

The unfolding of your words gives light.

Destroyer or Deliverer?

Exodus 12:21-32

Introduction

Let me use a personal story to illustrate the gravity of our inability. In February of 1994 I took my son, Steven, to the doctor to have some warts removed from his feet. Afterwards I felt sorry for the poor, limping child and wanted to be nice. He asked me if we could drive on the lake with our van before we went home. I wanted to display my off-road skills and my front-wheel-drive Dodge's capable handling of snow and ice, so I decided to indulge the kid. We were nowhere near the road that ice fishermen plow across Rice Lake each winter, so I picked the next best thing: a snowmobile trail.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you. And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped.

Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also." (Exodus 12:21-32)

Exodus 12 begins with The Lord's instructions to Moses regarding the Passover. Our text details the carrying out of those commands. The first order on the agenda was the choosing of lambs. Each family was to pick a yearling lamb without blemish. They kept the lamb with them for four days and then killed it. They drained the animal's blood into a basin and spread that blood above and on the sides of the door to their houses. They were to eat the meat as families. God told them not to leave their houses until morning, because on the outside the "destroyer" was "smiting" the Egyptians.

The Inside

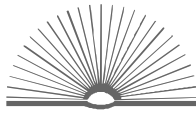
It is noteworthy here that God's instructions for the nation as a whole were to be carried out by family units. Fathers acted as priests and led their homes in worship. The fathers were in submission to the elders of Israel, but that did not eliminate their responsibility to instruct their families.

The instruction in the home centered around a family meal. They ate in a prescribed way the lamb they had chosen and kept for the previous four days. The ritual meal was not for getting favor from God but was for instruction. It was to be a perpetual reminder of the deliverance given to those "on the inside."

The Door

The only thing that separated the people on the inside from the judgment on the outside was blood. Blood? Isn't that terribly simplistic?

A message by Steven L. Svendsen, Sr.
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In order to appreciate the truth that this is not at all simplistic you need to look two directions. The first is a backward look to the events described in Genesis 6. The Bible word for the pitch Noah used to cover the ark is the same word used elsewhere for the blood atonement or covering for sin.

The other direction you look from this event took place nearly 1500 years later. The Lord Jesus was called “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Paul said of his death on the cross (1 Corinthians 5:7): “Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”

The protection of those on the inside is not provided because of the chemical makeup of the substance between them and the judgment. The protection is provided by the presence of God. He is pictured as the one who “hovered” over the door (see the same word used in 2 Samuel 4:4, 1 Kings 18:21, 26 and Isaiah 31:5).

Outside the ark, the covenant home in Egypt and the Church for which Christ died there is nothing but judgment.

How knowing you are on the inside changes you:

1. It comforts you. It is more than a wall that stands between you and destruction. God made the one who had no sin to be sin for you, so that in him you might become the righteousness of God. The Lamb was not your example or your helper. He was your substitute.
2. It motivates you. Just as the people of Israel bowed down in worship, you should leave after hearing a text like this with more than a good feeling. You are doomed eternally apart from this rescue. Security in Christ leads to delight and service, not laziness.
3. It humbles you. You need only listen to the cries of the Egyptians to realize that it is only grace that keeps you from such an end. Insiders are not like the three little pigs singing, “Who’s afraid of the big, bad wolf?” Insiders say, “Nothing in my hand I bring, only to thy cross I cling.”

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