

# Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."  
Isaiah 40:31*



October 22, 2017

## When I See the Blood

The first Passover typifies our salvation in a way that no other Old Testament story does.

A closer look at the account reveals some astonishing details that illuminate the New Testament.

*"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" (Ex. 12:13).*



Of all the Old Testament images that prefigure the gospel, the story of the final plague that God brought upon Egypt—the death of the firstborn—is the richest and most comprehensive. Pay attention to the details that parallel our own salvation experience:

When the death angel passed through the land of Egypt, it's judgment would fall on every house in the land that was unprepared. The families of Israel would have no advantage over the Egyptians. In the same manner today, *all* are under God's condemnation. None of us have earned a pass by virtue of some inherent quality or achievement. Unless God in His grace makes some provision for escape, we all are doomed to destruction.

For the Israelites, God's provision of grace took the form of a sacrifice.

Actually, thousands of sacrifices. Each household was to slaughter a lamb as a substitute for the firstborn that would otherwise be slain. Throughout their history, the Israelites would view the Passover lamb as the ultimate expression of the price that was paid for their redemption. Under the New Testament, Jesus is our lamb, sacrificed once for all time. Only this Lamb was provided by God Himself on our behalf.

The sacrifice of the Passover lamb was essential, but not quite enough. God instructed the Israelites to paint the doorposts and lintels of their houses with the blood of the lamb. That blood would "be a sign for you." As the angel of death went through the land, God's promise was, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you." The blood was their salvation—but they had to *do something* to make it effectual.

What was the purpose of this ritual? The easy answer is: because God said so. But there could be a deeper dynamic in play here. The painting of the doorways with blood was, by any human reasoning, bizarre and foolish behavior.

The Egyptians probably thought it was barbaric. It took a great deal of faith on the part of the Israelites to do it. Perhaps that was the whole point of the instruction. It was a simple act of faith by which the Israelites expressed their trust in God to deliver on His promise.

The parallel to the New Testament ritual of water baptism is unmistakable. The waters of baptism have no more miraculous power than the blood of the Passover lamb. But it is the final test of faith for any would-be disciple of Christ. It is the act of submission by which we contact the blood of Christ. When God sees the blood, applied by faith in our surrender to His will, He passes over us.

The story of the first Passover and Israel's release from bondage is a timeless lesson in how God relates to all humanity. We all stand equally condemned under the judgment of God. God has provided a perfect blood sacrifice by which we can escape that judgment. But each one of us must do something to appropriate the benefits of that sacrifice for ourselves. God is the Savior—but we must seek His salvation.

— David King



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