

The Good News of a God who Passes over us in Mercy
Sermon for the 4th Mid-week Lenten Service, 2026
Exodus 12:1-14

Dear friends in Christ,

The Apostle Paul reminds us that “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*” (2 Tim. 3:16).

“*All Scripture is breathed out by God.*” This makes the Scriptures unique. We call them divinely inspired. Peter also wrote about this: “*No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:20-21). God’s Spirit brought about these writings. They were willed by God; God determined their content; the Spirit moved the writers to write in the way they did. *The Scriptures truly are the very Word of God.*

There are, however, certain chapters of the Bible that are particularly *outstanding*. Genesis chapter 3, which brings us the story of the fall into sin and the first promise of a Saviour, is one of these. Leviticus chapter 16, which presents the regulations for Israel’s great Day of Atonement, is another. The chapter from which our text comes tonight, Exodus 12, is especially noteworthy because it presents one of the most important Old Testament types of the Saviour Jesus Christ. A type is a sign or an event that represents something still to come. We look to the Scriptures to identify these types. Exodus 12 brings us God’s institution of the Passover festival. The institution of Passover took place at the Lord’s command and established Israel as a nation,¹ and was to be celebrated by the Israelites every year to remind them of their special place as God’s chosen people. The Passover lamb, on which this feast was centred, is a type, or picture, of Christ, “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

The LORD gave directions for preparing the Passover festival and began by stating when it was to be held: “**It shall be the first month of the year for you.**” The Hebrew name for this month was “Abib,” or “earmonth,” because the grain was then in the ear.² It is the month of April.

The LORD told Moses and Aaron to say to the Israelites, “**on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household.**” The Passover lamb was to be “**without blemish, a male a year old...**” taken “**from the sheep or from the goats.**”

Having found a lamb, the man was to take it home and keep it “**until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.**” Then, they were to “**take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses.**” (The lintel is the top doorframe.) Then, in the house, the lamb was to be “**roasted on the fire**” and eaten with “**unleavened bread and bitter herbs.**” This was done in the homes of all the Israelites.

The LORD told them to be ready to leave Egypt, because He was going to “**pass through the land of Egypt that night, and... strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.**”¹³ **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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.**”

In judgment, the LORD did strike down the firstborn of Egypt, and in mercy, He did pass over the homes of His people. Wherever the blood of the lamb was seen, no harm came.

The next day, Pharaoh sent word that the Israelites were, at last, free to leave Egypt. Through nine

¹ Isaiah 43:15

² Exodus 13:4

previous plagues, in the hardness of his heart, he had refused to let them go, but now their time of slavery has ended. They are free at last.

The centuries rolled on, and year after year, on the anniversary of the original Passover, the people of Israel observed a weeklong feast that included the sacrifice of Passover lambs and the eating of Passover meals.

This all happened exactly as the Lord had said it would. Moving forward nearly fifteen hundred Passover celebrations: In about the year AD 33, on the Sunday of the week of Passover, a Man entered Jerusalem, riding humbly on a donkey. *He has come to present Himself as the true Passover Lamb.*

Over the next four days, this Man, Jesus of Nazareth, is repeatedly questioned, challenged, and tested. Each time, He proves faithful and guiltless. He shows Himself to be unblemished.

That Thursday, He celebrates the Passover with His disciples. Later that same night, He is taken captive, and the next day, on a hill outside Jerusalem, Jesus offers Himself up on a cross as our Passover sacrifice.

Like the earlier Passover lambs, not one of this perfect Lamb's bones is broken (John 19:31-36).

Unlike the first Passover, only *one* firstborn Son dies this time—the Lamb Himself, the firstborn Son of Mary and the only-begotten Son of God.

There is weeping over the death of this Son. But because of His self-giving sacrifice for us, all who are marked with His saving blood are untouched by God's righteous judgment. For our countless sins of thought, word, and deed—for the evil we have done and the good we have left undone—we justly deserve God's present and eternal punishment. But instead, just as God passed over the Israelite homes marked with the blood of a Passover lamb, God passes over us in mercy, "*for Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed*" (1 Cor. 5:7), and we are marked by the blood of the Lamb.

He is the true, final, perfect Passover Lamb—of whom all other sacrificial lambs have been merely a shadow. By His blood, we are saved, for we have been redeemed once and for all "*with the precious blood of Christ, . . . a lamb without blemish or spot*" (1 Pet. 1:19).

In baptism, we have been washed clean in the blood of this holy Lamb of God (Rev 7:14b). By the Gospel, His cleansing blood purifies us of all sin (1 Jn 1:7-9), and in the Lord's Supper, a new and better Passover meal, we receive forgiveness, life, and salvation through His body given for us and His blood poured out for us (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

Marked by the saving blood of the Lamb, we are forgiven and set free from sin, free from the fear of death, and free to live as God's redeemed people.

And it all happened *just as God said it would*, as He previewed in the Passover, He accomplished on the cross.

For all of this, may Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, be praised forevermore. For as John heard sung in heaven and recorded for us in the fifth chapter of Revelation, "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing! . . . To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever*" (Rev 5:12-13). Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.