

At Passover, Behold Yeshua, the Lamb of God

John said, "Behold! The Lamb of God..." (John 1:29 NKJV). I want us to behold Him once again.

Beginning March 25, we celebrate the Passover. This year Passover and Easter will overlap. That's not always the case. Sadly, in 325 AD, the church made the decision to separate Easter from the Jewish holiday of Passover. An official church document at that time declared that the "wretched [Jews] are ... blinded ... Let us have nothing in common."

But it's hard to fully behold Yeshua as the Lamb of God without seeing how intertwined His passion is with the Passover.

The Lamb's Beginnings

Let's behold Him from His beginnings on the earth. Thirty-three years before His death at Passover, Yeshua was born as a "Passover lamb." It's in the region of Bethlehem Ephrata that shepherds raised special lambs for sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem.

My wife Ann and I live in the southern part of Jerusalem. We're able to see Bethlehem. We still see shepherds with their sheep and young lambs grazing on those same hillsides.

It's no accident that on one of these Bethlehem hills, Mary's little lamb was born. Micah predicted that the Messiah would be born in the area of Bethlehem Ephrata, right where Passover lambs were raised.

"John saw Jesus [Yeshua] coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29) So we behold not just any regular lamb, but a lamb that was born to die. To fulfill the Passover sacrifice was one of

Yeshua's chief reasons for coming to the earth as the Lamb of God. Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "... Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us" (NLT).

We need the lamp of God's Word to behold the Lamb of God clearly. So let me remind you of what God's Word says about the original Passover. We read this in Exodus 12:12-14, "For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animal. Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh [the Lord]. The blood shall be to you for a token on the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall be no plague on you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be to you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to Yahweh: throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by ordinance forever" (WEB).

At Passover, the Jewish people recall how the angel of death, God's agent of wrath against the evil empire of Egypt, "passed over" and spared the children of Israel from death. The Hebrew word for Passover is "Pesach." It literally means to "pass over" or "to spare."

During Passover we are reminded of what God requires to save souls: nothing but the blood. In the words of Exodus 12:13, "... when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (NIV).

On this mission to kill the firstborn of every household in Egypt, the angel of death would inspect each home for the sign of blood. Whenever the angel spotted a house whose doorposts and lintel had been freshly smeared with the blood of a lamb, he would spare that household's firstborn.

The blood was sprinkled on two sides, as well as the top, and possibly the bottom threshold of the doorway also, depending on how you translate the word "saf." Could it be that this was a prophetic picture? For Yeshua's blood dripped from his two

hands, extended horizontally on the crossbeam. He bled from the top of his head, due to his crown of thorns, and he bled at lowest part of his body, from his feet. And isn't it interesting that Yeshua said in John 10:9, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved..." (NKJV).

The Passover Meal

Once a year, Jews all over the world continue to eat what is known as the "seder" on Passover eve. This is the meal that Yeshua and his disciples were eating that night, which we call "the Last Supper."

You can't really understand Yeshua's profound words and actions at His last supper with his disciples until you understand that He is the Passover Lamb of God. He is the final sacrificial lamb whose shed blood takes away the sins of the world.

During the meal there is the reading of the Haggadah, or the "retelling" of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt. Haggadah is a word related to the Hebrew word "to tell." The *retelling*, the story of that first Passover in Egypt, is so important for a Jewish family. Paul would later write to the Corinthians, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

That's why it's so important to celebrate the Lord's Supper, for we need to constantly retell and recall the amazing work of deliverance that the blood of the Lamb of God has achieved for us. Otherwise we may forget, or take it for granted and be unthankful to God for the great deliverance he has provided from our own 'personal Egypt.'

The Lamb's Final Passion

We've beheld the Lamb's beginning in Bethlehem and beheld Him in the light of the Word, way back in the Exodus story. Now I want us to behold the Lamb of God in the light of the New

Testament story of His Passover passion.

Just as the story of Yeshua's birth takes up a large portion of the gospel story, so does the passion story.

What's fascinating is that Yeshua arrived in Jerusalem in preparation for the Passover exactly four days before the day that He would be sacrificed as the Passover lamb. Like a Passover lamb, for those four days Yeshua was under the careful scrutiny of the Jewish religious leaders. They tried everything they could to find fault in Him, but no matter how hard they investigated, they could not find a single justifiable blemish in His character.

Even the Roman governor Pilate couldn't find anything defective about Yeshua after his intensive interrogation. In Luke 23:4 we read, "Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, 'I find no basis for a charge against this man'" (WEB).

There was another requirement to meet the stringent standards for a Passover lamb. In Exodus 12:5 the Lord said to Moses, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old."

In a lamb's years, the prime of life was one year old. I guess any older than that and a lamb is over the hill!

Yeshua was chosen from God's flock and made a Passover sacrifice also at the prime of his earthly life, at age 33. A priest couldn't even begin his career until he turned 30. So Yeshua gave up His life as a sacrifice for our sins in His prime. The sins of the world were simply so great, and such an affront to God's holy character, that only something of infinite perfection and value could redeem us all from sin and death.

I find it very fascinating that each Jewish family would take that little lamb into their home for four days. You can imagine that this cute, little, fluffy, cuddly creature would

be quickly adopted by the children as the family pet.

We talk about the need to accept Yeshua as our “personal” Savior. Well, it’s true. Until you ask Yeshua into your heart and home as your personal Savior and acknowledge that He is your personal sacrifice for your personal sins, God will not spare you; He will not “pass over” you.

As one preacher once said, “God has no grandchildren.” It’s not enough that your parents know Yeshua. You need to make Yeshua your own personal sacrificial lamb. You must allow Him to become your friend and allow Him into your life. He wants to be your friend, no matter how sinful and unworthy you feel.

Yeshua is our Passover lamb. He died once and for all for the sins of the whole world. But salvation is more than simply knowing that He died for the whole world’s sins. I need to believe that He died for me and you need to believe that He died for you.

Maybe you haven’t yet applied the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of your heart by faith. Just as the children of Israel were to eat their Passover meal in haste, so now, not tomorrow, is the acceptable time to receive Yeshua as your Passover lamb. Now is the day of salvation. Look on Him today. Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

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