**Session 13: Week 7b**

**Start at 19:00**

***God of Deliverance***

**Exodus 12:1-42**

**7-8 November 2022**

**The Blood of the Lamb** – We ended last week talking about the blood being applied to the doorposts and lintel of the door, which would be a sign to the Lord to pass over that house and not kill any firstborn there. We might be tempted to think that this means that the blood indicated that the people inside the house were *righteous* and that is why the angel of death would spare them. But if you consider the Israelites and the Egyptians, which of them are guilty of sinning against the Most High God? Both are! So the Israelites were not spared because they were Israelites but *because the blood of an innocent lamb had been interposed between them and the judgment of God*. We all deserve judgment. Some of us are covered by the blood of the Lamb, and the judgment passes by.

**New Month, New Festival** – The Israelites were given a new month to begin their year. On day 10 of that month they were to select a lamb or young goat and keep it inside for four days, and then celebrate Passover on the 14th. They were to have the Feast of Unleavened Bread for an entire week, on days 14-21 of the month. They were to have this dramatic practice each year of going through their houses and seeking out all the leaven to get rid of it. They were told, “You shall keep this as a statute for you and your sons *forever*.”

**New Covenant, New Observance** – So why don’t we observe Passover today? Believers have a new ordinance which replaces Passover, i.e. communion or the Lord’s Supper. In fact, Jesus and His disciples were observing Passover on the night before His crucifixion. They had reached the point in the meal where they were to share the “cup of redemption”, which symbolized the blood of the innocent animal whose blood had been shed on that night so long ago. It was at this point that Jesus said, “This is *MY* blood, shed for you.” He took the observance that was supposed to last forever, and He framed it up for the *new* covenant. He didn’t do away with the covenant, He fulfilled it. Then He picked up the unleavened bread and announced, “This is My body, given for you.” He was saying, “There is no leaven in Me.”

**Two New Ordinances** – Protestant churches today observe two ordinances, communion and baptism. Baptism corresponds to the Old Testament practice of circumcision, and communion corresponds to the Old Testament practice of Passover. What did the two Old Testament practices share in common? Blood: they are both bloody signs. In the new covenant circumcision goes from a bloody sign to the bloodless sign of baptism cleansing, and Passover goes from a bloody sign to the bloodless sign of the Lord’s Supper. Why? Because the final sacrifice has been made. The blood of Christ has satisfied the wrath of God. It is true, however, that when we take the Lord’s Supper, we acknowledge, echoing back to Passover, that we are the ones who raised the knife. We are the ones who shed the blood. We are the ones who were spared.

**The Tenth Plague** – The narrative tells us that there was not a single Egyptian house where someone was not dead, and now we see why God told the Israelites to eat the Passover meal in haste, with their

shoes on their feet and their staffs in their hands. God knew that when *this* plague struck, Pharaoh would not wait until morning to tell the Israelites to leave. He would do it immediately, and they needed to be ready to go at once. And think too, when you read that there was not a house where someone was not dead, that it had been that way in the homes of the Israelites for so many years. God is saying, “You have killed My firstborn son? I will kill yours.”

**Death of the Firstborn Son** – But why is it the firstborn son? In Egyptian culture as well as the Israelite culture, the firstborn son was the one who would inherit. And because the firstborn son was so important to the family, he was treated with favor. There was a lot invested in making sure that the firstborn son was prepared to take on the responsibility and the privilege associated with that role. When God killed all the firstborn sons, He was saying to the Egyptians, “I take from you your future and your hope.”

**“Bless Me Also”** – When Pharaoh presented Moses and Aaron with his urgent command for them to leave, along with their entire nation and livestock, he added, “And bless me also!” This poignant phrase is reminiscent of Esau’s, “Bless me also, my father! Is there no blessing for me?” No, Esau. You counted lightly the things of God, and the blessing has been given to someone else. In like manner, Pharaoh had said, “Who is Yahweh? I don’t know Him,” and now he wants a blessing.

**The Birth Metaphor Continues** – The text says that the Egyptians were *urgent* to sent the Israelites out in *haste*, words that remind us of the urgency and haste when a newborn infant is finally pushed out of the birth canal into the world. They had already given the Israelites gold, silver and clothing, and now they are anxious for them to leave before any more disaster strikes Egypt.

**The Departure At Last** – The people traveled from Ramses—the store city that they had been forced to build for Pharaoh—to Succoth. They were 600,000 men strong, plus women and children and all their livestock. There was also a very large group of non-Hebrews that accompanied them. We are not told exactly who this “mixed multitude” includes, but apparently some people in Egypt have been paying attention to this Yahweh and they want to go with the Israelites when they leave. We are never told what the total number of people leaving was—some have conjectured as many as 2,500,000. But what does Moses want us to understand about that number? It was six times ten times ten times ten time ten times ten. In other words, it was *complete*: God brought out exactly the ones He intended to rescue. The number that went into Egypt 430 years earlier was small; the number that left was enormous. Fruitfulness and multiplication has happened on an unthinkable level.

**A Night of Watching** – Moses tells us that the people left Egypt 430 years to the day from the time they had gone in. The night of their departure was a night of watching for the Lord, a night He had waited for until just the right time came. And the night was to be a night of watching kept to the Lord for the Israelites throughout all their generations.

**For Us and For Always** – What do these things mean for us today and for always? That is, how is this for the people of God for all time? How should we keep the spirit of a night of watching unto the Lord?

There are some verses in the New Testament that help us with this. We are told to **keep watch on our** ***adversary*** who prowls around, wanting to destroy us. We are to **keep watch on our** ***sin.*** We are to **keep watch on our *doctrine***, to guard our teaching and make sure that it is pure. And most wonderful of all, we are to **keep watch on the *horizon***, because the One who once rescued will certainly rescue again. What happens when we are not vigilant in our watching? We can begin to slip off our sandals, take off our belt, and get a little too comfortable. It is then that we are vulnerable to allowing a little bit of leaven to get mixed back into the dough of our spiritual lives. We are tempted to tell ourselves that our previous life wasn’t so bad, and we are drawn to past sins or indulgences. It is then God’s mercy to remind us, “Keep watch! Keep watch, not just for now, but for always!”

**Watching at the Lord’s Supper** – What if we viewed participating in the Lord’s Supper as a time to assess our lives: Have I let down my cloak? Am I believing that this world is my home? Or am I keeping watch, knowing that He will surely come again as He said? How would that affect the way that I think or talk or act or pray? **Let us keep watch, both now and always!**