

# Jesus our Passover

Passover is Israel's main holiday. Both secular and religious Jews all over the world celebrate annually as a remembrance of an event that took place over 3,400 years ago. Passover is the holiday that Israel identifies with the most; this is who they are. Yet most do not understand that this holiday was not instituted just for a memorial to what God had done but also as a foreshadow to what God will do.

In Exodus 12, the details of the Passover are given: original instructions, ordinance in future observance, and how to handle Gentiles in regard to this practice. There are other passages that discuss the observance and ordinances of the Passover for Israel: Numbers 9:1-14; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Joshua 5:10-11.

After Israel celebrated the Passover with Joshua, the celebration was not centralized. It was a private celebration within each family unit. This was not commissioned by any judge, prophet, or king in the nation of Israel until King Josiah (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 35:1-2; 16-19). This happened about 622 BC. Joshua entered the land around 1406 BC (784 years between such celebrations). But this Passover celebration was the greatest Passover since Israel was a nation.

Passover was about the nation's abiding redemption from slavery and for deliverance for those under the penalty of death. This act by God was so great that from the period of the Exodus to this day the Passover is celebrated and remembered (again, over 3,400 years of remembrance).

The fact that Jesus is the Passover for the whole world is more inferred than is a fully established biblical point. In fact, there is only passage that states that Jesus is our Passover (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:7).

In the Law, there are five essential requirements for the Passover lamb according to Exodus 12:

1. Unblemished male lamb
2. The lamb was to be examined to ensure no defects or disease
3. The lamb was slain (blood spilled)
4. The blood of the lamb had to be applied
5. The lamb had to be eaten as food

In the Hebrew Scriptures, there are nine sacrificial offerings: Passover, Burnt offering, Meal offering, Peace offering, Sin offering, Trespass offering (Leviticus 1-7), Two birds for cleansing for leprosy (Leviticus 14), Day of Atonement, and the Red Heifer (Numbers 19). Not all of these are for the purpose of sin atonement (partial satisfaction); some are celebratory. Even though Passover was performed in order to save the life of those

under the penalty of death, the future observance was a memorial, not a perpetual sin offering. The memorial of Passover was also prophetic in regard to the Messiah who would be the true Passover for all those who are under the penalty of death. This lesson will examine how we understand that Jesus Christ is our Passover.

### *Unblemished Male Lamb*

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29-36). This truth is reiterated by Peter in his first letter (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:18-21). Jesus is the Lamb of God as attested in the Book of Revelation 28 times.

### *The Lamb Examined*

Having established that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, His examination occurred over the 3+ years of His ministry. During His ministry, He performed many signs, spoke in wisdom, and was attested to as not having spot, blemish, fault, or sin. We already saw this conclusion in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, but let us also consider the Gospel of John. In John 5:33-47, there are four witnesses that attest to the identity of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God.

The examination of Jesus in regard to sin is first brought about in John 8:46. The examination was heightened in the trials of Jesus by Jews and Pilate (John 18:19-23; Luke 23:4, 13-16). The sinlessness of Christ is also reiterated in the epistles (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:14-15; 7:25-27).

### *The Lamb Slain*

The Israelites, God's selected nation, were not automatically exempt from the curse during the Passover, but had to have the death of an innocent and unblemished lamb take the curse for them. The lamb had to die in order that the firstborn would live. This was a life exchange, a sacrificial atonement.

The sacrifice of Jesus is a well-known and well-reenacted historical fact. He was scourged, given a crown of thorns, beaten with a staff, spit upon, mocked, and crucified.

This, the Messiah Jesus, was given as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of the world (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Galatians 1:3-5).

### *The Blood of the Lamb Applied*

In the Passover, the blood that was collected and used to paint the door posts and lintel was an outward demonstration of the sacrificial lamb that had been sacrificed and thus protected all the first born that were in the house. Likewise, Jesus Christ applied His blood for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:13-14, 19-20; Hebrews 9:11-14; Hebrews 10:10-14

### *The Lamb Eaten*

The consumption of the lamb is not as easily seen in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. John 6:48-60 – The difficulty of this statement is not in our vernacular only. The Jews and the disciples had difficulty with these words as well. To understand the meaning of eating of His flesh, we first look at John 6:47. He who believes has eternal life. This is stated in John 3:16-18; 5:24; 11:26. Receiving eternal life is directly connected to believing. Therefore, Jesus speaking figuratively, says in John 6:54, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” Eating His flesh, the flesh of the Lamb of God, is believing in who He is, what He has done, and believing the promises He has made.

John 6:61-64 – Some, specifically Judas, did not believe, therefore they (he) have not eaten of Jesus.

### Conclusion

As we have seen, the fulfillment of Passover (as well as full atonement and all other sin sacrifices) is in the life and death of Jesus Christ. He is the divinely selected Lamb of God. He was thoroughly examined in His life and found to be unblemished and sinless. His sacrifice was substitutionary for the death of others. Jesus Himself applied His own blood so as to fully satisfy the justice of God. Finally, when we believe in Jesus, it is likened to eating the true Passover Lamb.