

ETERNAL SALVATION

AS SEEN IN THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN
(5)

By Arlen L. Chirwood

Exodus chapters eleven and twelve record the death of the firstborn in Egypt during Moses' day, four hundred years beyond the birth of Isaac. God had decreed that the firstborn of both man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt *must die*. This included those in the household of every Israelite and Egyptian family alike — from the most obscure Israelite family to the household of Pharaoh itself. No firstborn throughout Egypt (even in the animal kingdom) was excluded from this decree (Ex. 11:4-6).

However, the Lord made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians by providing Israel with a substitute which could die in the place of, in the stead of, the firstborn in the family (Ex. 11:7; 12:3ff).

Each Israelite family was to take a lamb from the flock on the tenth day of the month, keep the lamb penned in a separate place until the fourteenth day, and then slay the lamb "in the

evening." Following the death of the lamb, *blood* from the lamb, which had been caught in a basin, was to be taken and applied to "the two side posts" and "the upper door post" of the house in which the Israelite family dwelled (Ex. 12:3-7, 22).

A few hours later, "at midnight," the Lord was to pass through the land of Egypt and execute the previously decreed sentence. *Death* would befall all the firstborn throughout the entire land of Egypt at this time. No distinction would be made between those in the households of the Egyptians or the Israelites in this respect, for the firstborn in every household was under *exactly the same sentence*.

("Midnight" is used in Scripture referring to *judgment*. The first use of this word occurs in Ex. 11:4, relative to judgment befalling the firstborn, establishing an unchangeable pattern [cf. Ruth 3:2, 8; Matt. 3:11, 12; 25:6-12].)

The distinction which God established between the Israelites and the Egyptians lay, not in excluding the Israelites from the sentence decreed upon the firstborn, but in providing the Israelites with *a means of substitutionary death*.

The paschal lamb in Exodus chapters eleven and twelve was given to Israel, and only those in Israel could slay this lamb. And for an Egyptian family to have had a part in the provided substitutionary atonement the night of the Passover, that family would have had to go to Israel (cf. John 4:22).

When the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight, He looked for *one thing*. He looked for *the BLOOD of a slain lamb* on the door posts and lintel of each house.

If *the blood* was there, the Lord passed over that house simply because He knew that death had already occurred. The firstborn had already died in that household. A lamb from the flock had died in his place, and the Lord looked upon the matter just as if the firstborn in the family had himself died.

However, if there was *no blood* on the door posts and lintel — with no respect given as to whether it was an Egyptian or an Israelite household — the firstborn himself died. The absence of blood showed that *death had not occurred* in that house, and the firstborn from every household *had to die, himself, personally*, though the Lord had provided for and recognized a vicarious death.

It cannot be overemphasized that the Lord looked for *one thing and one thing only* when He passed through the land of Egypt at midnight. He looked for *BLOOD on the door posts and lintel of each house — nothing more, nothing less*.

The blood not only had to be shed but it also had to be properly applied. Once the Lord saw *the blood*, He looked no further. Insofar as the death of the firstborn was concerned, nothing else was of any moment. *God was satisfied*.

And it is the same today. The firstborn is under the sentence of death, and God has provided a *Substitute* — "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7). He has shed *His blood*; but the blood, as in the type, must be properly applied, which is accomplished through a simple act of faith:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

As in Egypt the night of the Passover, insofar as the death of the firstborn is concerned, nothing else is of any moment. Apart from believing, unredeemed man today can do *nothing*.

The Israelites during Moses' day could do *nothing* but apply the blood of lambs, slain on their behalf; and man today can do *nothing* but apply the blood of the Lamb, which has been slain on his behalf.

And, as during Moses' day, once this has been done, God recognizes a substitutionary death as having occurred, *resulting in His satisfaction*.

"It is appointed unto men once to die..."
(Heb. 9:27).

A man can either keep this appointment in Christ or apart from Christ. That is, he can elect to either receive the One Who has kept the appointment on his behalf, or he can elect to keep the appointment himself.

For those who have *believed*, the blood has been properly applied to show that the firstborn has died; and *that's the end of the matter*.

For those though who have *not believed*, there is no proper application of the blood; and *the end of the matter awaits*.

(Note that Exodus chapters eleven and twelve address, in no uncertain terms, an issue often brought up today: "Who was responsible for Christ's death?")

In these two chapters, God gave the paschal lamb to Israel, and only Israel was in possession of and could slay this lamb.

In that foreshadowed by the type, Christ was the Paschal Lamb; and, exactly as in the type,

only Israel was in possession of and could slay the Lamb [Christ came to Israel and presented Himself to the nation (Matt. 15:24; John 1:11)]. And, beyond that, beginning with the type in Genesis chapter four, Scripture clearly attributes this act to Israel [*cf.* Matt. 23:37-39; 27:25; Luke 13:33; Acts 2:23, 36; 3:17; 4:10; 5:28-30; 7:52].

Seeking to absolve Israel of this act — something very evident within and without Christendom today — is man's way, within his finite thinking, of seeking to distance himself from that which he sees as anti-Semitism [seeing the Jewish people as the ones responsible for Christ's death]. But, in reality, exactly the opposite is true. Seeking to absolve and remove Israel from any connection with Christ's death is *one of the most heinous, anti-Semitic acts ever perpetrated against the Jewish people*.

If Israel could be absolved of and removed from the position which Scripture plainly attributes to the nation, that of Christ's death, note what would have to be the result. Such thinking, if carried to its logical conclusion, would *do away with God's provided means of salvation for anyone, Jew or Gentile*. And, in that respect, such thinking would not only be *anti-Semitic but anti-God and anti-human-race, for God's entire redemptive plan would be voided and mankind [Jew and Gentile alike] would have no Saviour*.

And the Biblical reasoning for that is very simple. Apart from Israel slaying the Paschal Lamb in 33 A.D., there can be no salvation for unsaved humanity [John 4:24], for, again, *only Israel could slay the Lamb*. And, to slay this particular Lamb, God's Son [after God, through Israel, had provided the Lamb (*cf.* Gen. 22:8)], *is the central reason God called the nation into existence. All other reasons for Israel's existence rest upon and are dependent on this fact*.

And, instead of being anti-Semitic, seeing

Israel as the slayer is one of *the most pro-Semitic acts in existence*. And the reasoning for that is very simple as well. *Through this act, Israel has provided man with a Saviour; apart from this act, man would not have a Saviour* [*cf.* Numbers chapter thirty-five (*ref.* the author's book, THE TIME OF THE END, Appendix II, "The Death of the High Priest,")].

And, while thinking along the preceding lines, a person might also want to consider which group of people God used to give mankind a Jewish Book to tell them about this Jewish Saviour. And, to carry the matter one step further, a person might also want to consider which group of people God has used, continues to use, and will always use as the channel through which all spiritual blessings for mankind flow, with the provision of a Saviour being the ultimate of all possible blessings.)

"What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

The answer is simple. You can't do anything. *It has all been done on your behalf*. Simply "believe [put your trust in, your reliance in]" the One Who paid it all at Calvary. Then, and only then, will God look upon sin as having been judged *in your life personally*, based on the finished work of His Son.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

www.lampbroadcast.org