



March 29, 2024

“...I Will Pass Over You...”

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

In three weeks we will again begin another cycle of the observance of feasts or appointments of the Lord. That beginning is quite intensive involving three special celebrations.

A large portion of the Jewish community fails to understand the correct timing of these celebrations. They combine several of them into one evening labeling the event “Passover” and then observe *their* Passover or Seder meal on the evening of Abib 15. I do not doubt their sincerity.

Much of the Christian community observes a "Good Friday" and Easter Sunday tradition that is both incompatible and contradictory with the Scriptural record and incorporates traditions that have non-Biblical origin. But, again I do not question their sincerity.

How does this happen one might ask?

We are told to serve Him in sincerity and in truth. *“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve you the LORD.”*
(Joshua 24: 14)

We also see in John 4:24 *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

1 Corinthians 5: 8 tells us “*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*”

So if one is sincere, no problem then, correct? Maybe with a closer look at the scriptures over the next few weeks we might clarify and it will help.

Each of the three Biblical celebrations has an individual meaning and significance. Let's examine them as we do a little review to anticipate observing these soon coming festivals. We'll begin in this letter with *the Passover*.

There are seven Scriptural references that link the celebration of the Passover day with the fourteenth day of the first month Abib, later named Nisan. Here is one. '*On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover.*' (Leviticus 23:5) The Hebrew phrase *beyn ha arbayim* is translated "twilight" above. When we analyze the use of the term in Exodus 16 we can conclude that this is a period of time between sunset and dark. It is approximately a little over an hour at that time of year.

Let's go to the original instructions concerning this festival. Exodus 12 records the instructions given to Moses to then pass on to all of the Israelites. In verses 1-5 we find the instructions for the heads of households to select a yearling lamb without blemish on the tenth day of the first month. They were to keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then all of the lambs were to be killed at twilight. (v.6) This implies keeping the lamb until the beginning of the fourteenth. The word *twilight* (NKJV) is again translated from the Hebrew phrase *beyn ha arbayim* - literally "between the evenings." Twilight begins at sunset and therefore has to be associated with the beginning of the fourteenth day, not the end of the day.

The blood of the slain lamb was to be collected and then splattered with a branch of hyssop on the doorframe of each house of the Israelites. (vv.7, 22) They were to enter their homes, roast the lamb and then eat it with unleavened bread and a

stew of bitter herbs "*on that night.*" (vv.7-8) "That night" has to refer back to the fourteenth day of the month introduced in v.6. Whatever remained until morning was to then be burned in the fire. (v.10) They were instructed to remain in their homes all that night. "*And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.*" (v.22) The Hebrew word translated "morning" is *boqer* and refers to "end of night, coming of daylight and coming of sunrise." (Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon)

On that night of Abib 14 a powerful and awesome event took place! The Lord passed through the land of Egypt on the night of Abib 14 and about midnight He directed the death of the firstborn of man and beast whose homes were not marked with the blood of the slain lamb. (vv.12, 29) He passed over the Israelite homes that were marked with the blood of the slain Passover lamb. (vv.13, 23, 27, 29) This was a test of faith and obedience for the Israelites, and it was a test that it seems they all passed! As the Israelites emerged from their homes at day break they prepared to fulfill another event to be commemorated in the future. We will examine that a bit more next time.

We read in the New Testament that John the Baptist recognized that Jesus came to fulfill this ancient ceremony when he exclaimed, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29) The apostle Paul recognized the fulfillment of the ancient Passover ceremony. "*For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*" (1 Corinthians 5:7) Jesus sacrificed Himself and shed His blood to cover and cleanse our sins and to die in our place. The apostle Peter also comments on this. "*knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" (1 Peter 1:18-19)

You and I have all sinned and earned the death penalty. (Romans 3:23; 6:23) Our merciful heavenly Father has *passed over* our sins because of our faith in the sacrifice of His Son and our repentance and commitment to turn from sin and disobedience. "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified*

freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." (Romans 3:23-25)

This ancient Passover ceremony focused on the death of the slain lambs and placing faith in the lamb's shed blood marking the door frame of the houses of the Israelites to protect them from the death of their first born. The lamb was roasted for several hours and then consumed by those assembled on that night of Abib 14. We place our trust and faith in the shed blood of the true Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth, Who left the God realm to become a human being, subject to temptation, but perfectly resisting sin and fulfilling the symbolism of the ancient unblemished Passover lamb. We remember the absolutely intense emotional stress He went through and the horrific agony He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane as He anticipated the events leading to His death.

As we spend these next few days examining our individual hearts and minds and our relationship with our Savior, may we also have a deeper understanding of what transpired on that Passover in Exodus 12. It reminds us of the forgiveness we've been blessed with and why we must continue to trust Him, follow Him, and let Him live in us.

May you have a faith-filled, encouraging, and awe-inspiring Passover celebration! Phil 2:5 must continue to be our focus, and in spite of all we see in this world right now, we must not take our mind or thoughts off of God, His plan, and His precious promises!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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