

September 10th, 2023

# Passover: Grace Not Race

Exodus 12:43-51

## The Divine order of Scripture

Last week we saw that God delivered Israel out of Egypt with a strong hand just as He promised. 430 years later, to the very day, as He swore to Abraham (Genesis 15:13-14). What's fascinating is the order in which God inspired Scripture to be written down. Because now we find God speaking about the regulations of Passover again. The question arises: why didn't He just place this section back with the other Passover regulations in v.1-28? Why place these here? The answer is that God of the covenant wants to put His saving grace on display.

## 'Rules for thee and not for me'

The new nation of Israel was to be entirely different than Egypt. The laws of pagan nations are capricious and arbitrary. Certainly you've heard the phrase *'rules for thee and not for me.'* Because Egypt worshipped so many so-called gods, there wasn't one standard of law—no equality of law. The Hebrews didn't have the same protection of law as did Egyptian citizens, much less Pharaoh. But right at this point—as the nation of Israel is being born—God institutes an entirely different paradigm. Look at v. 49 “There shall be one law [one תּוֹרָה *tôrâ*] for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.” This was a radical break with the polytheistic paganism of Egypt which did not have a law

which was universally binding on all men.<sup>1</sup> For the first time in the fallen world, God gives birth to a nation that has “liberty and justice for all.”

### **Circumcision and Passover**

Though this law applies generally, here it applies specifically to Passover. This is the first place in Scripture where the two sacraments of the OT: *circumcision and Passover* are linked together. Who could participate in Passover? Who had a right to that meal with God and His people that celebrated their redemption? Did you have to be an ethnic Jew? Was race the determining factor? No. In order to celebrate redemption, one had to come to the Lord by faith alone, publicly expressed in circumcision. As Philip Ryken says here:

“These regulations show that *God has always offered salvation to everyone*. No one has ever been excluded from coming to God simply on the basis of race. Even in the Old Testament, God provided a way for outsiders to come into his family and receive his saving grace. *The way to come was by faith in the God of Israel, and circumcision was the public way of trusting in his promise of salvation.*”<sup>2</sup>

And that is precisely what the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper demonstrate today.

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<sup>1</sup> Paganism can never offer the perfect law of liberty to humanity because it doesn’t recognize the one true and Living God. Arbitrary rule, capricious rule, tyrannical rule is the only kind of rule paganism can offer. But Yahweh at the birth of this new nation commanded “justice for all, grace to all.” And this was a witness to the entire ancient world. God says in Deuteronomy 4:8 that the nations would see this and say “...what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today.”

<sup>2</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Preaching the Word: Exodus, Saved for God’s Glory*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2015), pg. 330

## *The Big Idea...*

The sacraments show that salvation is always by God's grace and never because of our race *or any other consideration*

Not by the works of the law, not by our morality, or bloodlines, or the color of our skin, or the will of the flesh—every human work and circumstance is excluded. The *vital thing* is the grace of the Living God. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

★ Our Doctrine

★ Our Duty

★ Our Delight

### **I. Our Doctrine**

#### **The mixed multitude**

The transition between the last section and this section is v.42. There the LORD required that this night--Passover--be “...kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.” The bulk of instructions ‘how to keep Passover’ were given in v.1-28. But remember when the Hebrews left Egypt, v.38 says “A mixed multitude also went up with them...” These verses exist, to show us who can participate in the Passover.

## No foreigner or hired worker allowed

Let's look at v.42 "And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron..." Commentators think that God spoke these words at Succoth, their first destination after leaving (v.37).<sup>3</sup> Yahweh said "This is the statute [*the requirement*] of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it."<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word for foreigner "signifies [any] non-Israelite who temporarily dwells with the people of God."<sup>5</sup> Foreigners were *excluded* from Passover. This is repeated and expanded upon in v.45 "No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it." A hired worker in our context would be a migrant worker who is temporally here solely because of work. A hired worker as one commentator said "stood in a purely external relation,

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<sup>3</sup> "Such instructions were needed when the Israelites were joined by the "mixed multitude:" of strangers; and they were probably given at Succoth, on the morning following the departure from Rameses." Barnes' Notes on the Bible <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/12-43.htm> This is another good reason why these regulations were placed here, because they weren't given at the same time as the previous instructions.

<sup>4</sup> The first thing to see is that God always regulates how He is to be worshipped. There are two opposing views in the church today: 1) the normative principle of worship and 2) the regulative principle of worship. The normative principle of worship states that whatever is not expressive forbidden in Scripture can be used in corporate worship. The Reformed reject this. Our worship service would look like a circus if human imagination was the only restraint. We could have elaborate dramas, painting during the sermon, one church reported opening up their service with the theme song from *Cheers* [Source: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-freedom-of-the-regulative-principle/> Accessed September 9, 2023] One real problem with this approach is that worship is meant to bind our consciences. As Kevin DeYoung puts it: "We don't want to ask our church members to do anything that would violate their consciences" [*ibid*]. If worship services are left to the human imagination, then elders are calling their congregations to worship in ways that go beyond what Scripture says. The Biblical approach is the regulative principle of worship. WCF 21.1 defines it this way: "the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself and so limited by his own revealed will." In other words, we can only worship God in the way that Scripture expressly tells us to. The Scripture is filled with tragedy after tragedy when Israel tried to worship God according to their own imagination. Nadab and Abihu were burned up when they offered strange fire (Leviticus 10:1-2). Uzzah lost his life when he touched the ark (2 Samuel 6:5-7) [Someone might object: 'but these examples also violate the Normative Principle, and so they are invalid since both principles reject these practices.' True to be sure. But the difference between the two principles is God's express will (Regulative) vs. man's will (Normative). What these examples demonstrate is that, though these practices were forbidden, what was dominant in both is man's will usurping God's will. It's never safe or right to ask: "How do I want to do worship?" The question should always be "How does God want us to worship?"]. The question we should always ask is this: "How does God want us to worship Him?" Now what does the regulative principle have to do with v.42? Everything. God is telling Israel that Passover can only be practiced in this particular way. Any deviation is disobedience. And any deviation will ultimately lie about the gospel.

<sup>5</sup> John D. Currid, *Exodus Vol. 1: Chapters 1-18*, (Auburn, MA.,: Evangelical Press, 2000), pg. 264

which might be any day dissolved.”<sup>6</sup> God says that along with foreigners, hired workers were to be *excluded* from the Passover. Now in our radical egalitarian culture, *exclusion* is a bad word. More than that, exclusion is a heresy in America. The only people you can safely exclude are Christians. But everyone else must unquestionably be included and affirmed. ‘That’s why you Christians are mean, because you exclude others who don’t fit to your standards.’ But on the contrary, this particular exclusion is the most loving thing God could have done for these people. This exclusion says “You are not right with God. You are still in your sins.” You see the principle of exclusion didn’t rest on ethnicity. They weren’t excluded because they were outside of the genetic line of Abraham. They were excluded because they had not yet come to God in saving faith. How do we know? Let’s keep reading.

### **Circumcised slaves could partake**

Look at v.44 “but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it *after you have circumcised him*.” This type of slavery is not to be thought of in terms of chattel slavery that is part of American history.<sup>7</sup> Man stealing was a crime that God condemned with the death penalty. Exodus 21:16 “Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, *shall be put to death*.” This type of slavery here—whether a native or foreigner—is one who sells himself and/or his children into indentured servitude in order to pay off debt (Leviticus

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<sup>6</sup> Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/12-43.htm> Accessed September 9, 2023

<sup>7</sup> It is not the Christian worldview that endorses the slave trade, it is paganism. The Pharaohs had broken faith with the Israelites and forcibly enslaved them, though Joseph their ancestor saved all of Egypt. God is not double minded so as to endorse the very type of slavery that He condemned. There was a type of slavery that existed in Israel that was in keeping with the Golden Rule and God's righteous character. Cf. Exodus 21:1-11, 16, 20-21, 26-27, 32 for Divine rules on slavery.

25:39)<sup>8</sup>; or one who was captured in war and put into service (Numbers 31:9; Deuteronomy 21:10-14). When we get to Exodus 21 we will see many of God's rules that protected these slaves—laws that conformed to the greatest two commandments. We'll have to wait though. The point *here* is to explain *who* can participate in Passover. Household slaves—native or foreign born—could participate in Passover so long as the males were circumcised first. These slaves were to be circumcised precisely because they were part of the household and therefore considered to be part of the covenant (Genesis 17:10-13)

### **The circumcised sojourner**

Add to this v.48 “If a stranger[*a Gentile*] shall sojourn<sup>9</sup> with you[*that is, desire to live permanently with you*] and would keep the Passover to the Lord, *let all his males be circumcised.*” This stranger is different than the foreigner in v.43 and 45. Certainly, he is not an ethnic Jew. But he desires to be a spiritual Jew. Like Ruth, his confession is “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). In such a case, God says “let all his males be circumcised.” Then we read halfway through v.48 “Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land.” Stop. This is amazing. Gentiles (non-Jews) could be counted

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<sup>8</sup> “However, he would be set free on the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:40; Deut. 15:12) and was not to be made to participate in harsh service (Lev. 25:39). In addition, the master could not, in such cases, sell the person into further slavery (Lev. 25:42).” Source: <https://carm.org/slavery/in-the-bible-2-kings-41-creditor-to-take-children-as-slaves/> Accessed September 9, 2023

<sup>9</sup> “A 'sojourner' is different from the 'foreigner' of verse 43. The former has lived in the land with the people for some time. He has settled in the land and therefore he has privileges. The sojourner 'as a resident enjoys the rights of assistance, protection, and religious participation. He has the right of gleaning Leviticus 19:10; 23:22, participation in the tithe Deuteronomy 14:29; the Sabbath year Leviticus 25:6, and the cities of refuge Numbers 35:15. He could not, however participate in the Passover unless circumcised.” Currid, pg. 267

“*as a native of the land*”—that is as Jews.<sup>10</sup> Abraham’s offspring includes both Jews and Gentiles.

### **Not a NT doctrine only**

This isn’t *merely* a New Testament doctrine. From the birth of Israel’s nationhood, Gentiles could be included into the people of God *by faith*. Galatians 3:7-9 “Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup>And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” <sup>9</sup>*So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*” In our passage, circumcision was the way the sojourner publicly professed His faith in Yahweh. That’s why the end of v.48 says “But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it.” Those who refused to get circumcised—those who refused to come to the LORD *by faith*—were not allowed to share in Passover.

### **Circumcision and Passover**

What’s so helpful about this passage is that it links the two OT sacraments—circumcision and Passover—together. In doing so, we see the difference between the sacraments.

**Circumcision** was the sacrament of *initiation* into God’s covenant.

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<sup>10</sup> Someone might say: ‘But the Scripture says “first to the Jew, then to the Greek. Therefore the Jew gets the priority based on his race.” But this does not illustrate salvation by bloodlines or race in any way. This merely illustrates the order in which God works. Israel is God’s firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) In your family, your firstborn child gets privileges before his/her younger siblings simply because he/she is the oldest child. That’s not favoritism. Yes the Jew did hear the gospel first, but the Jew also receives judgment first. It’s a matter of order not equality (cf. Galatians 3:28).

**Passover** was the sacrament of *communion* with God and His people in the covenant.

Children, boys and girls, you can easily understand the difference between initiation and communion. What must take place before a man and a woman can live together, sleep together, have babies together? They must first be married. They must enter the covenant of marriage by taking their vows before God. At the wedding ceremony, the covenant is *initiated*. Only then can they have *communion* with each other, in the same house and the same bed. To reverse the order lies about marriage. To reverse the order is adultery.

### **The gospel was at stake**

The same thing is true *here*. To allow any male to skip circumcision and come straight to Passover lied about the gospel. Circumcision *meant* something. As Michael Morales puts it: “...circumcision was a sign and seal of one's membership in the congregation of Israel. *Symbolizing the removal of defilement*, circumcision functions somewhat similarly to the removal of leaven from one's house, except that it requires the shedding of blood. Positively, circumcision functions to seal a new identity, as Abram's circumcision came with his name change to Abraham.”<sup>11</sup> “Circumcision meant recognizing the necessity of rebirth, regeneration, by God's electing grace.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the gospel message for outsiders in the OT was ‘repent and be circumcised.’ If you were a woman,

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<sup>11</sup> He continues: “As with Isaac in Genesis 22, Israel's sons are put under the knife as part of their membership among the people of God. While spared from death, these sons have figuratively died to the world through circumcision, the removal of defilement, and are identified as those who belong among the congregation of Israel.” L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, (Downers Grove, IL.,: IVP Academic, 2020), pg. 73-74

<sup>12</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Exodus*, Vallecito, CA.,: Ross House Books, 2004), pg. 154



then you were covered under your father or husband's circumcision since they represented the family covenantally.<sup>13</sup> It's not the sacrament *by itself* God is concerned about. The sacrament told a story, a gospel story. That sinners must be cleansed from sin and receive the righteousness of God in order to be counted among God's people. To come to Passover *apart* from circumcision was to lie about the gospel. It was saying that I can come to God on my own terms, apart from free grace, apart from faith—I can come on my own merit.<sup>14</sup>

### **Our Doctrine: The sacraments show the grace of God**

That brings us to **our doctrine**: *The sacraments show that salvation is always by God's grace and never because of our race or any other consideration.* I just have two proofs of this.

#### **Proof #1: Circumcision of the Heart**

Please turn to Deuteronomy 30:6. The context for this verse is Moses prophesying that Israel would ultimately turn away from God and be removed from the land. But God promises to restore them like in former times. And He says this in v.6 “And the LORD your God will *circumcise your heart* and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” Physical circumcision pointed to the desperate need to be circumcised in the heart—to have our defiled nature, our sin removed and put away so that we could be with God. In getting physically

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<sup>13</sup> Certainly the husband and father still represent the family covenantally today, that has changed. But God in His grace has extended the NT sacrament baptism to be applied to both male and female. This is foreign to us only because Covenant Theology is foreign to us.

<sup>14</sup> “But OT male children didn't have faith when they were circumcised.” That's true. But God commanded them to included them in the covenant (Genesis 17:1-14). This is out of God's grace. He is seeking a godly seed (Malachi 2:15). Just as humanity was represented by her covenant head Adam, so our children are represented by their covenant head, their father. They belong to the covenant that he belongs to by God's command.

circumcised they were saying *by faith* “LORD I’m in need of a new heart that only you can give. My defiled nature must be cut off. I must be made new.” Circumcision demonstrated that salvation was *entirely* a work of God’s grace.<sup>15</sup>

### **Proof #2: Baptized into Christ**

Please turn to Romans 6:3-4. Here Paul is showing what happened to us when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit. “Do you not know that all of us who have been *baptized into Christ Jesus* were *baptized* into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were buried therefore with him by *baptism* into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

**Spiritual baptism is equivalent to spiritual circumcision.**<sup>16</sup> Our sinful nature was put away in Christ’s death. When the Spirit baptized us, He united us to Christ so that just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we also would have a brand new life. In getting baptized, we are saying “Lord, I believe You have put to death my sinful nature in Christ, and now by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, You have made me a new creation.” Baptism demonstrates that salvation was entirely a work of God’s grace.<sup>17</sup>

### **Not merit badges**

The sacraments are not merit badges. They are grace badges. They reveal that with man salvation is impossible, but with God all things are possible. For those outsiders to be circumcised and come into the covenant with Israel, they

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<sup>15</sup> Only the Spirit of God can circumcise the heart, and He does it apart from any consideration on the sinner’s part.

<sup>16</sup> Colossians 2:11-12 links the two together to demonstrate they accomplish the same thing.

<sup>17</sup> Baptism doesn’t point to *our faith*, it points to salvation being entirely a work of God. You didn’t make yourself a Christian. God made you a Christian by a work of grace. Yes you called out to Him by faith, but that faith was a gift of grace.

were saying the same thing modern men say when they are baptized: “Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Save me, not because of my works, not because of my skin color, not because of any deserving in me. The only thing I deserve is death and hell. But I trust in Your Son, and I submit to this baptism as a sign that you have washed me and forgiven me of all my sin; and as a seal that You will never leave me nor forsake me. Help me now to walk as a new man.” That’s **our doctrine**: *The sacraments show that salvation is always by God’s grace and never because of our race or any other consideration.*<sup>18</sup>

## II. Our Duty

### I. Informatory Use

Our **first duty** is to *consider* why the sacraments have changed. Why is circumcision is no longer required (Galatians 5:6)? Why is baptism now the sacrament of initiation into the New Covenant (Matthew 28:19)? Why did Jesus take Passover and refashion it into the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:17-29)? Because the sacraments—*the signs*—must be consistent with the Thing signified. Circumcision resulted in blood. It screamed that blood must be shed for sinners. “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22). But the blood shed at physical circumcision was not sufficient. It pointed to Someone else’s blood being shed. When Jesus Christ was crucified on that tree, the last words He spoke were “It is finished” (John 19:30). Then He bowed His

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<sup>18</sup> Wherever the sacraments have been warped in church history, the result is that salvation by grace alone is lost in those traditions, e.g. the Judaizers with circumcision (e.g. Galatians), Roman Catholics with both sacraments (cf. the Council of Trent), the Church of Christ advocating for baptismal regeneration, or the Quakers practicing no sacraments at all. All of these traditions have works mixed in as the ground of their justification and it is seen in their distortion of the sacraments.

head and gave up His spirit. Redemption was completed. No more blood will ever be need to be shed. Not a single drop. It was not longer fitting to shed the blood of those in covenant. Therefore God ordained *the bloody sign* of circumcision to be changed into *the bloodless sign* of baptism. In a similar way the Passover Meal in which the lamb was sacrificed, it's blood smeared, it's body eaten, was changed into the Lord's Supper. Why? Because Jesus Christ was what every Passover Lamb pointed to. John the Baptist's first recorded words of Jesus were "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). It would be unfitting to continue to slay a lamb today because "Christ, our Passover lamb, has [already] been sacrificed" for us (1 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore God ordained the *bloody ritual* of Passover to be changed into the *bloodless sacrament* of the Lord's Supper—bread and wine.

### **Unity and diversity in the sacraments**

The essence of the sacraments are the same, but the outward elements have changed in order to tell the truth about the gospel.

The OT sacraments were *bloody* pointing forward to the Savior yet to come.

The NT sacraments are *bloodless* pointing backward to that Savior who said "It is finished."

However there is still an order that needs to be followed. It's surprising today to find more and more evangelicals holding off on their baptism, but coming to the table. That is equivalent to skipping circumcision and yet eating the Passover Meal. Our passage shows that God didn't allow that. Now in my own family, I brought Josiah to the Lord's Supper before he was baptized. I believe he was

saved. But I did it out of order. I was never taught this in the church. Dear congregation, that is why passages like this exist.

### **The story the sacraments tell**

The order is important because the sacraments tell the story of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is why we say as we take Lord's Supper: that "...only baptized believers are welcome to come to the Supper." This is not about crossing our theological t's and dotting our theological i's. It's loving to exclude people who have not yet been united to Jesus Christ by a saving faith. When we fence the table, we are doing precisely what God told Moses to do in Israel. Those who have not yet put their trust in Jesus Christ—which is publicly expressed in baptism—are outside of salvation. It is loving to declare that truth so that they might believe and be saved. Additionally, the order matters because otherwise we are telling another gospel story. Before one can commune with Jesus at Lord's Supper—before one can have a meal of peace with Him, they need to be washed and forgiven of their sin. Baptism first—washing first—then Lord's Supper, then a meal of peace. This order and *only this order* declares that salvation is not by works of the law but by faith in Christ Jesus.

### **Signs and seals**

The sacraments are precious signs and seals of the covenant of grace. They do not save us. But they are unspeakable means of grace. And when we practice them rightly, the WCF (27.1) says they "confirm our interest in [Christ and]...put a visible difference between those who belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word."

## 2. Elenctic Use

That brings us to our **second duty**, to answer a difficulty. It goes like this “Those who practice infant baptism should also practice infant or paedocommunion. The qualification for Passover in the OT was circumcision<sup>19</sup>, therefore once our infants are baptized they should be immediately qualified for the table.” This view is growing in popularity today, though it was almost universally rejected by the Reformers and it is not affirmed by any of the Reformed confessions of faith. And for good reason because the NT has given us specific commands that regulate the table. All persons coming to the Lord’s Supper must do so in remembrance of Christ (I Corinthians 11:24-25). They must have profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5). They must be able to discern the body (I Corinthians 11:29). Infants cannot do this.<sup>20</sup> Now this doesn’t necessarily exclude young children from coming to the table so long as they can profess faith in Christ that is commensurate with their age and ability. As the Larger Catechism says in Q.177 that “the Lord’s supper is to be administered...only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.” The Lord’s Supper doesn’t work magically. It doesn’t operate as a means of grace apart *from the faith of the recipient*.<sup>21</sup> “Communion is not for those who do not know Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> On this I would say that Passover was only administered rightly/Biblically with instruction (Exodus 12:26-26; 13:8-16). That instruction presupposes that the children could understand what Passover meant. Until they could understand the meaning of the Passover, they could not exercise faith in the Lord. And without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

<sup>20</sup> One puritan has said that just as physical circumcision was required to come to Passover, so circumcision of the heart, the new birth, a profession of living faith is required to come to feast at the Supper

<sup>21</sup> For more on this see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic 2008), pg. 583-584

<sup>22</sup> Ryken, pg. 329

### 3. Experimental Use

That brings us to our **third duty**, to *examine* ourselves. The Puritan Matthew Henry asks these heart-penetrating questions: “Have we, by faith in him, sheltered our souls from deserved vengeance under the protection of his atoning blood? Do we keep close to him, constantly depending upon him? Do we so profess our faith in the Redeemer, and our obligations to him, that all who pass by may know to whom we belong? Do we stand prepared for his service, ready to walk in his ways, and to separate ourselves from his enemies? These are questions of vast importance to the soul; may the Lord direct our consciences honestly to answer them.”

### 4. Admonitory Use

That brings us to our **fourth duty**, to *warn* all those who do not have faith in Christ. In v.46 we read that the Passover lamb was to “be eaten in one house, you shall not take any of the flesh outside of the house.” *The lamb was not for anyone outside of the house.* Surely this teaches us that anyone who is *outside of the faith* is not under the blood of the Lamb of God, thus they cannot be saved. They are in the same position as the Egyptians on Passover, in danger of the wrath of a holy God. There is one law for the native and the stranger. There is one law for all men. Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

### III. Our Delight

#### I. Consolatory Use

Oh this passage brings incredible **comfort** loved ones. Loved ones, it doesn't matter what your past is. Some of these Egyptian foreigners would have been guilty of those grotesque and unimaginable sins. Incest, polygamy, adultery, infanticide, homosexuality, bestiality, and idolatry of every kind. There is a whole list of sins in Leviticus 18 that the Egyptians were guilty of. And yet when some of these great sinners left Egypt, God declared there is one law for salvation for all people, one law to enter into the covenant with God: *faith*. John 1:12-13 “But to all who did receive him, *who believed in his name*, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Salvation does not come from having the right ancestors. Salvation doesn't come making the right choices in life. Loved ones you were saved entirely, completely, irrevocably the moment you first trusted in Christ.

And God's Triune name was sealed upon you along with all of His promises in *baptism*.

And whenever we eat the *Supper* together, the Lord Jesus is eating and drinking with a meal of peace with you.

The truth is, there is no one—no one—in the family of God who does not have a past that is polluted and perverted and twisted and broken by sin. Jesus Christ Himself had ancestors who deceived, committed incest, prostitution, adultery, murder, child sacrifice. Yet He wasn't ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.



He was the Lamb of God who took away their sin. Dear congregation, whatever your past is, the Lamb has taken away your sin. Your sin does not make you less qualified for salvation. The Israelites were every bit as guilty as the Egyptians. And yet there was one law to the Jew and the Egyptian: *believe*. Come into the covenant by faith, be marked publicly by the sacrament and feast off the supper because all is well. You have been redeemed, you have been marked by the blood. God's wrath has been satisfied.

## 2. Celebratory Use

Perhaps its that last part that you're not sure of. You have believed in Christ, but your past still haunts you. The devil still accuses you. Maybe, you think, God is still angry with you. Perhaps there some sin left for you to suffer for—perhaps a protestant version of purgatory. Look at our passage. We have new information regarding how they were to prepare this lamb. End of v.46 says “...you shall not break any of its bones.” How is that little detail a cure for a troubled conscience? Well, in any other meal, bones would be *broken* in the butchering process. For any of you who have cleaned an animal from start to finish, *breaking* bones, cutting through bones is inevitable. But this lamb was to be prepared altogether differently *No broken bones*. Two reasons. **1)** The Lamb had to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5). If Jesus was *broken*—that is *broken* by sin—His death would mean nothing. *Jesus' perfect life is what gives value to His death.* **2)** The lamb was not to be butchered but offered up as a whole sacrifice—“its head with its legs and its inner parts” (Exodus 12:9). This signified that Jesus suffered entirely, completely in body and soul. Nothing was broken off, nothing was spared from the fire.

**Not one of his bones will be broken**

Now this is exactly how Jesus died. Turn quickly with me to John 19:31. This is immediately after Jesus already died. We read

“Since it was the day of Preparation [*it was Passover, the day when Israel would be preparing their lambs*], and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

*Quick note:* The breaking of the leg bones of the victims of crucifixion made them die more quickly. In crucifixion, death came by suffocation. The victim was stretched out and gravity was pulling him down. He had to push up with his feet, which excruciatingly painful because of the nails that pierced him, in order to breath. After hours of torture the victim in exhaustion would have no more strength to push up, and so would die of suffocation. Breaking the legs would expedite their death so they could no longer push up, they would die in minutes or less.]

[v.32] So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. <sup>35</sup>He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.”

Christ's legs were not broken. He did not have an accelerated death. He received no mercy. He suffered entirely—body and soul—for our sin. All of God's wrath has been satisfied. Beloved that is the cure for your troubled conscience. When Jesus' legs were not broken, it teaches us that He suffered fully for all our sins—all our most evil sins, our most shameful sins, our most secret sins, our most disgusting sins, our most wicked evil sins were all placed on the unbroken body of Christ. So when your conscience is condemning you, when the devil is accusing you, look to Jesus. Not one of His bones were broken. He stayed alive long enough to make sure all of your sins were punished on that tree. He suffered long enough to make sure God was satisfied.

### **3. Hortatory Use**

So what's the take away? What are we to do in response to this? What did God call Israel to do? v.47 "All the congregation of Israel shall keep it," that is Passover. In the same way, God is telling us "all the congregation" shall keep it, that is, all baptized believers shall eat the supper together. This stresses two things. **1)** The absolute importance of corporate worship. For certain we should privately worship the Lord, but the essence of Christian worship is corporate—the communion of saints. A lone ranger Christian is a contradiction. It would be like a man trying to have a family without a wife and kids. Pets are not family members. When Jesus died He saved the family of God, and He commands that family of God to worship Him together. We are not to neglect meeting together (Hebrew 10:25). **2)** Our second charge is that when we come together to eat the Supper, we need to remember this is not an individualistic ritual. It is communion with the saints in Heaven, on earth, in our congregation. It is communion with Christ. Our redemption is necessarily *corporate*. "All the congregation of Israel shall keep it." "Like Passover, the Lord's Supper is a meal

to be shared”<sup>23</sup>—it is the family meal, the meal that nourishes our union with Christ and with each other.

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<sup>23</sup> Ryken, pg. 328