

Christ in the Passover

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Passover lamb (see Exodus 12:3-5)...

Note "your lamb" in verse 5... each redeemed soul must appropriate the lamb for himself.

Note "the whole congregation" must kill it at twilight in verse 6... (see Matthew 26:47 and Luke 22:53)

Passover is also known as Feast of Unleavened Bread (see Exodus 12:8) when the 2 feasts are celebrated together where Passover was the first day of the feast and the next 7 days were the feast of unleavened bread.

FEAST OF PASSOVER - signified Israel's redemption from Egypt.

Significance in Christ: Believers in Christ are redeemed from the bondage of sin.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD - signified the purging of sin symbolized by leaven (yeast). Significance in Christ: all believers in Christ are cleansed from sin.

Bible references specifying that Israel should celebrate the Passover:

Exodus 13:6-7 (must get rid of all leaven for 7 days)

Exodus 34:25 (must offer the blood of the sacrifice without leaven) see 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Exodus 12:46 (must not break any bones of the Passover lamb) see Psalm 34:20 and John 19:36

Isaiah 53:7 says "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter"

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Jesus starts his ministry with John the baptist proclaiming "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" John 1:29.

In 1 Peter 1:19 Jesus is described as a "Lamb without blemish and without spot"

FOODS THAT MAKE UP THE SEDER MEAL:

Charoseth, eggs (Betzah), unleavened bread (Matzo), Wine, Lamb (today: shank bone only*), bitter herbs (chazereth & karpas) (see definitions below)

STEPS (partial list) IN PASSOVER SEDER MEAL and New Testament Parallels:

First cup of wine poured

The Kiddush - the blessing over the ritual cup of wine (see Luke 22:17-18)

The First Washing of Hands see John 13:4-5

Broken Pieces of Bread Dipped In Bitter Herbs and Charoseth and Handed to all (see John 13:27b, 30a)

Hallel (prayers of praise) recited (see Psalms 113-116)

Second cup of wine poured

Blessing After Meals (see I Corinthians 11:23-24)

Third cup of wine poured

Blessing Over Third Cup – Cup of Redemption (see I Corinthians 11:25)

Closing Song or Hymn (see Matthew 26:30)

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PASSOVER IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

“Since many of the early Christians were Jewish, they celebrated the resurrection of Christ at Passover time and called it Pascha which they continued to celebrate during the time of the first 15 bishops of Jerusalem, who were of Jewish descent. These bishops sent out Paschal epistles every year to notify the Christians when Pascha would fall according to the Jewish lunar calendar. By 325 AD however, paganism and anti-Jewish sentiment had invaded the Church and also Emperor Constantine prohibited Christians from continuing to celebrate the resurrection at the same time as the Jewish Passover.” **

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Betzah – Hebrew for egg (hard-boiled or roasted), also called Chaggigah or Haggigah, symbolizing new life

Charoseth – Hebrew for a mixture of apples, cinnamon and nuts representing the mortar of Egypt

Chazereth – Hebrew for bitter root, usually horseradish

Haggadah – Hebrew for the book used to explain the seder service, based on ancient writings in the Mishnah about Passover.

Hallel – a prayer of praise (Psalms 113-116)

Karpas – bitter herb (usually parsley)

Kiddush – Hebrew for a prayer of sanctification

Matzo – Hebrew for “without leaven”, also called Matzah

Mishnah – collect of the oral law that forms the basis of the Talmud and compiled by Judah ha-Nasi around 135 to 200 AD.

Pascha – Greek translation of the Hebrew word “pesah” meaning Passover.

FOOTNOTES:

* Today only a shank bone is used because there is no temple in which to offer the sacrificial lamb, so the bone is used as strictly a symbol of the sacrifice, since it cannot be the sacrifice without the temple.

** “Christ in the Passover”, Ceil and Moishe Rosen, c.1978, pages 59-60.