

## “THE TYPOLOGY OF THE BIBLE” SERIES

### #5: “The Passover Lamb as a Type of Christ”

SCRIPTURE: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:1-50

INTRO:

The apostle Paul says in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:7 that *“Our Passover lamb is Christ.”*

In Exodus 12, Moses tells us all about the “Passover lamb.” I suggest you keep your Bibles or your electronic Bible devices open to this chapter as we consider how an event in the history of Israel involving a lamb relates to Christ and our relationship to Him. This is a major key in understanding the Christian belief system.

Let me set the scene. The Israelites, who came to Egypt at the invitation of Joseph during a time of famine in the land, became slaves to the Egyptians. God sent Moses to rescue them, but Pharaoh became stubborn and would not allow them to go. To persuade him, God sent ten plagues or calamities upon the Egyptians. The tenth one consisted of an “angel of death” who would pass over the land, killing the first-born in every family, except in the homes where the blood of a sacrificial lamb or goat had been smeared on the door frame. As Pharaoh’s own son was one of the victims, he relented and told Moses to take his people and go.

Exodus 12 contains the instructions concerning the sacrificial lamb and the description of the night the angel of death passed over the land.

First of all,

***THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB OR GOAT HAD TO BE WITHOUT BLEMISH.***

Look at Exodus 12:5, where Moses told the Israelites: *“Choose either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a one-year-old male that has nothing wrong with it. And it must be large enough for everyone to have some of the meat.”*

Now consider the New Testament, where the apostle Peter says in his first letter, chapter 1, verse 19: *“You were rescued by the precious blood of Christ, that spotless and innocent lamb.”*

Second,

***THE BLOOD OF THAT LAMB OR GOAT, WHEN APPLIED, SAVED GOD’S PEOPLE.***

In Exodus 12:13, Moses told the people what God said: *“The blood on the houses will show me where you live, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Then you won’t be bothered by the terrible disasters I will bring to Egypt.”*

Again, in the New Testament we have the words of the apostle Peter: *“You were rescued from the useless way of life that you learned from your ancestors. But you know that you were not rescued by such things as silver or gold that don’t last forever. You were rescued by the precious blood of Christ...”* (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Third,

***NOT A BONE OF THE PASSOVER ANIMAL WAS TO BE BROKEN.***

Moses told the Israelites in Exodus 12:46: *“No bones of the Passover lamb may be broken.”*

In the New Testament, the apostle John wrote in his account of the crucifixion of Christ: *“The next day would be both a Sabbath and the Passover. It was a special day for the Jewish people, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses during that day. So they asked Pilate to break the men’s legs and take their bodies down. The soldiers first broke the legs of the other two men who were nailed there. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, and they did not break his legs.”*

This breaking of the legs was to hasten death by suffocation. With their legs broken, those being executed could not support themselves and continue breathing. There was no need to break the legs of Jesus; He was already dead.

Fourth,

***THE PASSOVER LAMB WAS CHOSEN FOUR DAYS IN ADVANCE OF ITS SACRIFICE.***

In Exodus 12:3 and 6, Moses recorded that God’s instructions to the people of Israel were that *“on the tenth day of this month the head of each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for his family to eat. . . Each family must take care of the animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, when the animals are to be killed.”*

In other words, the lamb or goat was selected four days before it was sacrificed.

On Sunday, March 20, Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly, hailed as “the king of the Jews.” On Monday, March 21, the religious leaders decided that He must be condemned and executed. On Friday, March 25, just four days later, He was nailed to a cross at noon and died at three in the evening.

Fifth,

**THE PASSOVER LAMB WAS TO BE EATEN BY THOSE WHO WERE SAVED BY ITS BLOOD.**

God instructed in Exodus 12:7-8: *“Some of the blood must be put on the two doorposts and above the door of each house where the animals are to be eaten. That night (the night of the visitation of the death angel) the animals are to be roasted and eaten, together with bitter herbs and the bread made without yeast.”*

In each house where there was no blood around the door, a first-born died, but those in houses with blood around the door were spared.

The New Testament, in Matthew 26:26, tells us that while the disciples were eating the Passover meal, *“Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, ‘Take this and eat it. This is my body.’”*

John, in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of his gospel, records these words of Jesus: *“I am the bread that gives life! ...I am that bread from heaven! Everyone who eats it will live forever. My flesh is the life-giving bread that I give to the people of this world. I tell you for certain that you won’t live unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man. But if you do eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will have eternal life, and I will raise you to life on the last day”* (vv. 48-51, 53-54).

The Israelites in Egypt literally ate the Passover lamb. We Christians in this sinful world partake of the body of Christ symbolically in the Lord’s Supper as we look forward to being raised to eternal life with Him.

Sixth,

**THE PASSOVER LAMB WAS TO BE EATEN WITH UNLEAVENED BREAD.**

Again, we look at God’s instructions for the Israelites in Egypt from Exodus 12:8: *“That night (the night of the visitation of the death angel) the animals are to be roasted and eaten, together with bitter herbs and the bread made without yeast.”*

Why “unleavened bread”? You may recall that this final meal for the Israelites in Egypt was a meal made speedily, specifically because the Israelites were to leave Egypt immediately once the Pharaoh relinquished his hold on them. Roasting the meat was an efficient way to deal with the fat, the bitter herbs were symbolic of the bitterness of their captivity, and the unleavened bread symbolized the haste in which the flight from Egypt was to take place (in that there was to be no time taken to allow the bread to rise).

The New Testament anti-type shows up at when Jesus and His disciples met in the upper room to observe the Passover by eating the Passover meal. The bread for that meal was “flat bread,” or “unleavened bread” symbolizing the hasty flight of the Israelites from Egypt.

Paul comments on our observance of Communion in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:6-8: *“Stop being proud! Don’t you know how a little yeast can spread through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast! Then you will be like fresh bread made without yeast, and that is what you are. Our Passover Lamb is Christ, who has already been sacrificed. So, don’t celebrate the festival by being evil and sinful, which is like serving bread made with yeast. Be pure and truthful and celebrate by using bread made without yeast.”*

As the anti-type to the Passover meal, Communion calls for unleavened bread. To use bread with yeast in it is to distort its symbolism. The question of fermented wine as opposed to unfermented is incidental. The question of leavened or unleavened bread is fundamental.

Seventh,

***THE PASSOVER LAMB WAS ROASTED ON A WOODEN SPIT.***

Again, God instructed in Exodus 12:9: *“Don’t eat the meat raw or boiled. The entire animal, including its head, legs, and insides, must be roasted.”*

You’ve all seen movies depicting a steer, pig, lamb, rabbit, or some other animal being roasted over a fire. Well, that’s pretty much the way it was done, either openly or in some kind of oven. The animal carcass would be skewered and hung over a fire.

The New Testament anti-type of the Passover lamb being roasted on a wooden spit is Christ hanging on a wooden cross exposed to the Judean sun during the hottest part of the day.

Finally,

***THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICIAL PASSOVER LAMB ENABLED GOD TO “PASS OVER” THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.***

In Exodus 12:13, God said, *“The blood on the houses will show me where you live, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Then you won’t be bothered by the terrible disasters I will bring on Egypt.”*

Just as the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb on the door jambs, you and I are saved by the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God!

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:7, Paul says, *“Our Passover Lamb is Christ, who has already been sacrificed.”* Just as the blood that was smeared around the doors to the Israelites’ houses saved them from the death angel, the blood of Christ symbolically smeared around the door to our hearts saves us from God’s judgment of sin. We’re covered by the blood of Christ; God

doesn't see our sin. We get to escape this sinful world and become eternal residents of the eternal Canaan!

#### CONCLUSION:

When John the Baptist stepped forward in John 1:29 and introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God, he did so as the final Old Testament prophet, the son of a priest, and as the chosen forerunner of Christ. He identified Jesus as the Passover Lamb of God. How powerful, complete and transforming is that truth. Think of the dramatic sequence God had planned just on the day of Christ's crucifixion. The day Christ died on the Cross – for our sins – was the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Abib, A.D. 33.

At the third hour (9:00 a.m.), Israel's high priest tied the Passover lamb to the altar for sacrifice. At that exact moment outside the city walls of Jerusalem, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was nailed to the cross. For six hours both the Passover lamb and Jesus the Lamb of God, awaited death. Finally, at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), the high priest ascended the altar in the temple and sacrificed the Passover lamb. At that exact moment from the cross, Christ's words thundered out over the city of Jerusalem, "It is finished!"

On a hill of Mount Moriah called Calvary, God the Father allowed the total sin of the world to fall upon Jesus, and, barely able to lift His blood-spattered face toward heaven, He shouted in triumph, "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30) and died.