

## PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JEWISH PASSOVER TO CHRISTIANS

*“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” — 1 Corinthians 5:7*

For over 4,000 years, the Jews have faithfully kept in remembrance their miraculous deliverance from bondage in Egypt, yet, without understanding its prophetic significance. For Christians, knowing the deeper meaning of the original Passover brings even greater appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ.

*this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt... and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you... And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations...” Exodus 12:3-14*

### THE FIRST PASSOVER — BLOOD OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH

The inspiring lessons found in the Jewish Passover are set during a most oppressive time in Israel’s history. The heart of Pharaoh was turned against the Hebrews, and God’s people cried out for deliverance from the cruel treatment by their Egyptian taskmasters. God heard Israel’s prayers for freedom and raised up a humble yet mighty man of faith to deliver them from their burdensome yoke: *“I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant... I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians... Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go...’”* Exodus 6:5-11 NAS

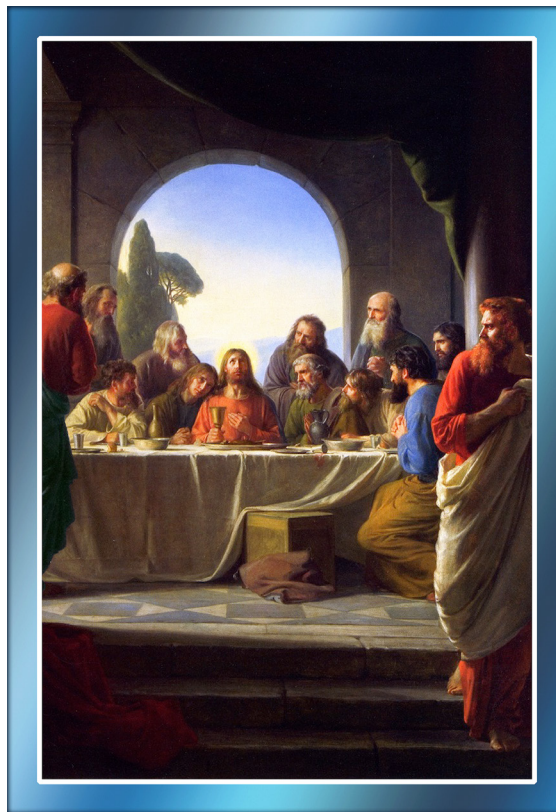
Pharaoh’s stubbornness in refusing to free the Hebrews resulted in ten plagues upon the Egyptians. The final plague was of special significance because it brought death to the firstborn in every household that had not followed God’s instructions for protection. *“Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb... without blemish, a male of the first year... and ye shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses... And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs... it is the LORD’S Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt*

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS — A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH

*“He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers... thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...”* (Isaiah 53:7, 10) Yes, Jesus is the *“holy, harmless, undefiled,”* *“Lamb of God”* as pictured in the Passover lamb of the Hebrews. (John 1:36) And, as in the original Passover picture where only the *firstborn* were in danger of death, so too, the followers of Christ are spoken of as the *Church of the firstborn*, and have accepted Christ’s blood on their behalf in this Christian Age. (Hebrews 12:23) These are *passed over*; saved from lasting death, corresponding to the *firstborn* of the Israelites being *passed over* by the application of the lamb’s blood on the doorposts and lintels of their homes.

The Hebrew firstborn were saved from death, but deliverance did not end there, for God provided deliverance soon after for the entire Hebrew nation.

This pictures God’s mercy not only for Christians now, but a future deliverance for the rest of humanity. (1 Timothy 4:10) These are still in bondage to sin and death and have been blinded by a vicious taskmaster — Satan and the servants of evil — pictured by Pharaoh and his henchmen. Therefore, the hope of deliverance **starts** with the *Church of the firstborn*, and then, for those who have never accepted Christ now during this dark night of sin and sorrow, they will receive deliverance in the *“new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* 2 Peter 3:15





**ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS SOON TO BE REMOVED**

We, as Christians, certainly appreciate the beautiful lessons this yearly celebration holds for the Jews, and, although we do not celebrate the Jewish Passover, we value the beautiful connection to our celebration of “*Christ our Passover.*” In addition to dying for the Gentiles by dying the just for the unjust, Jesus also delivered the Jews out from under the *additional condemnation* of not living up to the requirements of the Law Covenant that God had given them. Little did the religious rulers know that by executing Jesus as a criminal upon the cruel cross, he, though innocent, would suffer the curse (condemnation) of the Law on behalf of the Jews. “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree...*” Galatians 3:13

We can only imagine, when the blindness of fleshly Israel begins to turn away (Romans 11:25, 26), nothing will appeal to the Jews more forcibly than that Christ is the anti-typical (actual) fulfillment of the Passover lamb of the Hebrews. They will rejoice when they see that the blessings flowing from Christ's death were pictured in their Passover blessings. “*I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son...*” (Zechariah 12:10) Yes, they will mourn, but their tears will quickly turn to joy when they learn that Christ is their long hoped for Messiah. “*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*” Acts 3:22; Deuteronomy 18:15

**“THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME” — LUKE 22:19, 20**

Just as God commanded the Jews to *memorialize* the passing over of their firstborn by the blood of the lamb and their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, so, Jesus asked his followers to *memorialize* his death on the evening before the Passover Feast-week. At this *last supper*, Jesus also asked his disciples to *share* in his symbolic *cup of suffering* — wine picturing his blood shed in sacrifice. Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:11, 12

This concept of sacrifice is one that has been termed a *hard saying* by many who have sought to understand the Bible. Jesus said to the multitude, “*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life... Many therefore of his disciples... said, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’ ...From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*” (John 6:54-66) Of course, Jesus was not speaking of his literal blood and body — he was stating that his blood must be shed to “*take away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29) Since *all* fall under the one death penalty for Adam's sin, *all* will benefit from Jesus' payment for that penalty as they accept (drink) of the merit of Jesus' sacrificial death. (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22) Our Lord's faithfulness unto a *voluntary* death was the key to removing the curse of Adam upon *all*. Jesus' obedience pleased his heavenly Father, and not only granted him a resurrection from death, but also the resurrection of his faithful followers and the ultimate deliverance of the world from Satan, sin and death.

**“A MAN OF SORROW AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF” — ISAIAH 53:3**

The Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus is a *sympathetic high priest* who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. (Hebrews

**“CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US” — 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8**

*“Now these things happened to them [the Nation of Israel] as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” — 1 Corinthians 10:11 NAS*

**THE PASSOVER PICTURE****THE GOSPEL AGE REALITY**

Exodus 12, <b>Passover Celebration</b> ✧	✧ <b>Christ our Passover</b> , 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 26
Exodus 12:11, <b>Passover Supper</b> ✧	✧ <b>Lord's Supper—Memorial of his death</b> , Luke 22:15-20
Exodus 12:3-6, <b>Passover Lamb</b> ✧	✧ <b>Jesus, the Lamb of God</b> , 1 Peter 1:19; John 1:29
Exodus 12:3, <b>Lamb chosen for each household on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan</b> ✧	✧ <b>Jesus presents himself as a King on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan</b> , Matt. 21:5; John 12:1, 12, 13
Exodus 12:5, <b>Lamb to be without blemish</b> ✧	✧ <b>Jesus unblemished by sin</b> , 1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 7:26; 1 John 3:5
Exodus 12:6, <b>Lamb killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan</b> ✧	✧ <b>Jesus killed on 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan</b> , Mark 14:12 & 15:15-38
Exodus 12:46, <b>None of the lamb's bones to be broken</b> ✧	✧ <b>Jesus spared broken bones in crucifixion</b> , John 19:31-36
Exodus 12:12, 13, <b>Firstborn only of each family liable to the plague of death</b> ✧	✧ <b>Church of the Firstborn</b> , Hebrew 12:22-28 & Romans 8:29, 23 <b>liable to second death in Gospel Age</b> , Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29
Exodus 12:7, <b>Slain lamb's blood sprinkled on doorposts and lintels spares firstborn from death plague</b> ✧	✧ <b>Saved by faith in Jesus' blood sprinkled on doorposts &amp; lintels of our hearts</b> , Hebrews 10:22, Romans 5:1-10
Exodus 12:8-10, <b>Lamb roasted with fire was eaten with bitter herbs and none left over until morning</b> ✧	✧ <b>Christians' bitter &amp; fiery trials to consume the dross of their characters</b> , Hebrews 13:10-13, Matthew 5:10-12; 1 Peter 1:7
Exodus 12:8, <b>Unleavened bread eaten</b> ✧	✧ <b>“Unleavened bread of sincerity &amp; truth,”</b> 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8
Exodus 12:12, <b>Passed over in the night</b> ✧	✧ <b>Nighttime of the Gospel Age</b> , Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6
Exodus 13:3, <b>Delivered from bondage in Egypt</b> ✧	✧ <b>Saved from bondage of sin &amp; death</b> , Galatians 4:3-5
Numbers 33:3, <b>Deliverance in the morning</b> ✧	✧ <b>Morning of the Messianic Age</b> , Psalm 30:5; Malachi 4:2
Exodus 14:26-29, <b>Deliverance from Pharaoh the taskmaster</b> ✧	✧ <b>Deliverance from Satan, the taskmaster</b> , Revelation 20:1-3



4:15) “Therefore, he had to be made like his brethren in all things, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest..., to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since he himself was tempted [yet without sin], he is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” Hebrews 2:17-18 NAS

Because Jesus lived among the people, bearing their griefs and carrying their sorrows, he can have compassion for the *poor groaning creation*. (Isaiah 53:4; Romans 8:22) As our Savior demonstrated his *passion* at his first advent, he returns at his second advent to demonstrate his *compassion*, when the final fruitage of his suffering and death will be realized. (Revelation 21:4) Those whom he has ransomed from the grave he will know how to rehabilitate and restore to mental, moral and physical health when they are raised to life in his Kingdom. He will be their able teacher and mediator as they learn righteousness and grow to perfection. Isaiah 26:9; 1 Timothy 2:5

### EASTER TRADITIONS ROOTED IN PAGANISM

Over the years, our Lord’s injunction to memorialize the event of his death has been lost sight of and more emphasis has been placed on his resurrection — commonly called *Easter*. Within a few centuries after Jesus’ death, the Emperor Constantine popularized the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus, combining this with the pagan holiday of the Babylonian goddess *Estera* — the goddess of spring and fertility. Babylonians believed that an enormous egg fell from heaven into the Euphrates River, and from this egg the goddess *Estera* was hatched. The idea of this mystic egg eventually spread from Babylon to pagan Rome where, each spring a large *Estera* egg would lead processions in honor of the Mother Goddess.

Sadly, Constantine’s compromise with pagan worship has carried on through the centuries. Thus, *Easter*, falling at the same time in the spring, became identified with the Lord’s resurrection, and became a replacement for the *Memorial* of our Lord’s death. And now it is a common practice for Christians to have children hunt for Easter eggs, or roll them across church lawns. This all seems innocent and harmless, but how do we honor the true meaning of this resurrection day by carrying on pagan traditions? What example does this set for our children? How illogical and hypocritical this must all seem to non-believers.

Another unfortunate association with Christ’s death is the celebration of *Mardi Gras* — a “Christian” tradition which also dates back to ancient pagan spring fertility rites and other licentious Roman festivals. Again, from the time of Constantine, Christianity became the dominant religion, and religious leaders decided that, rather than abolishing these pagan celebrations altogether, they would incorporate them into their own faith. The French term *Mardi Gras* literally means “*Fat Tuesday*,” referring to the practice of partying and over-indulging on rich foods and drink in anticipation of the next forty days of *Lent*, where many Christians are told to fast from things they enjoy in

the days leading up to *Easter*. This should appear to all reverent Christians as the height of hypocrisy — we are told to “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*” 1 Thessalonians 5:22

It is understandable that Christians, without the aid of Bible study tools, have followed long-held traditions, teachings and practices. But now, in this age of enlightenment, sincere followers of Christ need to question whether these traditions have a Biblical basis and are truly God-honoring. We do well to heed the words of Jeremiah: “*Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen... For the customs of the people are futile...*” (Jeremiah 10:1-4) Leaving behind false traditions, and conforming our true Christian beliefs, we are to remember that God loves those who value truth above all else. “*You were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light... trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.*” Ephesians 5:8-10 NAS



### “WORTHY IS THE LAMB!” — REVELATION 5:12

The lesson of the Passover lamb as it relates to “*Christ our Passover*” began long before the account of Moses and the Exodus of the Hebrews. It even began before the creation of man. Before the foundation of the world our all-wise heavenly Creator knew that the first man Adam, without the benefit of experience, would inevitably sin. With this foreknowledge, God planned for a release from the death penalty for sin. In preparation for this deliverance, God offered to His Son, *the firstborn of all creation*, the privilege to pay the penalty for sin. (Colossians 1:15) Jesus took upon himself Adam’s sentence of death in order to fulfill this redemptive plan. In response to his beloved Father, Jesus

said, “*Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.*” (Psalms 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:7) Jesus, God’s “*only begotten Son*” was then destined to become the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world: “*...with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world...*” (1 Peter 1:19, 20) Herein is the entire plan of God — “*a ransom for ALL to be testified in due time.*” 1 Timothy 2:6

As demonstrated in the deliverance of the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt, a great day of blessing will soon witness both the reawakening of all mankind from the sleep of death and will realize the restitution of all things. “*...and he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*” (Acts 3:19-21 ASV) At that time, mankind and the earth will be restored to the harmony and perfection once enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. During this Kingdom of *compassion*, which God has been preparing through his beloved Son since before the foundation of the world, all mankind will have an opportunity to appreciate God’s gift of Jesus as that sacrificial Lamb. “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*” Revelation 5:12

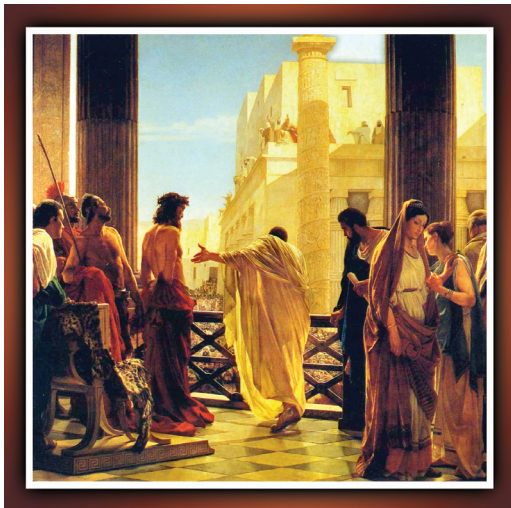
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