



The Heart of Passover

Praise and Worship in an Atmosphere Charged with God's Presence



At Bethel, we partake of Communion monthly, on the evening of the first Sunday. At our February 6, 2005, Communion service, as is our custom, we praised and thanked the Father for His indescribable gift—our Lord Jesus Christ! “Thank you, O our Father, for giving us Your Son.” We thank our Lord Jesus for laying down His life. “Thank You for the cross, Lord; thank You for Your nail-pierced hands.” We worshipped the Lord and exclaimed, “Worthy is the Lamb seated on the throne!” The atmosphere was charged with God’s presence.



Christ in the Passover



This communion service was special because it focused on Christ in the Passover. Our guest speaker was Lynn McCoy, of Jews for Jesus (www.jewsforjesus.org), an international evangelistic society dedicated to proclaiming the messiahship of Jesus. Sister Lynn described the preparation for and the key elements of the modern Passover service (or modern seder) and demonstrated that the Passover testifies of Christ.

God instituted the Passover. Exodus 12:3, 5–8, 23 says,

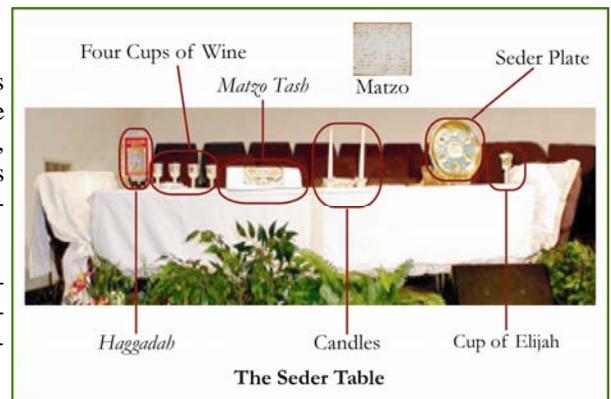
Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” . . . For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.

Christ, the Ultimate Passover Lamb

God had said, “All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die” (Exodus 11:5). The substitutionary death of the Passover lambs saved the Israelite firstborn. The Israelites followed God’s instructions: They slew the lambs, sheltered behind the lambs’ blood, and ate the lambs’ flesh. God did His part: He protected all Israelite homes with blood-sprinkled doors. The Israelite firstborn lived because the Passover lambs died.

The lambs that were eaten at Passover were the Passover sacrifices. However, in 70 A.D., the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. With the destruction of the temple was the destruction of the altar on which the animal sacrifices were made. From that time until now, Passover sacrifices have ceased.

But without a sacrifice, how is sin atoned? God stated clearly, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11). But without the animal sacrifices, how is redemption possible?



John the Baptist provided the answer; he declared (in John 1:29b), “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” The Lord Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb. Hebrews 9:26b, 12 says, “But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” 1 Peter 1:18a–19 says, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” By faith, we partake of His blood and of His flesh. We live because He died.

Christ, the Unleavened Bread

In Scripture, leaven is often a symbol of sin. The unleavened bread, or matzo, is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is sinless (1 John 3:5). On the seder table, three matzo wafers are encased in a *matzo tash*—a square, white, silk bag divided into three compartments for the three wafers. These three wafers symbolize a unity—the Holy Trinity (Deuteronomy 6:4). During the seder, the Passover host takes the middle wafer and breaks it in half. (The middle wafer is symbolic of the Lord Jesus, the second person of the Trinity.) He puts one of the halves back into the *matzo tash*. The other half he wraps in a white cloth and hides (e.g., by burying this half under a pillow). This hidden half is called the *aphikomen*. It also symbolizes the Lord Jesus: Luke 10:19a says, “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you.’” Like the *aphikomen*, the Lord Jesus was buried (Luke 23:53).

Christ, the Blessed Redeemer

Four cups of wine are drunk by each adult partaker of the Passover. The third cup, the cup of redemption, is the focal point of the entire service, for **redemption is at the very heart of Passover**. The Lord redeemed Israel with an outstretched arm and with great judgments (Exodus 6:6). The wine (which is red) symbolizes the blood of the Passover lamb. The cup of redemption is drunk after the Passover meal. Luke 22:20 says, “Likewise, he also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’” Thus, Jesus was holding the cup of redemption when he uttered those momentous words.

When the *aphikomen* is found and unwrapped, the Passover host breaks it again, to about the size of an olive. This olive-sized piece and the cup of redemption are then taken together in remembrance of the body and blood of the Passover lamb. Thus, the Passover is the mother of the Communion.

Christ, the New-Covenant Institutor

The Lord’s words in Luke 22:20 fulfill Jeremiah 31:31–32a, 33:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.



Faith-Filled Partakers of the Communion

The message of Christ in the Passover strengthened our faith: We saw again that the Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39). The Passover gave us another compelling reason to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. With faith-filled, joyful hearts, we partook of the Communion.



Evidence Demanding a Verdict!

Perhaps before reading about Christ in the Passover, you did not believe in Him. Now the evidence of Christ in the Passover demands your verdict. Repent, and receive Him. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins; ask Him to come into your heart. Come worship with us at Bethel. Our church is a wonderful place to grow in the Lord. Our pastors are genuine men and women of God. Moreover, anointed visiting preachers and teachers (like Sister Lynn) often minister at our church. We will be glad for your visit!

All scriptural quotations are from the New King James Version of the *Holy Bible*. For an excellent discussion on Christ in the Passover, read Ceil and Moische Rosen’s book *Christ in the Passover: Why Is This Night Different?*

Writer, Designer, and Photographer: Laurene Jackson, M.S. Publisher: Bethel World Outreach Church. Permission granted to make copies. To God be the glory!