

Christ Our Passover

(1 Corinthians 5:7-8 KJV) Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: {8} Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ our Passover. What does that mean? This is equating Christ with the Passover. Is this talking about the entire Christ, head and body, or about Jesus – and if about Jesus, to what part of his life or death does it apply? And what part, if not the whole, of the Passover is meant?

Actually, although not stated, it is implied that Christ is being equated with the Passover lamb since the remainder of the phrase is “sacrificed for us”. There is no sacrifice associated with the Passover other than the lamb.

In the context of 1 Cor. 5, Paul is discussing the sins of some of the members of the Church. The phrase, *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*, is almost parenthetical, as an explanation to the analogy of the leavened and unleavened bread. Paul here showing that a little sin can spoil the entire group as a little leavening can leaven the entire loaf – and to not fellowship with the sinners.

But again, what does it mean, Christ our Passover? Let us begin by looking at the historical account.

First of all, who were living in Egypt at the time of the Passover? (1) Egyptians (2) Jews – except they weren't know as Jews then. God's people? – Yes – but more specific. Abraham's descendants? – Well, yes, but Abraham had 2 children – Isaac and Ishmael – The Ishmaelites were not in Egypt. Descendants of Isaac? – But Isaac had two sons – Jacob and Esau and the descendants of Esau were not in Egypt. So who were living in Egypt? Descendants of Jacob, renamed Israel - Descendants of the PROMISE – heirs of the PROMISE.

You remember the story of how they got to Egypt – the story of Joseph and how they went into Egypt as guests then became slaves. And the promise that they would once again go back to their land found in *(Genesis 48:21 KJV) And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.*

After being oppressed in Egypt, God sent them a deliverer, Moses, to lead them from Egypt – but Egypt did not want them to go. And here is where the Passover story begins.

You recall the ten plagues and how after a plague, Pharaoh would either deny the release, or grant them a conditional release then rescind it. The tenth plague is the main one of interest to us today. The plague of death to the first-born. The plague was not just upon the people but upon the animals as well. Why the first born? Historically the first born was the primary heir. We have the Scriptures (*Exodus 4:22-23 KJV*) *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: {23} And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.* The Egyptians and Israelites both suffered in the first three plagues, but only the Egyptians suffered in the last seven; however, the Israelites were subject also to the 10th plague. Had they not followed instructions, they too would have suffered the loss of their firstborn. And what were these instructions?

The Scriptures speak best for themselves:

(Exodus 12:1-28 KJV) And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, {2} This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. {3} Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: {4} And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. {5} Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: {6} And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. {7} And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. {8} And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. {9} Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. {10} And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. {11} And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. {12} For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {13} And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. {14} And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. {15} Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread;

even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. {16} And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. {17} And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. {18} In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. {19} Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. {20} Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. {21} Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. {22} And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. {23} For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. {24} And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. {25} And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. {26} And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? {27} That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. {28} And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

Now let us look at our Lord's life. He was born in Bethlehem which is a short distance from Jerusalem. At a young age he and his parents were forced to flee into Egypt. They later returned and lived in Nazareth. At thirty years of age Jesus was baptized by his cousin John, and Jesus then started his ministry. He chose – or rather was given – twelve disciples who left all to follow him. He performed several miracles, most of which involved healing. Five days before the above mentioned passover feast he went into Jerusalem where he was loudly hailed by the common people who wanted to make him their king. Within the next five days, he had been betrayed, tried, and executed.

Compare And Contrast.

As good students of the Bible, Bible detectives if you like, let us examine Jesus and the Passover to see how they are similar and how they differ.

But before we do that, let us consider a previous question – Is this talking about the entire Christ, head and body, or about Jesus. One Scripture should answer this question for us: *(1 Peter 1:19-20 KJV) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: {20} Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* This could only refer to Jesus as that one sacrifice.

Now, let us examine Jesus and the Passover to see how they are similar and how they differ:

In the Jewish history, the 10 plagues preceded the exodus of the nation. There are also 10 plagues recorded in the book of Revelation. However, the plagues of Revelation, whether you believe that they were past, present, or future, could not have preceded Jesus' sacrifice as they were not even known until many years after Jesus' death.

Aside from the plagues, the Israelites were living in the land of Egypt. After the Passover and the exodus from Egypt, they were then considered a nation – the Jews acknowledge this event as the birth of their nation. After the sacrifice of Jesus – and his resurrection – there was a new nation born – a spiritual nation of the seed of Abraham. *(Galatians 3:16 KJV) Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.* In the Scriptures, Egypt frequently pictures the world, and that is where we currently reside – in the world; but we have the one hope of our calling to exodus Egypt to the Promised land – the New Jerusalem.

Let us take a closer look at the lamb of the Passover in reference to Jesus: First a lamb was selected. Not just any lamb. The selected lamb must meet certain qualifications. “{Ex 12:5} Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats” Who, other than Jesus, was without blemish? No other human qualified. “A male of the first year.” When we see pictures of lambs – or visualize lambs, we see the cute, cuddly little lambs which are carried around – but these are newborn lambs, not lambs of the first year. A one year old lamb is essentially a newly matured sheep, probably weighing about 90 to 100 pounds, of which only 45% would be the carcass weight, or weight of the meat and bones. When did Jesus consecrate? When he was 30 years old – the “mature” age according to Jewish custom.

{Ex 12:6} And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” In the wild, a meat-eating animal may go several days between meals, but any grazing animal must eat daily – almost continually. This lamb was taken into the house and kept there for 5 days (from the 10th to the 14th of the month). Since the instructions in the 9th verse indicate

that the inward parts were also eaten, it is assumed that the lamb was not fed for that 5 days. This time period would allow the digestive tract to be completely voided. It is also assumed that water was provided since it is doubtful that a lamb could survive 5 days without water. Sheep and goats are somewhat noisy animals, but especially when hungry. Can you imagine how noisy it would be with all those lambs pent up for 5 days without eating? Can you imagine also the reaction of the people in the house? If that animal were in the house with them for 5 days, they would first get to be very attached to it, but also get annoyed with its constant bleating from hunger.

What is the correspondence with our Lord? Five days prior to Passover, he entered Jerusalem, the house of the Jews. But, did Jesus not eat? Or did He make loud noises? *“(Luke 22:15-16 KJV) And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: {16} For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* With Jesus, it was not the eating He desired, it was the companionship – the fellowship – the common union which He desired. Did Jesus make loud noises? *“(John 16:12 KJV) I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”* Oh, how He wanted to tell his disciples those “many things”, but He knew that they could not, at that time, understand them.

“And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” It is neither practical nor reasonable that the entire congregation of Israel could slay each lamb. This probably indicated, as one translation renders it *“when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening.”* (RSV) But when it came to Jesus’ sacrifice, the phrase makes much more sense, considering the Scripture, *“(Matthew 27:25 KJV) Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”* In both cases, the nation was taking responsibility for the death of the lamb.

{Ex. 12:7} And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And verse {13} And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And verses 22 and 23: {22} And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. {23} For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. As with all these instructions, it took faith to carry them out. So the doorposts and lintels of the household of faith are typically sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of God, saving all that are within. Saving them, not from Adamic death, but saving them to a deathless state – immortality.

{8} And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. {9} Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. During which night will those in the household of faith eat this flesh? The dark night is sin – the Gospel age. After that dark night will come the morning of the new day – the millennial morning. Roast with fire. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water. Why roast with fire, why not raw (undercooked) or boiled? Consider also the tenth verse: {10} And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. This is similar to the Tabernacle picture of the Brazen Altar. The hot, fiery trials which he endured, and which we, too, must endure. This entire sacrifice must be consumed – either by being eaten or by being burned up – before morning – the millennial morning.

“And unleavened bread”. Remember what our text Scripture said? *(1 Corinthians 5:7-8 KJV) Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: {8} Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* There must be NO impurity associated with this sacrifice.

“And with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” The eating of bitter herbs increases the appetite. Bitter experiences should increase our appetite for God’s plan, His kingdom, His word. *(John 6:53 KJV) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* Without an appetite for these things, one will not receive sufficient food and the new creature will starve.

Again, referring to a part of our theme text, verse {8} *Therefore let us keep the feast,* What is this feast which we must keep? {14} And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. {15} Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. How long should WE keep leaven out? Seven days. Seven literal days? Of course not – COMPLETELY. We are to remove the leaven and keep it out – permanently! That, again, was the context of our theme Scripture.

Let us now take another look at the timing. The Passover occurred the 14th day of the first month, Nisan. This is the first ecclesiastical month. It is of interest to note that the day of Atonement of Leviticus 16 – (Yom Kippur) was on the 10th day of the seventh month, Tishri, which was the first month of the civil year. To me, this is of interest

because it further separates the Ransom from the Sin-offering. During the Passover, the lamb was brought into the house the tenth day and killed on the 14th day. Jesus entered Jerusalem the 10th day, and his sacrifice was completed the 14th day. We recall that the lamb was slain “between the evenings”, the Lamb of God was also slain “between the evenings.” Certainly, he was placed on the cross about 9AM, but His death did not occur until “between the evenings.”

We know that during the Passover, the Jews ate the lamb, roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Now a question for you. What did they drink? Do you remember what the Scriptures said in Ex. 12? Nothing. No. it didn't say that they drank nothing, but nothing is said about drink. But Jesus, when He was partaking of the Pascal meal, *(Matthew 26:27-29 KJV) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; {28} For this is my blood of the new testament, [new covenant] which is shed for many for the remission of sins. {29} But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* Here we have a noticeable difference. Why was wine used here – or perhaps, why was wine, or any drink, not specified in the original Passover? It was not the time to speak of a drink. That came later. Remember Jesus' words that we just read – , *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*? Compare those words with *(Leviticus 23:10-13 KJV) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: {11} And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. {12} And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. {13} And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: **and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine**, the fourth part of an hin.* This is the life-blood of the new covenant of the millennial kingdom. And we are asked to be a part of it. But to be part of it we must first internalize it, consume it, make it a part of ourselves – Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col 1.27).

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(John 1:29 KJV) . . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.