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THE LAMB OF THE PASSOVER

Living Stream Ministry

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by Watchman Nee

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Scripture Reading: Exo. 12

God's people, the Israelites, were enslaved in Egypt for many years. God saw their affliction and brought down ten plagues upon the Egyptians to punish them so that they would release His chosen people. After nine plagues had passed, the Egyptians were still hard-hearted. They did not want to lose their slaves. Therefore, God sent down the last plague to show His wondrous might and accomplish His deliverance.

We want to see how the last plague shows us the way of our salvation. God told the Israelites that He had decreed that all the firstborn in the land of Egypt should die. Whether the firstborn of an Israelite or Egyptian, God had decreed that they should die. "All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" (Exo. 11:5). But God established a way of salvation. He told the Israelites that every household should prepare a lamb without blemish, kill the lamb, put its blood in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop strike the blood on the two side posts and upper doorpost of each house. At midnight the angel of the Lord would pass through the land of Egypt and smite all the firstborn in houses that did not have the blood of the lamb on the side posts and upper doorpost. By midnight Jehovah had smitten the firstborn of many Egyptians in the houses which did not have the blood of the lamb on the side posts and upper doorpost. Those who did not die denote those who are saved, while those who died denote those who are perishing.

We should realize that all the firstborn in Egypt should have died. Egypt was under God's judgment. The Israelites were also under God's judgment. The firstborn typifies all sinners (1 Cor. 15:46). Egypt typifies the world, and Pharaoh typifies the devil. All sinners who live in the world and have become the slaves of the devil are under God's judgment. They will all receive God's punishment, eternal death. All have sinned and there is no distinction (Rom. 3:22-23). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). My dear sinners, please do not take this matter lightly. Do not forget this! You are a sinner, your sins will be punished, and this punishment is eternal perdition and suffering in the lake of fire. You ought to consider your sins more! You ought to consider the punishment that awaits you! Regardless of whether you attend a church, the wrath of God is always upon you unless you are saved and delivered from your sins (John 3:36). O sinners! Do not forget that God is righteous. He surely will judge sins.

Nevertheless, we are not without hope; there is still a way to salvation. Although we do not have a way by ourselves, God has a way. There is no other way of salvation except God's way. The Bible says, "Neither is there another name [but Jesus] under heaven given among men in which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He told the Israelites to prepare a lamb. This lamb was their savior. The blood of the lamb saved them from death.

This lamb of the Passover signifies our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Scripture says, "For our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). "You were redeemed...with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). In the past God saved the Israelites with the lamb. Now He is saving us through the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is our Lamb. The Israelites were saved by the lambs and we are saved by the Lord Jesus.

Do you want to be saved? If not, there is nothing more to say. But if you know that you are a sinner under the judgment of God and cannot escape His righteous judgment, and you wish to be saved, there is a saving way. God has prepared a salvation. He wants to save you.

The Lord Jesus has been crucified on the cross for our sins. Salvation has been accomplished, and whoever accepts Him as their personal Savior will be saved. The Israelites could not be saved by any other means. They relied on

the blood of the lambs. Similarly, only the precious blood of the Lord Jesus can save you. Only the precious blood can save sinners!

Suppose that I could go back in time with you to the house of an Israelite. (Of course, this is only hypothetical.) Suppose we found a father and son sitting comfortably at home, and I asked him, "I heard that God is going to kill your son at midnight tonight. Why are you still sitting here comfortably? Aren't you afraid of death?"

The man might answer, "We have nothing to fear, for God has prepared a lamb for us, and the lamb can save our lives. Look at my lamb! How fat! How white! How attractive! How lovable! And listen to the pleasing sound he makes! My lamb is the best; the lambs of my neighbors are not as good as mine. Since I have such a nice, good, and kind lamb, what more do I fear?"

What he said seems to be correct, but I tell you, at midnight his son will die! He will be killed by the angel of God!

Why? Has the word of God come in vain? Does he not have a lamb?

Indeed, he has a lamb. But God wants a dead lamb, not a living one. Let me tell you, a living Lord Jesus cannot save us; only a crucified Lord Jesus can save us. While the Lord Jesus was living on earth, He could not save us. Only after He was crucified could He redeem us. Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Galilee are places that condemn us; only Golgotha is the place which gives us eternal life. Do not marvel at this statement. Many people claim that Jesus is our model, a great man and a great teacher. Others think of Him as a man of good behavior, good morals, noble humanity, and great might. But, let me tell you, the more excellent the Lord Jesus is, the more your inadequacy is exposed! His goodness cannot save you; it will only condemn you! When God sees Him, God is satisfied. Although we may try our best to imitate Him, the more we try, the more our inward sinful nature and outward evil acts demonstrate our unworthiness. Our conduct will never please God. The more we imitate, the more we find that we will not and cannot imitate Him.

Do not be deceived! Although you may speak about the excellency of Christ's humanity and the loftiness of His morality, only He is excellent and only He is lofty. He and you have no relationship. Thank and praise God! His Son did not come into the world to be our model. God does not want us to

imitate Christ with our own efforts so that we can be saved. He sent His Son to die for us sinners and accomplish salvation on our behalf. We do not need to do anything by ourselves, because He has already accomplished everything. We were sinners and the punishment we deserved was death and perdition. However, the punishment we deserved and the judgment we should have received have all been borne and received by the Lord Jesus. He died as sin in our place. His death should have been ours, but He died in our place. Therefore, we do not need to be punished for our sins anymore. "Surely He has borne our sicknesses, / And carried our sorrows / ...But He was pierced because of our transgressions; / He was crushed because of our iniquities; / The chastening for our peace was upon Him, / And by His stripes we have been healed" (Isa. 53:4-5).

We are all sinners (Rom. 3:9-20) and deserve to die (Ezek. 18:4). If the Lord Jesus had come only to live for us, what could have saved us from our sins and delivered us from perdition? Praise be to God that He did not come to live, but to die—to die in our place, to bear our sins, and to receive the punishment due to us. Since we have Him as our Substitute, we do not need to die anymore! We now have a way to salvation! If we merely take Jesus as a model, intending to imitate Him as a means of salvation, we will end up perishing because there is no one on earth who can be like the Lord Jesus. No one can be saved by trying to imitate the Lord Jesus (Gal. 2). Those who believe on His substitutional work shall be saved! (Acts 16:31). The word of God says, "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

Suppose we go to the next house and see the parents and children there, and we asked them: "I heard that God is going to kill your firstborn tonight. Is it true?"

They may answer, "Yes."

Then I would ask again, "Why are you not afraid? Do you realize that your firstborn will die soon?"

They might answer, "We are not afraid because God has established a salvation. He told us to prepare a lamb, kill it, and put the blood in a basin. Look! The lamb has been killed, and the blood is in the basin. We Israelites are sinners, but the lamb has died on our behalf. Therefore, we have no fear."

But, let me tell you, at midnight, the firstborn of this family will still be killed by God's righteous wrath! If you act like those of that household, you will also perish!

Consider what the fault is of this man. The first household lost their firstborn because of the absence of the blood of the lamb. But the second household had a live lamb, slaughtered it, and shed its blood. Why then should they perish? They had the blood, but where was the blood? Blood in the basin cannot save a man. Unless the blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the side posts and the upper doorpost, it could not save them from death.

There are too many people like the ones in this household. I am afraid that these people may even be members of a church! You have already heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus and also know that He died on behalf of the sinners of the world. You have read from the Bible and newspapers about the Lord Jesus' substitutional death. You have heard it from the pulpits. But you have not come to God devotedly to receive His Son as your Savior. You know that the death of the Lord Jesus is a substitute for sinners; but you have not accepted Him as your personal Savior. You know that He died for the world, but do you believe that He died as sin for you? In your mentality you have heard and known all these things. But you have not exercised your heart to believe and to trust in Him. You have heard and known, but you stop right there and do not go further to seek after God's grace. You may be tired of hearing the teaching of the cross of the Lord Jesus, but you still have not mixed your faith with the Word preached to you (Heb. 4:2). You are still a man of perdition! Although you have known, you have not believed. Because you have not exercised your faith to receive the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior, your knowledge cannot help you at all, and you are still a man bound for hell! Blood that is in the basin, but unapplied to the side posts and upper doorpost, cannot save you. If the heart (Rom. 10:10) has not believed in the Lord Jesus, what good is the knowledge of the gospel in the head? Salvation is not for the one who knows, but for the one who believes (Acts 16:31; John 3:16).

Therefore, let me ask you, has the upper doorpost of your heart been sprinkled with the precious blood? Have you received the Lord Jesus in your heart as your Savior? I am not asking about your age or family status, nor do I inquire about your education or health. There is only one question in the world, the most important one—have you been saved? Have you received

eternal life? Do you have the precious blood sprinkled upon the upper doorpost of your heart? This is the most vital question! Please answer God. Have you been saved?

Blood in the basin, if not applied to the side posts and upper doorpost, is unable to save men. Although you know that the Lord Jesus has died for you, you will still perish if you do not exercise faith to apply His blood on the upper doorpost of your heart. The night of judgment is coming soon! The sinner-judging angels of the Lord will soon come forth! Eternity is now before you! Eternal life and eternal death are both eternal!! My dear sinners, apply the blood now! What are you waiting for? While you are reading this line, pause for a few minutes and pray, "O God, have pity on me, a sinner! I want to believe in the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior. Lord, forgive all my sins." The Lord will save you. Only come quickly!

On that night the Israelites used hyssop to dip in the blood and strike on the upper doorpost. If you want to rely on the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, you must have your own hyssop. According to the Scripture, hyssop is the smallest of all plants (1 Kings 4:33) and is despised by men. Speaking truthfully, I have never seen a proud man who can believe in the Lord Jesus. Unless we see ourselves as sinners and are willing to stand in the position of a sinner, we will not receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior. Therefore, you who are proud, please do not be proud any longer. Humble yourself before the feet of the Lord Jesus. Confess that you are a sinner; accept His salvation, and you will be saved!

When the blood was still in the basin, the Israelites were not safe; when the blood was applied, they were safe. If anyone knows about the salvation of the Lord Jesus but does not accept Him with faith, he is in danger. But the moment his heart is cleansed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, he is secure forevermore. What a pity that so many who have believed in the Lord Jesus do not know that they are secure and will not come into judgment!

Have you believed in the Lord Jesus? Have you been saved? Many Christians answer "yes" to the first question, but concerning the second question, I am afraid that many answer, "I don't know," "I dare not say," or, "I hope I can be saved."

These answers are not correct because the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). If you believe in the Lord Jesus, then you will be saved. This is the Word of God. How can you believe in the Lord Jesus and yet not be saved? If you are not saved, even if you have believed in the Lord Jesus, then has not the Word of God become void? If this is the case, then the Lord is a liar! The Bible says, "This is the testimony of God that He has testified concerning His Son...And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God...He who does not believe God has made Him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony which God has testified concerning His Son" (1 John 5:9, 11-13, 10). The teaching of the Scripture is this: He who believes in the Lord Jesus has the Lord Jesus, and he who has Him has eternal life. Those who have read this testimony of God can know that they have eternal life. If a man does not believe that God has given us eternal life and does not believe that he who has the Son of God has life, he has made God a liar! We should not make God a liar. He said that we can be saved by believing, and that if we have His Son, we have eternal life. Since we have believed and received His Son, the Lord Jesus, as our Savior, surely we are already saved. The word of the Scripture says that we can know whether we have been saved.

I once went to a certain place to preach, and I asked those who truly believed in the Lord Jesus as their Savior to raise their hands. Nearly everyone put up a hand. Then I asked those who were sure that they had been saved to raise their hands. Not one hand was raised! My visits to other places also led to the same experience. There are many who believe in the Lord Jesus, but there are few who know that they are saved! After I read the Bible, I could not understand how people could believe in the Lord Jesus and yet not know that they were saved. The Bible definitely says that those who believe in the Lord Jesus have eternal life. How can we believe in Him and yet not be saved? God cannot lie. To entertain such a thought is blasphemous enough; how much more serious is it to openly doubt His Word! He said that if we believe we have eternal life. We believe, and we surely have eternal life. "He who believes into the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36). This is the Word of God.

Let us consider the condition of another household in Israel. Suppose we went to a third house, and the moment we reached the door, we saw the upper

doorpost and side posts smeared with the blood of the lamb. As we entered into the house, we saw the killed lamb and the basin with hyssop by its side. However, the people in the house were sitting and crying, with their firstborn also looking pale, crying, and trembling. They acted as if a great calamity was going to come upon them. If I asked them, "Why are you so sad?", they would answer, "Sir, don't you know about the calamity that will befall us at midnight? At that time God will kill all the firstborn in Egypt, and our son will be among them." Then they might cry again. But I would ask them, "Has God not established a way of salvation for you? Did He not order you to kill the lamb and smear the blood on the upper doorpost and side posts? Is your door not smeared with blood already? Why are you still worrying?"

They might answer, "Yes, God has indeed said this, and we have done so accordingly. But we don't feel that we are safe."

Then I would do my best to persuade them not to worry and cry because they have the precious blood, and they are in a safe and sound position. Despite my efforts, they may continue to worry over the thought that it is impossible to know they are safe just by the smearing of the blood on the upper doorpost.

Is it reasonable for this household to be so worried? Yes or no? You might laugh at their foolishness because once the blood was on their upper doorpost, everything was all right. Continuing to worry and suffer would merely be self-inflicted agony. But many times we are the same as they. Having believed in the Lord Jesus, having accepted Him as our personal Savior, and having applied His precious blood on the upper doorpost of our heart, we have entered into a safe and sound position. We are saved and will no longer perish! What more do we fear? Why do we still worry? The moment we believed in the Lord Jesus, we were safe. If we have not accepted the Lord Jesus as our Savior, then we ought to worry and cry for we are condemned already (John 3:18). If, however, we have believed in the substitutional death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, then we have no reason or right to worry and cry, because we are already saved. We ought to rejoice because God has already saved us. We have not saved ourselves. God has saved us. What a wonderful grace! We ought to start praising the grace of the Lord and worry no more. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). Therefore, we are already saved! Heaven is guaranteed to us!

Many people cannot understand how someone can be saved merely by believing in the Lord Jesus. Their difficulty lies in being unable to feel that they have been saved. I often hear people saying, "I have truly believed in the Lord Jesus as my Savior, but in my heart I still cannot feel that I am saved." Let us read Exodus 12:13, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you." Who saw the blood? God saw it, not the firstborn. The blood was applied to the upper doorpost and side posts; the firstborn could not see it, and even if they could, it would have been of no use. God said that He would see the blood, and when He saw the blood, He would not smite us. We do not realize how much value there is in the blood of the Lord Jesus. We cannot understand how God profoundly values the blood of the Lord Jesus. But God said that when He saw the blood, He would pass over. He will save all those who have the precious blood of His Son. Our duty is to believe in the Lord Jesus' substitutional death and His shedding of the blood on the cross. God sees the blood, He will save us. Whether we feel it or not matters little. The Scripture does not say that we are saved when we feel that we are saved, and that if we do not feel so, then we will perish. What the Scripture says is that God will pass over when He sees the blood. Therefore, dear friends, do not rely on your volatile feelings. God's words are reliable. When He sees us believing in the Lord Jesus, He will save us. What more do we have to fear? Even if we feel nothing, God has already seen. Could the Israelites, who remained indoors, see the blood on their upper doorpost? Therefore, there is nothing strange if we do not feel anything!

Some brothers always worry. They think that they are not yet saved, even though they have believed in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, because they repeatedly fall. Many times they are weak. The more they look at themselves, the more they think they are unworthy to be saved. They honestly believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior. They know the grace of the Lord is great; however, when they look at their own failures, they are unable to believe that they are saved. But these thoughts are in vain. Let us again read God's Word. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exo. 12:13). What is the basis for God's salvation? What does God see? The Bible says that God sees the blood and nothing else. God saves us because of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and only because of the precious blood of His Son, not because of a change in ourselves or in our conduct. The Scripture does not say, "When I see your good conduct, I will pass over you." Nor does it say, "When I see your perfect life, I will pass over you." It says, "When I see the blood, I will pass

over you." The blood! We must pay attention to the blood. God sees the blood, not us, or even less, our conduct. Salvation and damnation are according to the presence or absence of the blood. Even if you were the best man in the world, if you do not believe in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, you are still a man of perdition. If you were the worst man in the world, and by faith applied the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, you would immediately be saved. The precious blood can save sinners! The precious blood is especially for saving sinners! "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). We are saved entirely by the grace of God; it has absolutely nothing to do with our conduct. The more we look at ourselves, the more we will feel that we are not worthy to be saved and have less peace. Therefore, we should look to the Lord Jesus and rely on Him alone. Look to Him, and we will have peace and joy in our hearts. Although we are not trustworthy, He is trustworthy. The more we look to Him, the more we will be purified and sanctified.

The Israelites were saved because they relied on the blood of the lamb, not because of their own merits. The Egyptians perished because they did not have the precious blood of the lamb, not because of their evil deeds. Salvation or perdition depends on whether we rely on the precious blood of the lamb. If we have the precious blood, then we are saved. Otherwise, our situation is dangerous! Let us now leave the Israelites and come to the Egyptians. Suppose we entered into an Egyptian house and found them enjoying their family life, and I asked, "Why are you so happy? God said that He will kill your son by midnight tonight!"

They might answer, "Sir, my son is different from other people's sons. He has never committed murder or arson. He is just and honest. He has done everything according to his conscience. Will God punish such a man?"

I would say, "If you do not have the blood of the lamb on your upper doorpost, God will not pass over him. He will destroy him."

They might respond, "Others may need the blood of the lamb, but good people have no need of the blood of the lamb."

When midnight came, their son would perish! Let me tell you, the consequence for all those who rely on their own righteousness, rather than the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, is eternal perdition! Although you are

better than your neighbor, and in the eyes of the world you are an honest man, can your small merit save you from the wrath of the most righteous God? All our righteousness is not up to God's standard. He still sees us as sinners; without the blood of the Lamb for our ransom, we will perish. Although the Israelites were evil (as we see from their experience in the wilderness), they had the blood of the lamb to redeem them from their sins. Therefore, they were saved. Although the Egyptians may have been good, they did not have the blood of the lamb to redeem them. Therefore, they perished. Salvation or perdition is not according to ourselves or our behavior; it is according to whether we accept the redeeming Savior who has died for us. In the book of Revelation the ones in heaven are there because of the precious blood of the Lamb, not because of their own conduct. Saved ones can go to heaven because they "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-17).

As the Passover approached and the hours ticked away, the time came! The hour of judgment came! "At midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt" (Exo. 12:29). This is the destiny of those who do not believe in the gospel of the Lord Jesus! I advise you to no longer rely on your own conduct because of the imminent coming of eternity. Do not excuse yourself or delay any longer. Believe quickly in the Lord Jesus. While today is still today, come quickly! "Behold, now is the well-acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

"There was not a house where there was not one dead" (Exo. 12:30). In every Egyptian house, someone died. Even the Israelite homes were not without their dead! Both the Egyptian and Israelites had a death in each house! The only difference was that in the houses of the Israelites, the dead one was a lamb, while in the Egyptian houses it was a man. In every house there was death, either of a person or of a lamb. How frightful! How solemn! Either a man or a lamb died.

Dear readers, I do not know who you would rather see die. Would you rather bear all your sins and die, or would you believe in and rely on Jesus, the Lamb of God, and let Him die for you? Either you die or He dies for you; it is either one or the other! If the Lord Jesus does not die for you, then you must die. Who will die? Thank and praise God because "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). You do not have to die; you do not have to perish for your sins. From this point on, you will not perish because

you are a sinner, but because you have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18). Therefore, do not let the Lord Jesus say to you, "You are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:40). "Let him who wills take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). How I desire that you would just come to God with a believing heart, praying, "O God, I am a sinner who deserves perdition, but I believe that your Son has died for me. Forgive all my previous sins so that from now on I will be saved."