

" **Easter Lamb** " Pastor Takaaki Inoue Exodus 8:21-24, 12:12-14, Heb. 9:18-22

① [God has made the stubborn man that way]

The book of Exodus is really a book with much to learn. Moses returns to Egypt and tells Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to let the Israelites go and leave Egypt, but Pharaoh's heart stubbornly refuses. Moses then performs the miracle of turning God's staff into a snake, followed by 10 other miracles. (1) The waters of the Nile turning to blood. (2) The plague of frogs. (3) The plague of the bush. (4) Plague of flies. (5) Plague of pestilence. (5) Plague of pestilence. (6) The plague of hail. (7) Woe of hail. (8) Woe of locusts. (9) The plague of darkness. (10) The plague of the death of the firstborn.

But even before God sent Moses to Egypt, He said, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart... and he will not listen to you, even though you repeat signs and miracles." (Ex. 7:3). This similar expression is repeated many times later. How mean, don't you think, that God would keep Pharaoh's heart hardened and tell him to speak to his king? But it makes sense that God would intentionally harden Pharaoh's heart. If Pharaoh had been gentle, the Israelites would never have decided to leave Egypt. It is the breadbasket of the world. It is better to stay here to survive. There is no point in going all the way out to the desert and risking their lives. And if Pharaoh had listened to God, he would not have seen the 10 plagues or the miracle of the Sea of Reeds. The purpose was to bring God's power before the people and to show them that God is indeed alive and at work, ruling over the world. Thus they will know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the earth." (8:18), "that My name may be spoken in all the earth" (9:16).

Another thing we learn from this is that God uses evil and evil people as his instruments. Christianity is thoroughly monistic. It is not dualism. Even the devil cannot move without God's permission. When we see a stubborn or evil person in front of us, we think that if only that person were not there, we would be at peace. What if God dares to put evil people in front of us, to make us return to God through them and to show us God's work?

● Dr. Tetsuo Kashiwagi has been involved with various people as a hospice physician. A man who lost his parents early, had a difficult marriage, was betrayed by his colleagues at work, was laid off, lived a life far from happiness, and died at the age of 67, told us that before he passed away, he said, "I had many things happen, but it was a happy life. Looking at this patient, Dr. Kashiwagi says that a "person who can think of any situation as happiness" or "a person who has a kind of belief that various events in life, even if inconvenient, surely have some positive meaning" is a "competent person in life."

People in this world think that the purpose of life is to be rich, to achieve something,

and to be happy, but they are very mistaken. The purpose of life is to “know God” through various events. Whether you are happy or unhappy in this world does not matter much. In the next life, you will be asked only one question. “Do you know God?” The question is, “Do you know God? No matter how many things you have done in this life, it will all be for nothing if you are told at the door of heaven, “I don’t know you.

② **【The devil doesn't let us go easily】**

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, turns every time a plague falls on him, but when the plague passes, he returns to his old ways. When he saw that he had time to catch his breath, his heart became obstinate and he would not listen to them again.” (8:11) And he repeatedly offers Moses a compromise. He would repeatedly propose compromises to Moses: “You may offer sacrifices in the midst of this nation.” (8:21) “But do not go too far.” (8:24) “If you go, go with only men and serve the Lord.” (10:11) “Leave the sheep and oxen behind. You may take your wives and children with you.” (10:24) Isn’t this Pharaoh’s image much like ours? We compromise with the world and do not easily follow God. It is also called the “faith that neither burns nor goes out,” or “smoldering faith. They attend services on Sundays, give offerings, and serve because they are asked to, but it is a faith that has no joy. The power of evil and the temptation to sin do not easily leave us. The devil is constantly tempting us, trying to get us to join with evil, to draw us to his side.

● There is a favorite saying of mine in the Psalms.

‘Since I was young, they continued to afflict me; since I was young, they afflicted me, but they could not overpower me. The plowman has plowed my back [back] and made the ridges long. The LORD is righteous. He breaks the bonds of those who defy Him.” (Psalm 129:1-4) I believe these men are the power of sin. Since I was young, sin and evil have continued to plague me. Evil has tried to cultivate my disobedience. But in the end, it cannot overwhelm me. The Lord will always help those who fight against sin. The Lord always helps those who fight against sin.

So do not give up. Augustine said, “When you say this is enough, you have no more life. When the fire says that it has burned enough and ceases to burn, that is the beginning of its extinguishing. The apostles also said, “Fight the battle of faith with honor and obtain eternal life.” (I Timothy 6:12), “Submit yourselves to God and rebel against the devil.” (James 3:7). Water will not decay if it keeps flowing. If a person continues to fight against evil and sin, he is clean, even if he cannot overcome.

③ **【Death passes for those to whom the blood of the Lamb is applied】**

So the Lord inflicted the final plague of beating every boy who left his mother’s womb for the first time. This is what the king of Egypt did to the first Hebrews. But He commanded the Israelites to prepare for each family a yearling lamb

without blemish, slaughter it, eat its flesh, and smear its blood on the two pillars of the doorway and on the doorposts. For when the Lord struck all the firstborn in Egypt, the house that had the blood of the lamb on it was passed over. With this, Pharaoh finally surrendered and let the Israelites leave Egypt. This is the origin of Passover.

The blood that I have sprinkled on the house where you are will be a sign to you. If you see the blood, I will pass over you. . the plagues of the destroyer shall not come upon you" (Exodus 12:13); St. Johannes Chrysostomos, a fourth-century preacher, preached.

●Moses says, "Dust a yearling lamb and smear its blood on the doorway" (Ex. 12:5-7). What are you trying to say, O Moses? Are you saying that the blood of a lamb can save man, a rational creature? He will say. "Yes, it can. But it is not the blood itself that can save, but it is the forerunner of the Lord's blood that can save." Now, seeing that the blood of the anteface is not on the doorway, but the blood of the One who is the Truth is on the mouth of the believer, the doorway of the temple where Christ dwells, naturally the devil would retreat, would he not?

This Passover, "Pesach" in Hebrew and "Paschal" in Greek, became the template for the crucifixion of Christ. During this Passover, Jesus was crucified, His body torn and His blood shed as the Lamb of God. This marked the beginning of a new Passover, not only for the Jews, but for the people of the whole world. It is Easter. As the Hebrews wrote, "Everything ... is cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins" (Heb. 9:22). (Heb. 9:22). In the Old Covenant, the blood of animals was sprinkled on the sacrifices and on the congregation to cleanse them. In the New Covenant, the blood of Christ is sprinkled to cleanse people. No matter how serious, righteous, or good you are, no matter how deep your faith is, you cannot enter heaven and be cleansed. Nothing can purify a person except the blood of Christ. That is why the church holds the sacrament every week. When the blood of Christ is sprinkled on you in the form of wine and applied to your mouth in Holy Communion, death passes through you. Today's churches think that they can have or not have the sacrament and that man's faith is the best. You are very mistaken. Without drinking the blood of Christ, you have no life, you are not cleansed, and you cannot even stand before God. That is how deep man's sin is. Without the sacrament, without the blood of Christ, there is no worship. People of the past risked their lives to eat the sacrament. Please believe in the immense efficacy of the blood of Christ in the sacrament.