

Saved by the Blood

***“They shall take of
the blood, and
strike it on the two
side posts and on
the upper door
post of the houses,
wherein they shall
eat it.”***

—Exodus 12:7

AS WE ENTER ANOTHER

Easter season, which falls during the spring months, March or April, Christian people from all parts of the world gather together to observe Good Friday and Easter Sunday in memory of the death and resurrection of our

Lord Jesus Christ. About the same time, Jewish people will also gather to celebrate the Feast of Passover.

Each group uses their calendars and long-held traditions to determine the exact time to celebrate the two religious holidays. Sometimes, these two events may be separated by a few days and, at other times, even by weeks. According to the scriptural record, the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th day of their month, Nisan, which also corresponds to our months, March or April.

Although Christians and Jews both celebrate these important events, there are perhaps few who discern the true meaning and significance of the

death and resurrection of Jesus, who died as the Savior of the sin-sick human creation. The Apostle Peter explained that they are blinded to an appreciation of the deep things of God. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” (II Pet. 1:3) “He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”—vs. 9

GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS

At the time our featured scripture was recorded, the nation of Israel was being held captive in Egypt. God then commanded his typical people to apply the blood of the lamb on the ‘side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.’ They were also instructed to eat the slain lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. (Exod. 12:8) The context of this scripture also provides other important details and perspectives in connection with God’s special instructions to the Israelites.

In the twelfth chapter of Exodus, we read, “The LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your

count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.”—Exod. 12:1-6

THE SLAIN LAMB

These explicit directions contain a great amount of significant symbolism. The reference to the ‘land of Egypt’ points to Satan’s present dominion over the earth and its people. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—II Cor. 4:4

The ‘beginning of months’ indicates the exact time the Passover Feast was to be celebrated. It was to be observed when the first new moon appeared following the spring equinox in the Jewish first month, Nisan. The sacrificial lamb was to be selected on the ‘tenth day’ of the month. This pictured Jesus’ antitypical arrival at Jerusalem (Matt. 21:4), as the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), and in fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy. (Zech. 9:9) The animal was to be a year-old male and without blemish, which illustrates Jesus’ perfection as the future antitypical lamb. The Passover lamb was then slain and eaten on the 14th day of Nisan. The Passover Feast began the next day and lasted for seven days.

UNDER THE BLOOD

Further to these directions, we read, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite

all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.”—Exod. 12:12-14

THE FIRSTBORN

In these scriptures, reference is made to passing through the land of Egypt at ‘night.’ This typifies the dark night of sin and death through which the people of God are passing during this present Gospel Age. The ‘firstborn’ picture the “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23), who are under the lamb’s blood and are therefore saved from death. No others among the people are subject to death during this period of time.

THE TRIBE OF LEVI

The firstborn were later exchanged for the whole tribe of Levi. “The LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD.”—Num. 3:11-13

THE MEMORIAL

Blood symbolizes life, and when the lamb was slain, it represented sacrificed life. The blood of the sacrificed lamb was then used in accordance with the divine will to represent the precious blood of our Lord Jesus that would be applied on behalf of the sin-sick human family many years later. Our Lord's sacrificed blood is the only means whereby we may be saved from the sentence of death that was placed upon Adam and Eve because of their disobedience to the law of God.

God instructed the typical people of Israel to remember the specific time of this event, and to observe it each year. He specifically said, 'This day shall be unto you for a memorial.' In the antitype, this serves to illustrate the greater Memorial that Jesus instituted when he and his disciples were gathered together in the upper room. At that time, he asked them to partake of the loaf, which represented his broken body, and the cup, which showed his sacrificial blood. He then said to them, "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) He would die a few hours later for the sins of the world.

"He [Jesus] took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them [his disciples], saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you."—vss. 19,20

THE PLAGUES

When the Israelites were given God's instructions, the great time clock of the ages had struck,

marking that the time for their release from Egyptian bondage and deliverance had arrived. However, their taskmasters were not willing to set them free, and refused to let them go forth to the promised land of Canaan. One after another the Lord sent various plagues upon the people of Egypt, but gave them relief when their Pharaoh sought mercy and made promises that he had no intention of keeping.

Finally, God's servant Moses announced that a great calamity would be inflicted upon the first-born in every family of Egypt and they would all die in one night. In the homes of the humblest peasants, as well as in the palace of the Pharaoh, great mourning would take place throughout Egypt, and they would be glad to let the Israelites go.

"It came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men."—Exod. 12:29-33

PREPARED FOR A JOURNEY

It is noted that the first three plagues were common to all in the land of Egypt, including the district in which the Israelites lived. The next six plagues affected only the district occupied by the Egyptians. The last plague was declared to be common to the entire land of Egypt, including the part apportioned to the Israelites who were under the blood. However, the children of Israel had been instructed to show their faith and obedience to the will of God by providing a sacrificial lamb whose blood was to be sprinkled upon the sides and lintels of their doorways, and its flesh eaten in the same night, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. They had full faith that, because of the lamb's blood upon the doorposts and lintels of their homes, they would not share in the calamity when God would smite the firstborn of Egypt with death. Those who ate of the lamb waited with staff in hand and girded for the journey, expecting that God would make the Egyptians willing to let them go.

FEATURES OF THE LAW

The Israelites were commanded to remember and celebrate this Passover Feast that was given to them by Moses. It was one of their greatest national memorials, and is still celebrated by Jews in all parts of the world as an indication of their measure of respect and importance for the ancient custom.

All of the features of the Mosaic Law were divinely designed to foreshadow various blessings that would be poured upon all the families of the earth during Christ's future kingdom. The Jewish

Sabbath foreshadows a greater epoch of rest, blessing, and release from bondage, sorrow, and death.

The Passover lamb typifies the Lamb of God, and its death foreshadows the death of Jesus as a perfect man. The sprinkling of the lamb's blood symbolizes the imputation of the merit of Jesus' death upon the entire household of faith—the passed-over class during this nighttime of sin and death. Blessed are those whose eyes of faith see that Jesus was indeed the Lamb of God, and that the cancellation of the world's sin is effected by the payment of Adam's penalty, wherein the whole world lost the favor of God and came under the divine sentence of death.

It was necessary that before this curse of death and its accompanying pangs of sorrow and pain could be lifted, a satisfaction of justice be provided. As the Apostle Peter declares, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (I Pet. 3:18) Paul also wrote, "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."—Heb. 10:20

THE FIRSTFRUITS

As he was moved by the Holy Spirit of God, the revelator wrote, "I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the

sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 14:1-4, *New American Standard Bible*

These inspired words of God point to the glorified Christ, head and body, as the ‘first fruits to God and to the Lamb.’ It is implied therefore, that there will also be ‘after fruits’ in the ultimate plan and purpose of our loving Heavenly Father. It was God’s purpose to save all of the children of Israel. As a nation, they were typical of the whole human family that will be given opportunity to come into harmony with God and be granted eternal life in the future land of promise.

Thus was the whole nation of Israel miraculously delivered by the Lord through Moses. They were led by him on a pathway across the channel of the Red Sea, that had been especially prepared for them, by divine power that controlled the winds and the tides. Not one Israelite was left behind. This wonderful event illustrates the ultimate deliverance of the whole world from the power of Satan, and every creature who will come into accord with the righteous laws that will be established under the administration of Christ’s future reign over the earth.

THE TWO PASSOVERS

Deliverance from death depended upon the first-born children of Israel remaining under the lamb's blood when God's death angel passed them by. They were the only ones who were under the blood and who were subject to death. They were all delivered that night as shown in the typical picture.

During this present Gospel Age, Jesus' followers are also under the blood. They have accepted the merit of Jesus' blood which saves them from destruction. They will observe the antitypical passing over, or sparing, of the firstborn of Israel. They are being called in advance of the world, and have had the eyes of their understanding opened to a realization of their condition of sin and bondage and their need of deliverance. They have responded to the marvelous grace of God, and have given their lives to him in full consecration. Because of their faith in the shed blood of the antitypical lamb, they have been begotten of the Holy Spirit of God.

The Apostle Paul explains that consecration is a baptism into Jesus' death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:3-5) James wrote, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."—James 1:18

It is a matter of life or death whether those who have given their lives to God will remain in the

household of faith and under the precious blood of sprinkling. For any to go out from this condition of grace, would imply a disregard for the mercy of our loving Heavenly Father. It would signify that they do not appreciate his goodness, or their share in the saving power of the blood of the Lamb. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."—Heb. 10:26

THE WORLD'S PASSOVER

During this present Gospel Age, members of the 'church of the firstborn' have received the merit of Jesus' blood. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24) When this work has been completed, the merit of our Savior's blood will become available for the entire human family. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—John 10:14-16

The second great passing over that occurred in the land of Egypt was the deliverance of the nation of Israel when they were led by Moses across the Red Sea. All matters concerning types or figures foreshadow a higher meaning and purpose. In this remarkable event is shown the ultimate recovery of the whole human creation from the bondage of sin and death. The promised blessings will be

available to the world under the establishment of Christ's future kingdom and the terms of the New Covenant. At that time, all who desire to follow righteousness and obey the greater Moses—our Lord Jesus—will be granted life rights that were lost because of sin.

The long night of sin and death will have passed, and the glorious morning of deliverance will have come. The Christ, head and body, will lead forth and deliver all Israel, all the people of God. At that time, all shall know and be glad to reverence, honor, and obey the will of God. At the close of that future age of Christ's kingdom, all evil and all evildoers will be cut off from any further life.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth, he told them, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."—I Cor. 5:7,8

In this scripture, the apostle was addressing the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:23) He was admonishing them to cleanse themselves from all sin and unrighteousness as represented by the leaven of malice and wickedness, and to seek righteousness and Truth as illustrated by partaking of the unleavened bread.

By eating the lamb, we appropriate Christ's merit to ourselves. We put on Christ to the extent of our ability, and are transformed into his glorious image

in our hearts. We feed upon him even as the Jews fed upon the literal lamb. The bitter herbs aided and whetted the Israelites appetites, and serves to show our bitter experiences and trials. These are provided for us to help wean our affections from earthly things, and to give us an increasing appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened bread of Truth.

In the world, we have no continuing city, but, as strangers and travelers, we go with staff in hand and girded for the journey to heavenly Canaan. All of the glorious blessings which our loving Heavenly Father has in reservation for the church of the firstborn will be given to those who have faithfully accepted the Lamb of God and the merit of his saving blood.

LET US KEEP THE FEAST

As we keep the feast again this year, let us rejoice in the precious blood of Jesus that was shed on our behalf and that will be testified to the world in due time. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."—Heb. 13:20,21 ■

*We love thy name, we love thy laws,
And joyfully embrace thy cause;
We'll bear the cross, the shame, the pain,
O Lamb of God, for us once slain!*