

For 400 years, God’s people experienced the harsh reality of slavery in Egypt. The people kept praying and praying for deliverance. Finally, the Lord called and commissioned a Jew who was raised in Pharaoh’s house to be that deliverer. Moses would return to Egypt and personally carry God’s demand: **"Let my people go!"** to Pharaoh. Pharaoh disregarded God’s request. He wasn’t about to let his slave-labor leave.

God’s response to Pharaoh’s refusal, was a series of 10 judgments on Pharaoh’s people and his land. These plagues would not only have Pharaoh begging God’s people to leave, but the Egyptians would give them the gold off their necks and wrists and the clothes of their backs as parting gifts. The tenth and final plague would involve the killing of every firstborn son in every home in Egypt. There was a way in which God would pass over those inside the home and spare their lives.

They would have to faithfully follow his specific instructions. Here, again, are the rather unusual details in today’s lesson. (v.1,2) **The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt: “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.”** This event must be super important. It would mark the beginning of their calendar, the first month of the year. From this time forward, the Passover celebration would be an annual reminder of God’s amazing deliverance in Egypt. This would be for Israel, what the July 4th is for us.

**(v.3,4) Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.** God now introduces his people to the center piece of their OT worship. On the 10th day of this first month, they were to bring a lamb home. Each family would have its own unless they were too small, then they would share one with

their neighbor. This made sure that neighbors were looking out for neighbors.

**(v.5) The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect.** A special lamb was required for a special God. A one-year old male must pass inspection - no sores, scars, broken bones, infections or diseases. The best was expected and commanded, because that’s what the God who is orchestrating this deliverance deserves.

**(v.6) Take care of them until the 14th day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.** They weren’t to immediately sacrifice the animal. Since there weren’t any backyard pens, the lambs stayed with the family and become part of the family. The children would get attached to it, maybe even treat it like a pet. The sight, sound and smell of that live animal would be a constant reminder to the family of the lamb’s presence. Just before dark on that 14th day, every Israelite house and family was to take the lamb they had been taking care of for the past 4 days and slit its throat.

**(v.7-11) Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. .... This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.**

Because this was the “Lord’s” Passover, the Lord explained what he wanted done with that lamb and the instructions for a meal they would eat on this special day for years to come. Drain the blood and brush it on the doorframes. This is the fundamental principle upon which every OT sacrifice rested – life is in the blood, and blood was the payment for sin, the compensation God required.

Their “To Go” menu included roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The bitter herbs would remind them of their 400 bitter years of slavery. The unleavened bread was necessary because they couldn’t wait for the dough to rise. For over 1500 years, this meal would define them. On this night of deliverance, they needed to be ready to leave their life of slavery quickly.

Moses and Aaron had a huge task, major responsibility. The fate of every Israelite rested on their shoulders. The Lord gave the details of his plan to them: Picking the lamb, preparing the meal, but it was the blood brushed on the doorposts that would bring deliverance, instead of death: **(v.12) 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.**

At the stroke of midnight the wailing must have been unbearable as all the firstborn sons in Egypt died. We usually think it was the young who were affected by this plague. But, if you were the firstborn of your mother and you were 80 years-old, you would have been struck dead. There was not a house in Egypt without someone dead in it. Only the blood of that sacrificed lamb allowed any first-born male to escape death.

If you think about it, there was death in every home in Egypt. The angel of death struck down the firstborn males in every Egyptian home because they were guilty of sin. There was also death inside every Israelite home. They struck down the innocent male lambs to spread its blood on their doorposts.

We’ve walked through God’s carefully laid out plan for the Passover. This annual meal pointed to their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, but it would point them to a deliverance from an even greater slavery – from sin. And just so that we’re clear how this whole thing points to our Passover Lamb Jesus and his sacrifice for sins on the cross – let’s identify 4 connections.

1 - The Passover lamb had to be male. John the Baptist identified Jesus, Mary’s son, as *“the Lamb of God.”*

2 - The Passover lamb had to be flawless. The very best was required, no bruises or broken bones. That’s exactly what God the Father supplied in his Son, our Savior. Peter reports: **“We were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”** Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, knew crime and criminals. He couldn’t find any fault with him either.

3 - The Passover lamb was to be slaughtered as a sacrifice. When John the Baptist identified the Lamb, he also identified the Lamb’s purpose, **“who takes away the sin of the world.”** And Paul clues us in on how he would achieve his goal, **“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”**

4 – The blood of the Passover lamb was brushed on the doorframes. Israel was kept safe and secure inside the house, as God promised: **“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”** This points directly to the central teaching of the Bible. The blood of God’s Lamb brushed on the cross allows death and sin to pass right on by us and keep us safe and secure.

The entire ministry of Jesus from his baptism, to his sacrifice on the cross was intended to identify him as the Lamb of God. In that Upper Room, as Jesus celebrates the Passover with his disciples one final time, he instituted a new meal.

As a Christian, we may not have experienced the lamb of the OT Passover meal, but we have the new meal that is far better. For instead of waiting once a year to relive, recall and remember, each time you eat and drink at the Lord’s Table, you receive the true body and blood of God’s Lamb along with the bread and wine as a guarantee of your forgiveness. From lamb to Lamb God delivers and his people.