

The Christian Significance of Passover

April 16th & 17th, 2016

Leviticus 23:1-44

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, God established seven Biblical Festivals that honor God.

- Two additional Jewish festivals are Purim from the book of Esther, and Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, from the Apocrypha Books of First and Second Maccabees.
- The Hebrew word for feast is “chag” meaning appointed times or solemn times. God initiated the feasts in order that His people would keep His miracle stories alive and remembered.
- The festivals are part of a Biblical model instituted by God to teach His people about their relationship to Him.
- The festivals all pertain to Christians today in that they all have a Messianic message. Jesus didn’t come to abolish the Old Testament, but to fulfill it. *Matthew 5:17-18*
- In some Bible translations, the festivals are referred to as “convocations.” The Hebrew word for convocation is “miqua” which means rehearsal.
- Through the festivals, God’s people were to practice or rehearse the coming of Christ even though this purpose was veiled to them.

The Festival of “Passover”

- The sequence of events for Passover was stipulated by God and prophesied in Genesis 15:13-16.
- Passover is the most ancient of all the Jewish feasts and has been observed for over 3,500 years. Passover came toward the end of the 430 year period that the Jewish people resided in Egypt.
- God wanted His people back in His land, Israel. Pharaoh, however, enjoyed the free slave labor and wouldn’t let them go. God brought ten plagues against the Egyptians and their false gods.
- The tenth and final plague was that the Lord would pass through the land killing the first born of each family to include the cattle.
- In Exodus 12, God instructed His children how to avoid the ravages of the plague.
 - ↪ They were to select a year-old male lamb, without any flaw or defect. The lamb was to be selected from the flock on the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and kept until the fourteenth day of the month. This four day period would allow time for each family to become personally attached to their lamb. This would impress on them the costly nature of the sacrifice. Innocent blood would be shed on their behalf.
 - ↪ On the evening of the fourteenth day, the lambs were to be publicly killed by the whole assembly to emphasize that all were sinners. Each family, however, was to individually apply the blood to their doorposts as a sign of their faith in God. In following this command the innocent lamb became their substitute, and God’s judgment would “PASS OVER” them.

Exodus 12:41-42 “And it came about at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be observed for the Lord for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the Lord, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.” (NASB)

The Biblical significance of Passover as it relates to Palm Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, and Communion.

- Jesus, being a Jew, observed all of God's Old Testament Feasts. As He was nearing His crucifixion day, He and His disciples observed Passover. Matthew 26:1, 2, 17-25.
- This Last Supper celebration served as a bridge between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
- One of the significant parts of the Passover meal is the "*Afikomen*".
 - ↪ The "*Afikomen*" is a stack of three matzot like crackers. The top piece represents God the Creator, the bottom piece represents humanity on earth, and the middle piece represents the mediating priest. Jesus is our mediating priest.
 - ↪ At the beginning of the meal, the head of the house will bless the matzot, take the middle piece from the stack, break it in half, wrap it in white linen, and hide it.
 - ↪ The word "*Afikomen*" is the only Greek word used in an all-Hebrew festival. The nearest translation that can be made of the word is "that which is coming." "*Afikomen*" comes from the root verb "*ikneomai*" meaning "I came."
 - ↪ The Passover Meal is where Jesus instituted our New Covenant celebration of Communion to remember just what He did for us.
 - ↪ The testimony of the Afikomen resonates "I came" for it was during the Passover festival that the true Passover Lamb was crucified, buried, and on the third day rose again to provide redemption to all who believe. Scripture records that Jesus is the Passover Lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and John 1:29.

Comparisons between the Passover Lamb and Jesus

PASSOVER	JESUS
Lamb without blemish. Exodus 12:5	Lamb without blemish 1 Peter 1:19
Lamb under inspection for 4 days. Exodus 12:3	Jesus entered Jerusalem 4 days before crucifixion
Death penalty imposed on lamb when chosen	Christ received death penalty for our sin before He was born.
Lamb's bones not to be broken. Exodus 12:46	Jesus' bones not broken John 19:31
Blood of lamb applied to doorframe saved Israelis firstborn.	Jesus' blood saves us
No work is to be done on Passover. No matter how hard they may have worked, without the blood they could not have saved themselves.	The blood of Jesus saves us, not our works. I Peter 1:18-21

**Even as the ancient Israelis had to place the blood on their doorpost,
today each person must place their trust in the blood of the Lamb
for their salvation.**