

PASSOVER CONNECTION

Why should you reflect on why today is different from all other days? And maybe change your plans for this evening? Because today Christian believers around the world observe "Good Friday" in remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

It's part of a week to meditate, celebrate, and communicate the rich reality of "*new life in Christ*." This describes the experience of those who believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as personal Lord and Savior. It all goes back some 3,500 years in God's story of redemption.

1- THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB. When Moses liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God provided them with a dramatic object lesson, lived out in real life. Pharaoh would not release the slaves. Ten plagues helped convince his hard heart to let them go. The final plague involved the death of all the first-born humans and animals in the land. A hard lesson for hard hearts.

Exodus 12 instructs God's people to sacrifice a perfect lamb without blemish, marking their doors with its blood. "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.*" God set an annual Feast of Passover for Israel to keep.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, is called "*our Passover lamb*" because His sacrifice of His own body and blood paid the penalty for sins (Heb 9:22,26). He perfectly fulfilled the Passover, and gave us Communion as our new covenant meal (1Cor 11:23-26).

2- CHRIST THE PASSOVER LAMB. Does blood sacrifice seem a grisly way to commemorate something sacred and godly? It pictures the high price of sin, imagery found all through the Bible. In Genesis 3 God clothed the nakedness of Adam and Eve with skins, which required animal sacrifice. All because their disobedience brought sin and death into the world (Rom 5:12).

God promised to deal with this evil. An offspring of Eve would be the "last Adam" and deliver mankind from the curse of sin and death and the devil. The Bible traces this offspring from Genesis 3:15 to the person of Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Luke 3:21-38, 1Cor 15:45).

The New Testament of God's written Word presents Christ Jesus as the Son of God come in the flesh. And He is "*the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*" because "*Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed*" (John 1:29, 1Cor 5:7, 1Pet 1:19, Rev 5:6, Eph 1:7).

3- COMMUNITY OBSERVANCE. God chose the Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem as the time to sacrifice His 'firstborn' Son on the cross of Calvary, to pay the penalty for sin. And the Old Testament presents more than 100 prophecies as graphically fulfilled in crucifixion week.

Right before His voluntary death, Christ gathered in the upper room with His disciples for the Passover feast. He instituted "The Lord's Supper," the Christian celebration of Communion, saying of the bread, "*this is My body*" and of the wine, "*this is the new covenant in My blood.*" Christ fulfilled the Old Covenant as God's promised age of the New Covenant came to pass.

The entire Israelite community was called to observe Passover. The whole Christian community celebrates Communion. It is not optional, but essential, by the Lord's command. All believers gather with elements of bread and wine, to "*proclaim His death until He comes.*"

4- ALL THINGS NEW IN CHRIST. The Israelite community's new year began with the Feast of Passover. Its fulfillment in Christ brings new life to believers "*reborn from above by the Holy Spirit*" in regeneration, made "*new creations in Christ*" (1Cor 5:17). The old life subject to sin and death is replaced with new life "*in union with Christ*" because "*Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness*" (1Pet 2:24).

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the New Covenant. He is the new Moses working the new exodus from slavery to sin and deliverance from its penalty and power. And we will be delivered from the presence of sin, in the new heavens and earth, because He rose from the dead. Those united to Christ by grace through faith will be resurrected to inherit life eternal in His presence.

The good news of Easter resurrection requires the sacrifice of Good Friday. The "passover" observance of Communion points to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, which brings new spiritual life to all who receive Him as Lord and Savior. All because Christ Jesus lived and died and rose again, perfectly obeying God's Word. Hallelujah! Live for Him by His power! ☐