



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians – study passage: Exodus 12:1-28

“Paul and the Lord’s Supper, part I”

TRANSCRIPT

Well I think it’s 7:30. Let’s bow our heads for a word of prayer before our class.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for another opportunity to study the Scriptures together thank Thee for the inspiration of them. We remember that the apostles have told us that they were writings that authors wrote being moved by the Holy Spirit and that all Scripture so written is inspired of God, God-breathed and is profitable for us in teaching and in instruction and conviction that we ourselves might be able to serve Thee acceptably in our Christian lives.

We thank Thee for the epistle that the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, the 1 of them, and we thank Thee for the practical truth that is found there in that epistle that is so applicable to us in the Christian church now nineteen hundred years later.

We thank Thee for those who are gathered here. We pray Thy blessing upon them upon their families. We again ask Thy blessing upon our country of which we’re a part, for our president for others associated with him in government. And we pray for the church of Jesus Christ, thank Thee for the great work that Thou art doing, that Thy hast been doing down through the centuries and that will reach its culmination in the glorification of our great triune God. We ask Lord that in that magnificent work over so

lengthy a period of time, our class may have a special part. We commit it to Thee in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] Well, we’re turning tonight for our Scripture reading to Exodus chapter 12, and the reason we are doing this is that we want to take two or three times out and deal with the question of the Lord’s Supper which is the next topic that we meet in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and so now for the next two or three Wednesdays we’ll take a look at passages that have to do with that. And of course our beginning is the first Passover, and the account is given us in Exodus chapter 12, and I’m going to read beginning at verse 1 through verse 28. So I hope you’ll turn to that and follow as we read these verses. Moses writes,

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Do not eat

it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the 1born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. ‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the 1 day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the 1 day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. You can see that the Passover is associated with the feast of unleavened bread and so Moses is going on describing features that have to do with that. Verse 16. On the 1 day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared for you. So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In

the 1 *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-1 day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land.”

And incidentally, the apostle has referred to this in chapter 5 when he said, for Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, and he mentions specifically that no leaven should be in the houses, corresponding to the fact that there should be no leaven of sin in our lives once we have come to be a part of the Christian church. Verse 20,

“You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb*. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through and strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you*. And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD shall give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by

this service?’ that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.”

Now the reason we are looking back at the Passover is because the Passover very closely connected as you know to the Lord’s Supper. In fact they are tied together very intimately, and in our Lord’s last supper which began as a Passover service, the institution of the Lord’s Supper was made. So this is the first of the studies, and next time we want to take a look at that passage in the gospel -- we’ll use the Matthean account -- in which our Lord eats the final Passover, the last Passover, and institutes the first Lord’s Supper. And then of course we’ll look on at our passage in 1 Corinthians in which the apostle discusses the Lord’s Supper in significant detail.

Now let me begin with just a word or two of introduction. The Lord Jesus as you know left the Christian church two ordinances. He left them the ordinance of baptism which signifies our entrance into the body of Christ. We are baptized in token of our identification with him and his death, burial and resurrection. For example, in Believers Chapel, when a person is immersed in our baptistery, and he is put under the water and brought up out of the water, that is designed to signify his relation his union with Christ in his death burial and resurrection. The other ordinance is the Lord’s Supper. That’s the ordinance that we’ll be discussing in some detail. If baptism signifies our entrance into Christian life and our entrance into the church, the Lord’s Supper signifies our continuance or our life in it, and that is why we continually observe the Lord’s Supper Sunday after Sunday, Lord’s Day after Lord’s Day while we are baptized only once ideally.

Now I know there are people who have been baptized more than once. I’ve been baptized more than once. I was sprinkled as a young person and then later on came to the conviction after my conversion I should be baptized, and I was immersed later on.

Now the Christian church, generally the evangelical church, the Reformed bodies particularly, have stressed that there are only two ordinances: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They are often called sacraments, and today it’s very popular for the term sacrament to be used. I’m not trying to make any distinction in the terms although one could argue the question theologically. I don’t think it’s quite that important. But you should know that the Roman Catholic Church contends that there are not two ordinances but seven ordinances. They acknowledge the ordinance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but also contend that there is the sacrament of confirmation, of matrimony, of penance, of extreme unction and ordination.

Now the Reformers call these “those five commonly called sacraments.” In other words, they didn’t recognize, they just simply said there are people who commonly speak of those five additional ordinances or sacraments. The great body of the evangelicals have insisted that there are simply two.

Various terms are used for the Lord’s Supper. We have, for example in the New Testament, the term[s] communion or fellowship used in connection with it in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Then it is called the Lord’s Table in Acts chapter 2 and verse 42. Frequently people do that today. We are observing communion or we are going to participate in a communion service or we are going to sit at the Lord’s Table for the communion service. Also commonly in non-evangelicalism but professing Christendom the term “Eucharist” is used.

Now Eucharist is a term that is associated with those that have a more distinct liturgy than most of the evangelical churches. You won’t find Baptists speaking about observing the Eucharist, and you won’t find independent churches talking about observing the Eucharist, but the term Eucharist is simply an English word derived from the

Greek word *eucharistia* which means “thanksgiving,” and so all it means is we are observing the thanksgiving service -- Eucharist -- but it’s come to have that liturgical usage.

Then, of course, there are one or two other possibilities for use of terms. The Lord’s Supper is one in addition to the Lord’s Table. The Lord’s Supper is commonly used, I think probably more commonly used, simply because it sets forth very well that our Lord is the host, and thus the Lord’s Supper seems suitable, and we are the guests, so it’s his supper. He’s the host. We’re the guests and that seems to make excellent sense. One of the striking things about this is that the Lord’s Supper is the only act of worship for which the Lord gave special instruction to the church. That’s very striking. He didn’t tell us how to perform baptisms,, but we do have instruction concerning the Lord’s Supper what we are to do as Christians. We are told we should be baptized of course but this is the act of worship for which the Lord gave special instruction. He took the bread and he spoke with reference to its significance. He took the wine, the Apostle Paul picks that up and in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, also develops the points.

The root of the Lord’s Supper is found in its Old Testament parallel which is the Passover, and so it’s very significant, and I think important to make recognition of the fact that the Lord’s Supper is instituted in the context of the observance of the Passover. In fact it was the last genuine Passover service. There has never been since that time a genuine Passover service. Now if there were Jewish individuals in my audience and they were still Jewish individuals they would be shocked by that statement, of course, and I would have to defend it theologically, and I would defend it from the standpoint of the Christian faith. When our Lord observed that last Passover and instituted the Lord’s Supper, it was with the conviction that he would fulfill the Passover service -- all of the prophecies concerning his ministry by his death, burial and resurrection which was to occur a couple of days later. That last one on a Friday, and on Friday he was crucified

and rose again on Sunday morning, so the Passover is very closely connected with the Lord’s Supper.

What is the Passover? Well the Passover is a memorial of Israel’s physical deliverance via sacrifice. Let me state that again so we have that clearly in our mind. The Passover is a memorial service, and it was to be observed as our text says continually. It was to be observed, and it was a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt.

Now it was a memorial of a deliverance by sacrifice by blood sacrifice. The slaying of the lambs, the sprinkling of the blood on the side of the door frame and on the lintel on the top was the carrying out of the details of the Passover service, and so it was a memorial of a deliverance. Now it was a physical deliverance, not a spiritual deliverance. It was a physical deliverance. As a matter of fact, in the case of Moses and some of the others, they already belonged to the Lord when this service was undertaken.

Now in the case of -- oh and I should point this out; it was also a memorial of a physical deliverance by sacrifice and it was an anticipation of the future fulfillment by virtue of his coming in the future so it was an anticipation. In the case of the Lord’s Supper, we observe the Lord’s Supper, it is grounded in what he has accomplished on the cross. It is not a physical deliverance that we celebrate. It’s a spiritual deliverance that we celebrate, and we do it in anticipation of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We often say that in our service. We observe these things until he comes. And as we’ll see in Matthew chapter 26, for example, after he has given the details concerning the coming Lord’s supper, he reminds them of his Second Advent right in that context in Matthew chapter 26 I think it’s verse 29.

So now we want to turn to the Passover service and point out some of the parallels and some of the significant scriptural and theological teaching involved in it. And first of all, Moses has described for us in the first ten verses of chapter 12 of what may be called a picture of the Lamb itself. It’s a moving picture of the Lamb of God if we recognize the typical character of this. For remember, Paul has stated in 1 Corinthians

chapter 5, “For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” So we are justified in saying that this chapter which has to do with the Passover is a typical chapter. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

I neglected to say one thing, and I think it’s important to say it, so I’m going to go back for just a moment and point out that these ordinances that we are talking about. Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, are ordinances that have value only for believers. In other words, an unbeliever cannot be expected to understand the significance of a baptism or the significance of the Lord’s Supper. M. R. DeHaan, in a little pamphlet he wrote many years ago -- a copy of several sermons that he delivered over the radio -- made the point that the ordinances had value only for believers who understand the meaning of them. “Spiritual blessings are for spiritual people and must be spiritually discerned and understood,” he said.

And he illustrates it by supposing that a man who had never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ or the gospel suddenly came upon a baptismal service, and suggested that if he were to come upon a baptismal service where men and women and boys and girls were being immersed in water by another man, if he had never heard of the meaning of this service and not understanding what it’s all about, DeHaan said he might think that they were playing some kind of game or trying to drown one another. In other words, there needs to be an understanding of what is signified by the baptismal act.

And the same thing he went on to say with regard to the Lord’s Supper. If someone came in and in our meeting on Sunday night and did not know what we were doing and saw that we were taking bits of a cracker with some wine they would wonder what it was that we were really doing. They would see that we were eating something of course, but they would look at people of very solemn demeanor who seem to be having a very, very simple meal together, but they wouldn’t understand of course what was signified by the bread and the wine at all. So it does require an understanding of spiritual

things to appreciate the ordinances which suggest to us that they are for believers. We should remember that.

C. H. Spurgeon, when he comes to the Passover, he has an interesting section I think, and I’m going to try to summarize it. He says, “Do I hear someone say that I’m now coming to an old subject?” This thought struck me when I was preparing for the preaching that I should have to tell you an old story over again. All pastors and preachers and teachers have that problem because the Bible is filled with an emphasis upon the saving ministry of Jesus Christ, and it’s very difficult to preach the word over a period of time without repeating one’s self, and particularly if he’s preaching the gospel he ought to repeat himself constantly and say, give the message, try to give it in such a way that he doesn’t put people totally to sleep, but it is a problem after you’ve done it, and if you’ve done it to a congregation for many years it becomes more and more of a problem. That incidentally, is why preachers spend generally short times at churches. They go spend five or six years, exhaust their barrel, move to another church and then they don’t have to prepare a whole lot. They may refurbish a sermon here or there, but essentially they have their ministry performed, and so if they do that over a period of time it’s much easier to do the job and they can spend time on other matters, maybe ministering, maybe playing golf, who knows.

But at any rate, Mr. Spurgeon is talking about the fact that he has to prepare again, and he’s going to tell the old story again, and he said, “Just as I was thinking of that I happened to turn over a book (apparently on his desk, and he said) I met with an anecdote of Adoniram Judson, the missionary to Burma. He had passed through unheard of hardships and had performed dangerous exploits for his master. He returned after thirty years of absence to America.” Many of you who have had a Baptist background or friends in the Baptist Church know that Judson is a big name among the Baptists and that name comes from Adoniram Judson, the missionary to Burma. He said, “He returned after thirty years of service and it was announced that he was to address an assembly in a

provincial town -- talking like a like a Britisher there; we don’t have provincial towns in the United States -- and a vast number of people had gathered from a great distance to hear him.

And he rose at the close of the usual service and all eyes were on him to hear what he had to say, because he was a famous missionary, and he spoke for fifteen minutes, so Mr. Spurgeon says, “With much pathos of the precious Savior of what he had done for us, of what we owed him, and he sat down very visibly affected by the message that he had given. A friend of his was with him shortly afterward and said to him, the people are very much disappointed. They wonder that you did not talk of something else. Judson said, Why? What did they want? He replied, he went on to say, I presented to the best of my ability the most interesting subject in the world. His friend said, But they wanted something different -- a story.”

“Well I’m sure I gave them a story, the most thrilling one that can be conceived of. But they heard had heard it before. They wanted something new, of a man who’d just come from the antipodes. Then I’m glad that they have it so that a man -- they have it to say so that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell them than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the gospel of Christ, and when I speak at all I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people today and remembering where I should next meet them (that’s an interesting statement isn’t it? Remembering where I should next meet them. Well in eternity of course) how could I stand up and furnished food for vain curiosity tickle their fancy with amusing stories however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, I gave you one opportunity to tell them of me; you spent it in describing your own adventures.”

Mr. Spurgeon said, “So I thought, well if Judson told the old story after he’d been thirty years away and couldn’t find anything better, I will just go back to this old subject

which is always new and always fresh to us: the precious blood of Jesus Christ by which we are saved.” And then he gave his sermon on the Passover service.

Well now I just want to make two or three points from Exodus chapter 12 because I know that most of you in this audience know basically the story of the Passover and its significance so I’ll just emphasize a few things. The description of the lamb includes these things in the 5th verse. Moses writes, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.”

Now anyone who knows anything about the New Testament at all knows that when he reads, the lamb shall be without blemish, that Moses by the Holy Spirit is anticipating the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember Peter’s statement in 1 Peter chapter 1, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” So the fact that the lamb is to be a lamb without blemish is designed to anticipate of course our Lord Jesus Christ who is absolutely without flaw, fault or sin.

Now secondly he says in verse 6, “Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month.” In other words it’s as if they were to look at the lamb which was chosen without blemish, but they were to observe it carefully to be sure that no blemish appeared or that they had overlooked anything, and so in our Lord’s case, of course, I am called to think when I read this of our Lord’s life, because he came, he lived his life, he began his ministry when he was approximately thirty years of age, and then for three years he carried out his ministry. It was the way by which not only he was ministering of what is going to happen in his death and resurrection and beyond, but it was one of the evidences of the fact that he was approved of God, and in the experiences of life there were no indications whatsoever of any failure to do anything other than the will of God.

When he began his ministry, remember, the voice from heaven came and said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” This is the lamb without blemish

who is to be offered for our sins. Men, both those who were familiar with him, knew him, loved him, and then his enemies, also acknowledged the fact that he was approved of God. Pilate said, I find no fault in this man. Judas himself acknowledged that the person whom he was responsible -- whose death he was responsible for, humanly speaking -- also acknowledged that our Lord Jesus was without flaw and fault. Even the demons acknowledged that he was the Son of God. So his enemies, his friends and the Satanic world itself all united to signify that he was truly a lamb without spot or blemish. So that’s the second thing. You are to keep it for four days, and they were to observe it to be sure it was a proper type of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then in the 6th verse, Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

Now we all know of course what that means. This is a reference of course ultimately to our Lord’s crucifixion. The lamb was to be slain and then they were to feed upon the lamb. So the lamb was to be slain signifying way back then that it’s not the life that our Lord lived, but it’s the death that he died on the cross that saves men. That’s common truth in Believers Chapel, I know, but you’d be surprised when you go out into the world. That’s a startling new idea for them that it’s necessary for the Redeemer to die if we are to have eternal life.

I think I mentioned the other night that I was listening to the Re-Imagining Conference in which the feminists were conducting in last year and one of the questions was, What are we going to say is our theory of the atonement? And the person who was conducting the meeting said, “We don’t read any theory of the atonement.” And I think there was another question that was asked, but then the person went on to explain why there was no need for an atonement. Cross -- someone mentions a cross -- the cross was a bad thing. We don’t need any theory of the atonement. We want to talk about the parables which our Lord spoke about, talk about the things that he did. Go into our Christian churches today that’s precisely what you hear.

And as a matter of fact, in our evangelical world, it has come to this place that constant preaching on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus and the significance of our Lord’s death for sinners on Calvary’s cross is not the primary message of those pulpits today. I hate to say that, but I think it’s true. If you will go around you will find that that is not true in churches that profess to be evangelical. In the Dallas area we have had a strong emphasis from the seminary here. I don’t know that I could say that I don’t hear enough in this city to know, but I know that over this country that is true.

Down at Dallas Seminary there is a building known as Stearns Hall. It was the building which the students lived at one particular time, most of them. D. M. Stearns was a pastor from Germantown, Pennsylvania, and had a church in Philadelphia for many year. His son also came to the seminary and was a well known missionary to Europe, Minor Stearns, that I happened to know.

And there is an old story about Mr. Stearns that he was in a church service, in his church, and a man came up to him after one of his messages and said, I don’t like your preaching. He said I don’t care for the cross. I think that instead of preaching the death on the cross it would be far better to preach Jesus the teacher and the example, just as this lady was saying the other day in the conference, the Re-Imagining Conference. And so, Mr. Stearns continued the conversation with him, Would you then be willing to follow him if I were to preach Christ the example? And the man said, I would. I will follow in his steps. And Mr. Stearns thinking of 1 Peter chapter 2 said, Then let us take the first step. After the passage in which our Lord is said to be our example, the first step is who did know sin? He said, Would you be willing to take the first step? And the man said, No I do sin I acknowledge it. Well then said Mr. Stearns you first need Christ not as an example but as a Savior. That’s very true. That’s why we have the Passover lamb slain, and so it is to be killed.

Now Moses goes on to talk in verse 12 and verse 13 about the deliverance that follows so we’ll turn to those verses now. He says It shall be when the Lord brings you

into -- I’m reading from chapter 13 instead of 12. Verse 12, For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and will strike all the first born in the land of Egypt both man and beast and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood I will pass over you. The statement I will pass through the land of Egypt is of course a statement regarding judgment. This is the judgment that is to fall upon the Egyptians. I am going to pass through the land of Egypt; I’m going to strike all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

Now that would seem to include not simply the Egyptians but also the Israelites. He’s going to pass through, and all the first born sons are going to be slain, Egyptians and Israelites. So he’s going to execute judgment. The judgments typically upon all. There is death in every house in Egypt where there was a first born. The first born or the lamb. In other words, in every house there was death the first born in those who had first born sons, and then in those who put the blood on the doorpost outside there was the dead lamb. So, death in every home. Very suggestive of the fact that death ought to be in every home, because the wages of sin is death and all of us are sinners, and so it’s very fitting to state that in this marvelous, typical picture. I will pass through Egypt and death will be in every house, the first born or the lamb.

Now in the 13th verse he says, Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you. Now later on it makes it evident that when he says, I will pass over you, he means he will pass over them in the form of the destroying angel, because it is the destroying angel that will do the slaying, but the destroying angel is the angel of the Lord God. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This Hebrew verb, incidentally, “to pass-over” is the word the word *pesach*, and the meaning of it is essentially to pass over in the sense of to protect. Actually, the New English Bible, one that I don’t ordinarily quote, but I happened to look it up just to be sure that they agreed with me. And I looked it up today and down at the

bottom it has “I will pass over and then, or stand guard over,” because this is a word that I think means essentially that. In other words, it’s the Lord God who stands guard over the houses of the Israelites in order to protect the first born of the Israelites from the destroying angel which is coming to slay the first born.

Isaiah uses the term in a very significant place in chapter 31 and verse 5. He says “Like birds flying about so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem.” So the picture is of a mother with young, and like birds flying about, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending it he will deliver it. Passing over. Pasach. Infinitive absolute used there from that very verb. Passing over, he will preserve it. So the picture is of a mother bird protecting her young birds to protect the birds from the hawk, and so this term is used. The Passover -- it’s God’s protection of his people, the first born -- and so when the destroying angel comes, he cannot of course do the 1born any damage. This is what Peter means in 1 Peter chapter 1 when he talks about how we are kept by the power of God, God acting as a sovereign guard over us protecting us from evil. So I will stand guard over you.

Now let me stop for just a moment and mention a couple of points here. You’ll notice that the safety of the children of Israel is dependent not upon their sense of sin. It’s very common in Reformed circles these days to make, I think, have a false emphasis on sin. One has such a deep stress upon sin that the proper attitude that Christians ought to have is mortification. As far as I can tell that’s not justified. We should have a deep sense of sin, but sin has been removed from us by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Christians ought to have a great sense of joy over what has taken place in their lives. Not that they should not realize their sin and also grow in understanding it so that they may learn deliverance, but basically a Christian is not to be a sad person, a mournful person. A Christian is to be a happy person, a joyous person, but also one who fears sin. So our safety is not dependent upon our sense of sin.

After all, if I said that my safety depends upon what Christ did plus my sense of my sin, what am I saying? I’m saying in effect that I have my sense of sin as part savior. We are saved by what Christ has done, not by our sense of sin, by the graces that may characterize the Christian life – no, no, by experience nothing. We are saved because of the blood that was shed on Calvary. That is the reason that we may be free to call ourselves individuals who belong to the Lord. It’s what happened when he died on Calvary’s cross and said, It is finished. He accomplished the saving work himself totally and completely. All of those other things are only means by which we receive what has been done for us by Jesus Christ. He is our Savior.

Mr. Spurgeon said, “When a person trusts the blood of Christ for his salvation, he’s as safe as an apostle or prophet.” [Johnson laughs] That makes it pretty, pretty definite doesn’t it? I’m just as safe as the Apostle Paul was safe if I’m trusting in the blood, just as safe as Isaiah was if I’m trusting in the blood of Christ. He also has an interesting statement about Mary Magdalene which I thought was pretty good. I just noticed it today. He says, “Magdalene’s seven devils the blood of Christ can cast out, the madness of the demoniac it can ease, the deep-seeded leprosy it can cure, the wound of the maimed; yea, the lost limb it can restore.” Remember, I just read the other day about that, remember the ear that one of the apostles cut off of one of the Romans, and our Lord reached up and put the ear back on his head? The wound of maimed; yea, the lost limb it can restore. There is no spiritual disease which the Great Physician cannot heal. This is the great catholicon -- that’s the great universal -- the great catholicon, the medicine for all diseases. No case can exceed its virtue be it never to black or vile; all sufficient, all sufficient blood. So the safety of the Israelites for their first born depended not upon how their felt. It depended simply upon the blood that was put on the two side posts and the lintel of the door of their homes. When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

There is an old legend of two sisters who in one of the Israelitish homes, and one of them heard the message, they all gathered in the house, and this sister sat down and

was quietly eating her portion of the roast body of the lamb. A type of the soul of course feeding on our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh by the way when we observe -- well I’m gonna say that I’ll save that for the time when we get to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. She was feeding on the lamb her mind at perfect peace and rest, and the other the other daughter was walking about the dwelling full of terrible fear lest the destroying angel should penetrate the home and destroy them. And finally upset at the peace and tranquility of the other sister, she turned to her, reproached her for being so careless and confident, and finally asked her how it was that she could be so full of assurance when the angel of death and judgment was abroad in the land. And the other sister replied to her, Why sister the blood has been sprinkled. We have God’s word that when he sees the blood he will pass over us. I now have no right to doubt God’s word, although I would be uneasy if I doubted the blood’s having been shed.

Well that’s the way believers should be. If we have acknowledged our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who died on Calvary’s cross for sin and my sin, and I have trusted what he has done, I should have no fear of judgment to come. That’s very important for Christians. To have the freedom that comes from the fact that we will by no means ever die spiritually. Our Lord states this. This is something we should be happy about and certain about.

Now the certainty of our salvation, while our safety is dependent on the blood being shed, the certainty of it is dependent upon the word of God. Ultimately, it’s dependent upon what Scripture says. I know something of this personally. When I was still in the insurance business, I used to work, remember? When I was still in the insurance business and had been converted, had begun to read the Bible, and I had begun to read books about the Bible, and I remember I, at one point in my early Christian experience, I was about twenty-five years of age, I became disturbed about my salvation. I knew I had at least I thought I believed in Christ, but I became so disturbed once that I can remember in Birmingham getting up from the sofa in the living room and walking

back into my bedroom and getting down upon my knees and talking to the Lord about this.

And I had been memorizing Scripture, and some of the things I had memorized the 1 thing I did was to memorize the Book of Ephesians and then I remember I started memorizing the Epistle to the Hebrews, and there were passages in the Gospel of John that I was memorizing. But one text was upon my mind. When I came in, I got down upon my knees and I said, Lord I’m disturbed about my salvation. I’m not certain. But you have said in your word -- and this is the text that I repeated to the Lord; I really thought he know it but I just wanted to remind him about it -- all that the father gives me will come to me and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. And so I said to him, if I have not come to you I’m coming right now, and I’m counting on this promise, and I think I can honestly say that since that time I had no questions about the assurance of my salvation in Christ. But it was not because of that experience; it was because of what Christ did on Calvary’s cross.

The safety is dependent on the blood that was shed. My certainty of it is dependent upon the word of God. My enjoyment of is dependent on the certainty, but the certainty is not essential for safety. It is true that there are people in my, as far as I feel, there are people who do know our Lord as their Savior but have not really come to a sense of certainty. I know here at Believers Chapel a number of people over the years have come to me and talked to me privately about the fact that they have believed in Christ. They felt but they still cannot have certainty or don’t have certainty concerning their salvation. Certainty is not an essential to safety. It certainly is an essential to enjoyment of the salvation that we have, but if we have believed in Christ, if we’ve rested ourselves upon him to the best of our knowledge we can be sure that the cross saves. Blood the blood of Christ saves the soul from sin. Part of your growth will be of course to grow in the knowledge of the word of God, and by God’s Holy Spirit come to conviction concerning your salvation.

I want to tell you an old story. This is an authentic story, but it’s funny. It’s a story of an old minister. I love these. An old minister. I had this in my notes fifty years ago, I think, and I told as if an old minister, an old minister somebody else. Now I tell it of myself. There is an authentic story of such an old minister who had preached the gospel in clarity and power during all his public life, but when he was suffering at times found himself greatly beset by doubt and uncertainty, and he mentioned it to his wife and she had drew attention to John 5:24, “Verily, verily I say unto you,” he read, “he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death into life.” And he burst out into a joyous laugh and said, How strange that I should ever forget words like these when I preached on them in the past for years. And some time later she came into a room and found her husband leaning over the side of the bed holding his Bible up under the bed and she said, Whatever are you doing? He said, Well Satan’s been after me again and since he’s the prince of darkness I took it he would be in the darkest place in the room, and so I’ve opened up my Bible to John 5:24, and I’ve been showing it to him under the bed. [Laughter] And he told his wife, he said, the moment that he saw it he ceased to trouble me [Johnson laughs]. I don’t think that that’s that Satan won’t stop at one look at the word of God like that but I think we can understand the mental weakness of a person like that when they get to be an old minister you understand.

Now one final thing we have about five minutes and I want to mention what is stated in verse 21 through verse 23. We’ve largely talked about this so I don’t think I have to emphasize it much. What is the duty of the people? Well it’s spelled out. Moses says he called for the elders of Israel, verse 21, said to them, pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families and kill the Passover lamb and you shall take a bunch of hyssop dip it in the blood -- that is, in the basins -- strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning, for the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when

he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over, hover over like a bird, like a mother bird, hover over the doorpost and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike it. So two things were necessary for Israel’s safety. First of all, they had to know the good news. They had to possess the good news, the good news of the blood that was to be placed on the doorposts. Nothing else could be sprinkled; not gold dust, silver, whitewash, all the other things, possibilities -- no only the blood. Only the blood. Only the sacrifice of Christ. No other substitute for the sacrifice of Christ for salvation. What Peter calls the precious blood of Christ.

Now this past week I read an article by Maurice Roberts in *The Banner of Truth Monthly*, or their magazine, I don’t know whether it’s monthly; I take it, but I’ve forgotten whether it’s a monthly magazine. But it’s entitled, Mr. Roberts is the Editor of *The Banner of Truth* magazine, it’s entitled “What Earth’s Princes Never Knew.” It’s so apropos. He begins by saying, “The one idea which is not found in the writings of the ancient pagan world is the cross. The thinkers of Greece and Rome managed to philosophize about almost everything else but this entirely eluded their powers of speculation. Our familiarity with the thought of Calvary in these New Testament times beguiles us into supposing it is something which the world has always known about. We’re therefore apt to think of the cross as one element in a system of truth, the other parts of which are creation, providence, judgment, heaven and hell, but we fail to appreciate when we put the cross on a par with other religious truths that it is the one thing which is out of sight in pre-Christian pagan times, whereas all the rest was more or less in sight.”

My mind went right back to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and chapter 1 where the apostle writes about this. “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world, for since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message, preached the blood of the cross (the blood on the doorposts) the blood of the cross to save those who believe. The Jews request a sign. The Greek

seek after wisdom. We preach Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness.”

And it’s still true today. It’s the one truth that earth’s princes do not know. The truth of the cross; because it says something about us personally that we are sinners. It’s the one thing that might bring remedy. It’s the one thing that our presidents don’t understand, our other leaders don’t understand, our great thinkers from over the face of this globe do not generally speaking understand. It would solve so many problems for them if they just realized what we are, but they don’t realize what we are. That’s part of God’s program, too, of course, but that’s the first requirement: to have the gospel of the blood, to possess the good news, and then the other duty that Moses gave the people was to believe the good news and apply it. It was not the lamb that saved, it wasn’t the shed blood of the lamb that saved, it was the shed blood sprinkled on the doorposts that saved. The lamb didn’t save them. The lamb slain didn’t save them. The lamb slain with the blood sprinkled on the doorposts -- the application of it is that which saved them.

Peter talks about that in 1 Peter chapter 1 again. I’ll just read these verses because they follow on after the text which speaks about the precious blood of Christ. He says, “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” We know that. We even see it in the Passover account later on. It was foreordained before the foundation of the world, was manifest in these last times for you, for you who through him do believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. It is for you he says. There’s a whole lot of difference between knowing about the cross and knowing that the cross is for me.

August Van Ryan, a preacher who is now with the Lord, preached all over this country. He said he was walking with a friend of his one day in a city and they passed a building where the individual pointed out to him that just recently there had been put in that building eighty-two million dollars worth of silver coin that evidently was property of the Federal Reserve System, and the friend turned to him and simply said, “There was just

recently or last week eighty-two million dollars worth of silver coins were put in that building.” Mr. Van Ryan said, “As a matter of fact that didn’t affect me much at all because there was something missing. Now if he had said eighty-two million dollars worth of silver was put in that building for you or even if he said it was just one million that was put in for me, then it would really mean something for me.”

It’s not enough to know that Christ died for sinners. By God’s work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts we are to know that Christ died for me for me. It’s the Holy Spirit that brings that conviction to you, because he died for all believers. It’s the Holy Spirit who brings you to that conviction. May God bring you to that conviction. Spurgeon said when he finished his one of his sermons, I’ll borrow it from him, he said, “I’ve dwelt sufficiently on the efficacy of the blood that no tongue or seraph could ever speak, but no tongue of seraph could ever speak its worth. I must go on to my chamber and lament, because I’m powerless to tell this story adequately.” May God help you to see as the dying thief the fountain for sin, and there wash all your sins away. That’s my prayer for any in this audience who may not know our Lord Jesus Christ. May God in his grace bring you to trust in the Passover lamb that has been slain whose blood is available for sinners. Let’s bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this magnificent typical picture of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Passover sacrificed for us. O Father, if there should be someone in this audience who has not believed in Christ, do not, Lord, give them any peace or rest until they rest in him in Thy will.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.