he comes, the reality, then we shall stop observing the Lord's Supper. So each of these rites are anticipations of a fulfillment in the future.

In our day, we sit here on Sunday evening. We take the bread, we take the wine, and we do that until he comes, and we really do it until the kingdom feast in which he comes and will eat the bread and drink wine throughout that kingdom period.

Now we want then to look at the old story of the Passover first. And it's one of the richest expositions of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ found in the word of God. I know some people say, now, well we are coming to an old subject. And it's true, we are coming to an old subject. There's a story about Adoniram Judson, one of the greatest of the American missionaries, which I think is pertinent at this point. Mr. Judson spent thirty years in Burma. He was a missionary who endured a great many hardships and a great many experiences and performed by the grace of God some very dangerous exploits for Jesus Christ.

He returned to the United States of American after 30 years absence. And he was asked to address an assembly in a large provincial town, and people came from everywhere to hear Mr. Judson whose fame had spread over the United States as one of the greatest of the American missionaries. Well when he came into the meeting, many people were present, and when it came time for him to speak, he stood up, and he spoke for about 15 minutes with a great deal of pathos about the Lord Jesus Christ, of how much he had done for us, and also what we owed to him. And then very visibly effected, Mr. Judson sat down. The people were very much disappointed, said a friend to him on the way home. He said, “What did they expect?”

Well, he said, “They wondered that you didn't talk about something else.”

“Why, what did they want?” Mr. Judson said.

“Well,” he said, “They probably wanted you to talk on some of the experiences that you had. They wanted you to tell them a story.”

He said, “Well I presented to the best of my ability the most interesting subject in the whole of the world.”

“But they had heard it before. They wanted something new from a man who had just come from the Antipodes.”

“Well then I'm glad to say that a man coming from the Antipodes,” Mr. Judson said, “Had nothing better to tell them than the wondrous story of the undying love of the

Lord Jesus Christ. Because when I stand up to speak I dare not trifle with my commission, and my commission from the Lord God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“When I looked out upon those people,” Mr. Judson went on to say, “And I reflected upon the fact that I would next meet them around the judgment seat of Christ or at the Great White Throne Judgment, how could I stand up there and furnish food for their vain curiosity, tickle their fancy with amusing stories however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That’s not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. And then how can I hereafter meet the fearful charge, I gave you one opportunity to tell that great mass of people about me, and you spent it in describing your own adventures?” Well, if Adoniram Judson felt that it was the commission from God to preach the gospel, we ought never apologize that we preach the gospel Sunday after Sunday. That is our commission as preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me begin this morning by just commenting on the preceding chapters in Exodus in a most general way, because it is important to realize that the opening chapters in the Book of Exodus, among other things, detail the preparations of the deliverer, who is going to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. There is a great deal of parallel between Moses, his background, his experiences, and his preparation with the Lord Jesus Christ. When Stephen preached, in Acts chapter 7, he draws a very distinct parallel between Moses and the Lord Jesus, commenting on the fact that they were both deliverers. They both came. They both were rejected. But nevertheless, they were the means for the deliverance of God. So when we look at the story of Moses, we’re looking at something that is designed to represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses had the experience of supernatural preservation at the time of his birth. He was born at a time in which it was fatal to be a Jewish child, or an Israelitish child. As you know, his parents exercised faith in the Lord God by hiding him for three months. When it became no longer possible to hide him, the sister and the family, having put him



out in a little ark, took the ark down by the river and placed him in that ark, hoping that someone would come by, think of him as an orphan child and take him home and raise him.

The Scriptures say he was “Fair unto God,” literally, and that may suggest something of a supernatural quality about him – he was a divinely prepared deliverer. There’s an encouraging story of how insignificant Hebrew slaves become significant by the Providence of God. You know the story. Pharaoh’s daughter came down to the river with her helpers. They came upon the ark. Then, as a result of the providence of God, Moses became the property of Pharaoh’s daughter, who in turn committed him to Moses’ mother to raise him for her in a remarkable providential thing. Then as Moses grew up, he grew up in Pharaoh’s house. It was, I say a remarkable thing and God no doubt intended that Moses should be brought up in the house of Pharaoh, in order that he might have the proper preparation for the deliverance of the hundreds of thousands of children of Israel.

Well, Moses traditionally is said to have been a great philosopher, a great statesman, and a great warrior. Now in the New Testament we have that stated in the sermon in Acts chapter 7 when Stephen is speaking, he says, “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds.” Josephus, recording Jewish tradition, says about Moses that that really was true about him, that he really was mighty in words and deeds. In fact, Josephus says, that while he was in his early manhood, the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, they routed the army of the Egyptians and threatened Memphis. In the panic that followed, the Egyptians sought the oracles and the recommendation was that Moses be entrusted with the command of the royal troops. He took the field, and not only surprised and defeated the enemy but actually captured their principal city, the swamp engirdled city of Moreau and returned to Egypt with the spoils of victory.

There isn't anything in Moses' life that would discount that. He was a man who was wise, brought up in the home of Pharaoh, with all of the privileges of that kind of background. He was charged with the tasks of taking over just as the Prince of Wales has been prepared over the past 30 years with becoming the King of England, trained in everything that human beings can train another human being. And in addition, history reveals he was a man mighty in words and deeds. It was the kind of preparation that Moses needed.

But Moses was a man of faith, and so as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, Moses gave up everything because of his desire to be identified with the people of God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, “He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than those treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” He did not argue, as so many evangelicals do, if I am brought up in the home of Pharaoh, I will have great influence with the lost, so I'll stay here and have greater influence than in identifying these outcast children of Israel. But rather, in obedience, he will identify himself with them. His renunciation far greater than Edward VIII's, “For the woman I love.”

Moses was prepared further in the desert. Someone has commented, a Bible teacher I'm sure, that Moses' life may be divided into three period of 40 years each, for he lived to be 120 years of age. In the first 40 years, we learn from his story that God can do nothing with a man who is trying to be somebody. And in the second 40 in which he fled into the desert, we learn God can do nothing with a man who tries to be nobody. But in the last 40 years we learn what God can do with a man who has learned these first two lessons.

So Moses came back. He was commissioned through the theophany in which Yahweh appeared to him in the Burning Bush, gave him his name, I AM THAT I AM, or I AM WHO I AM. It's impossible to give a definition of God in an absolute sense. When

you define God by something in this world, you limit him. So he is I AM THAT I AM. You may give him a relational definition, in the sense that “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God Jacob,” but in the sense that his nature is concerned, he is the absolute God. He is who he is, and there is no other way to speak of him other than as the one who is, I AM WHO I AM. Sovereign God – we learn in the progress of time, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of the people of God by covenant, but the absolute God.

Moses is commissioned. He enters into a contest with Pharaoh, because anytime there is an activity on the part of God to draw the people of God to him, Satan will oppose it. And so, in the land of Egypt, Moses performed thirteen miracles and ten judgments in overcoming the king of Egypt -- illustrative, incidentally, of Satan himself. That is an illustration of the overthrow of the Satanic kingdom. And finally, at the conclusion of the performance of the miracles, the greatest of which is the Passover account itself, the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, “We are all dead men.” And so the children of Israel came and asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment, and the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they gave unto them such things as they required. And the text says, “And the Lord despoiled the Egyptians.” That’s an illustration of the work of Jesus Christ in the overthrow of Satan in the work of the cross, when he overthrew principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, made a triumph over them in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Now the ceremony of the Lord’s deliverance is the Passover account. It is in this Passover account that we have illustrated the word of the Lord Jesus. It is a beautiful picture of the lamb of God, and if we have any doubt about it, let’s listen to Paul. He said, “Our Passover has been sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.” Our Passover *has been sacrificed for us*.

It's remarkable, isn't it? You read the Bible and some people wonder, what is the significance of this? I have a friend who is now with the Lord in heaven, whom I led to the Lord many years ago. He's a younger man than I. He was a member of a church here in this city, and by heresy he came to the knowledge of Christ. He was sitting in a church here in this city, a large church. He said he was leaning back against the back of the room in the adult Sunday School class and they had a teacher come from one of the local theological seminaries who said, "We don't believe in the virgin birth anymore." And he said he was leaning back, sleeping like this, when that came to me, we don't believe any more in the virgin birth, my chair rocked forward and I said, "What?" to myself, "We don't believe in that anymore?" And that started him out on the search, which led him to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, he was a man who shared his faith with others, and he told me not too long after that how he had had a conversation with a Jewish girl here in the city of Dallas in which she made the statement, "I'm sure Passover refers to going through the Red Sea." Well, I'm sure it's a related event, but the Passover does not refer to going through the Red Sea, which only illustrates that it is possible for people who we think ought to know the Scriptures who do not. And that of course is true of the Protestants as well.

A person next door to us some years ago found the Lord as Savior, and she had been a member of the First Baptist Church some years ago when she was a child in this city. But she was converted, just as I, as we said previously, was converted after 25 years in the Presbyterian church. Well, she started going to Bible class, and the day that the Passover account was expounded in the Bible class, she rushed over to our house, and we had to listen to her for about an hour as she explained to us how the Passover account was typical of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. She said, "Had you ever heard such a thing as that?"

Well I had heard since shortly after I was converted, but that's the way we are. We frequently have heard things – no doubt she had heard that before – heard things, but

we never really hear it until finally the Holy Spirit illumines our mind and we see the truth that has been there all along.

Well this is a magnificent illustration of the saving work of Christ, and of course we don't have time to talk of all of the details of it. Our purpose is ultimately to expound the Lord's Supper. But let me just point out a few things.

God gave Moses instructions concerning the Passover account, and he told them they were to take a lamb. Now, he says they were to take a lamb without blemish. That is important because, of course, the lamb is illustrative of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter says in the first chapter of his epistle that we were redeemed, not with flesh and blood, not with gold, silver and precious stones, but we were redeemed with a lamb, as without spot and without blemish. In other words, our lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a lamb without blemish. He uses the expression that is found here of this lamb. He is trying to show that our lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, is illustrated by this lamb which was without blemish. It is designed to anticipate the truth of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the first thing: the lamb is to be without blemish, for he represents the sinless Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, Moses says, giving the instructions of God, “Ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month.” Chosen on the tenth day, kept until the fourteenth day, evidently to be sure that it was a lamb without blemish. The Lord Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, lived here for approximately 33 years in order that it might be demonstrated that he was truly able to be our sacrifice, able to be our great high priest. He was sinless. Approved by God, he was, at the end of the silent years, the baptism of the Lord Jesus, he said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” That puts the sign of approval over the thirty years of his life previously. When he labored among men, even his enemies said he was without spot. Judas said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.” Pilate said, “I find no fault in this man at all.” The dying thief on the cross said, “He hath done nothing amiss. We're condemned justly, but he is a sinless

individual.” Even the demons acknowledged his sinlessness. They said, “I know Thee who Thou art – the Holy One of God.” So, for thirty-three years he demonstrated his sinlessness.

The third thing that is stated here about the lamb is that it should be killed. We read, “And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” Now, to kill it has obviously only to do with the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the life that he lived but the death that he died that saves us. It is not his great teaching that saves us; it is the death that he died. It is not the fact that he was the greatest instructor in ethics the world has ever seen. It is not that the Christian system is the greatest system of ethics. It is the blood that saves.

And so, the lamb should be slain. He announced that he was going to Jerusalem to be crucified. And he would be, and he would rise again on the third day. [I] always remember a story about Pastor D.M. Stearns. If you go down to Dallas Theological Seminary, there’s a building on campus called Stearns Hall. That building is named for Pastor D.M. Stearns, an Episcopalian minister of the city of Philadelphia. Pastor Stearns was preaching in Germantown, Pennsylvania many years ago, and at the conclusion of his message, someone came up to him and said, “I don’t like your preaching. I don’t care for the cross. I think that instead of preaching on the death of the cross, it would be far better to preach Jesus the teacher and the example.”

And Mr. Stearns said to him, “Would you be willing to follow him if I preached Christ the example?”

And he said, “Well, yes, I would. I’d be willing to follow in his steps.”

Mr. Stearns said, “You know it’s interesting. You’ve hit on the words of Scripture. Peter said, ‘We should follow in his steps.’ But did you notice the first step?” And the man said no, as you might expect. And he said, “Well, the very next words say, ‘He who did no sin.’ Would you like to follow, and take the first step of he who did no sin?”

He said, “No, I can’t take that first step. I do sin, and I acknowledge it.”

Then Mr. Stearns said, “Your first need of Christ is not as an example, but as a Savior.” So, the lamb was to be slain. Christ is to be crucified. There is no salvation apart from that.

Now in this context we read that God said, “On tonight, I’m going to pass through the land of Egypt and I’m going to smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.” Notice the words “pass through” in verse 12. Now that was his coming through in judgment. That was judgment on all. In fact, there was death in every house, not only death in the houses of the Egyptians, but death also in the houses of the Israelites. In the case of Egyptians who did not have the blood on the two sideposts nor on the lintel above, it meant the death of the firstborn, for the angel entered the house and slew the firstborn. As they said later, we be all dead men. In the case of the Israelites, there was death on the doorpost. The blood of the slain lamb, sprinkled on the side of the door and above it. So, death on every house, judgment everywhere. Some were delivered by the judgment upon the lamb; others were lost because they refused and discounted the deliverance upon the lamb. Death upon all for the simple reason that all are sinners; every one of us shall die.

Everyone of us shall die spiritually. Everyone of us shall die spiritually if we refuse the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have received the Lord Christ, we have died spiritually in the death of our substitute, who took our spiritual death for us. In other words, he was our representative. Our judgment has been meted out upon him, and there is no basis any longer upon which heaven may judge us. Who are represented by our representative and are brought by the grace of God to faith in him. Death upon every individual because all have sinned, either our personal death or our death in our substitute. Thank God for the substitute and the representative. So I will pass through Egypt.

But he says in the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, “And the blood shall be for you a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you.” I am going to pass through the land, but when I see the blood I will pass over you. Now that is of course a

reference of course to the safety the children of Israel will have if they put the blood upon the doorpost.

That verb has sometimes been thought to suggest the idea of omission. That is, he would pass over them in this sense, that when the destroying angel would come down he would hop over that house and into the house where there was no blood and enter that house and destroy the firstborn. But that's not the meaning of the expression, “pass over.” In fact, the verb, *pacach*, which is the verb used here, among the Hebrews it is the *Pecach*, the Passover – that is a verb that means “to hover over.” It is the verb that has the idea of protection, not omission. It's used for example by Elijah, when on Mt. Carmel, gathering together the prophets of ba'al and the prophets of the groves and the children of Israel, he says, “How long Israel hold ye two opinions?” In other words, they were hovering in this place not making a decision, for the Lord God or for ba'al. It's also used in the Book of Isaiah of a bird hovering over the nest.

The other day, I looked out of my front door and there was a little squirrel. We carry on a running battle on Ash Ridge. In case you want to come by – if you have nothing better to do – and observe it, it is going on every day. I have my slingshot. Incidentally there is a fresh crop of acorns which I use. I have also hit one, too. When I come out, they usually run. But this one was very nervy. It was a mother. I looked out of the door, and a little hole had been gnawed in the roof, and just as I looked out, the squirrel – I was sitting in my study and I heard this little scratching noise. I looked out and here was the squirrel with the baby in her mouth, coming out of the hole.

Well, I turned back. I usually have my slingshot handy – be sure and knock on the door if you come to visit me [laughter] and I got my slingshot out and fired. And of course they were gone. I fixed up the hole. The next day, incidentally, I looked out and there was the cat with a little one in her mouth, and evidently, too bad for the little one, I fired at the cat, too...I have the same regard [laughter] for cats that I have for squirrels. And the cat dropped the dead infant and rushed off to the neighbors.



But anyway, the idea of protection is found in this – the idea of a mother bird hovering over her nest. So that what God is saying is that when I see the blood I will hover over you and when the destroying angel comes, I will protect you from the destroying angel. That’s why Peter says in his first epistle, in the first chapter, that we are kept by the power of God through faith. Let me read that verse, for Peter, it seems to me, clearly has in mind this Passover account which he speaks about in the second chapter – “Who are kept by God through faith unto to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” So the power of God, Moses is told, will hover over the houses which have the blood and the destroying angel cannot come in and destroy the firstborn because they will be kept by the power of God. The blood on the doorpost guarantees that the power of God will protect them.

Now we learn some interesting spiritual truths from this. We learn that safety is dependent upon the blood. There are people who say that well, if I could just have a good concept of my sins, I could trust in Christ. But it is not our concept of sin that saves us; it is the blood that was shed. There are others who say that I don’t feel that I really value the blood of Christ as I ought, and therefore I am afraid to believe. Why my dear friend, it is not the efficacy of your faith that saves, it is the efficacy of the blood that saves. Faith saves as an instrument. But, there is weak faith, little faith, war faith, great faith – but faith saves. It’s not the efficacy or the greatness of our faith that saves, it’s the fact of faith – it’s Christ who really saves.

Or some say, if I just had a certain kind of experience, like the holy hunch bunch recommends, then I might be willing to trust in Christ. No, no, the blood saves. It’s the death of Christ that saves. Or some, if I just had some graces to go along with it – no, it’s the blood of Christ that saves.

If you’ll pardon me, I’d like to tell a story. There is a story that Dr. Ironside used to tell about a train wreck. A certain train with a lot of people on it was on a siding. And it had what was known as a hot box. The Limited was due soon, and the engineer knew

that, and he sent one of the men back to signal to the Limited when it came along that there was a train along the track above that was unable to go.

So he got his flag and he went back a lengthy way, and when the Limited came along, he waved his flag at it. But the Limited did not stop, plowed into the back and quite a few people were lost. Well, when the time came for the trial, they asked the engineer of the Limited who had managed to save his life by diving out of the train what he had done, what flag did you wave? Well he had simply that he saw the flag, and he had slowed down, but because it was a yellow flag, he went on.

They turned to the flag man and asked him which flag did you wave? He said, “I waved a red flag.” Are you absolutely sure it was red? He said, Absolutely. Well one insisted it was a yellow flag, the other insisted it was a red flag, and nothing would satisfy but the producing of the flag. And so they produced the flag and immediately discovered what the problem was. It had been a red flag, but by virtue of exposure to the elements and the sun, the red flag had become yellow. And of course, the engineer of the Limited just slowed down because it was a flag of caution.

Dr. Ironside used to say, “Oh the lives eternally wrecked because of the yellow gospels of the day; bloodless theories of unregenerate men in which the cross of Christ is not made preeminent in the preaching.”

One thing you can be sure of is that safety resides in the blood of Christ shed on Calvary’s cross for our sins. And the person whose faith has brought him to the place where he has taken the blood of that sacrifice and put it on the side posts and the upper door post of his heart, that person is safe by the blood of Christ. He is safe as an apostle or as a prophet if the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is his ground of hope. That particular sacrifice is the sacrifice that can cast out seven demons of Mary Magdalene. It can cure the madness of the Demoniac. It can cure the leprosy of the lepers. It can also cure the maiming of the wounded. It is also able to give us the forgiveness of sins.

Certainty of our salvation depends on the word of God. It is possible for an individual in the house in Egypt to have the blood of the doorposts and not be sure of their salvation. But God said, when I see the blood, I will pass over. Safety comes from the blood. Certainty of salvation or assurance of salvation comes from confidence in the word of God. One person in the house may be very much in doubt, having put the blood on the doorpost. Another may be very confident. One believes the word of God, the other one doubts the word of God. It is the blood however that saves. So, the happy Christian is the one who has put the blood on the doorpost of his heart, who believes God does not tell lies and has rested in it, and therefore enjoys the certainty and assurance of his salvation which rests upon the blood of Christ.

The duty of the children of Israel was very simple: strike the lintel with the blood. Nothing else can save. We believe the good news, we apply the blood. Someone has said, “It wasn’t the lamb that saved, it wasn’t the shed blood that saved, it was the shed blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorpost that saved.” The fact that there is a Lamb of God does not save anyone. Some people do not even know there is a lamb of God. And in fact, it does not save to know that the Lamb of God was crucified. Many people know that the Lamb of God was crucified who have not trusted in that lamb. So it is the Lamb of God crucified, received through faith that brings salvation to us.

I wish it were possible for me to go on. It’s not. In fact, if I could preach forever on this topic, I’d never exhaust it. It’s too big a topic for me. And so, we must stop with these simple little comments on one of the great events of human history. May God help you to see that there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day, and there may you, though vile as he, wash all your sins away.

May God give you grace to recognize there is a Lamb of God. There is a Lamb of God who has been slain, and may God give you grace to apply the blood to the

doorposts and lintel of your heart in faith. Why don't you just say, if you're lost, I thank you Lord that Jesus Christ has died. I recognize that salvation rests only in him. It surely does not rest in me, for I'm a sinner. And I do receive him as my personal Savior this moment. I by the grace of God rely only upon him for my eternal destiny. May God help you to come to that simple decision. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] We thank Thee Lord for this great, wonderful chapter in the word of God which we could never expound in its fullness. We thank Thee for the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world, slain in time, whose blood has eternal efficacy. We rely upon him in the shedding of his blood for our salvation. And O God, if there are some here who have never believed in Christ, O give them no rest nor peace until they rest in the Lamb of God, slain. Go with us as we part.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.