

Lessons from the Passover Feast and the Lord's Supper.

A very intimate relation exists between these two institutions; and when considered together, each serves to illuminate the other, and make clear the great truths which heaven designs should be taught thereby. The Passover feast, being first in order of establishment, demands our first attention.

This festival was introduced among the Israelites while they were yet in Egyptian slavery, and was first celebrated on the night prior to their departure from Egypt. But before God delivered Israel from bondage, he chastised the Egyptians for their iniquity by bringing upon them ten severe judgments. These judgments served to reveal to the Children of Israel the true God, and to inspire in their hearts confidence in his ability to deliver them. God chose the time set for visiting upon Egypt the tenth and last judgment as the occasion for celebrating the first passover supper.

The Passover

I. What provision did the Lord order made for celebrating this feast?

“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.” - Ex. 12: 3.

2. At what time was the lamb to be slain?

“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 between the two evenings.” Verse 6, margin.

NOTE; --- It will be noticed that the passover was to be slain “between the two evenings.” According to Jewish reckoning, the first evening, called the evening of the day, began immediately after the noon hour and continued until sunset, or six o'clock, when the second evening began, called the evening of the night. The central point between the commencement of these two evenings would be three o'clock, at which hour the work of sacrificing the passover began. This feast was celebrated in the month Abib, or Nisan, as it came later to be called, and corresponds mainly to our April. The animal required for this offering was a lamb or goat, of the first year, without blemish.

3. What did the Lord direct them to do with the blood of the animal?

“They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses. wherein they shall eat it.” Ex. 12: 7.

NOTE. --- The flesh of the animal was to be roasted with fire, and eaten the same night with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. This marked the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days. During this period no leavened bread was to be eaten or even allowed in the house, under penalty of death. That portion of the lamb which was not eaten was to be burned with fire; nothing being allowed to remain until the morning.

4. How was the Passover to be eaten, and what benefit was derived from having the blood sprinkled on the doorposts?

“Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born 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, . . . when I smite the land of Egypt.” Ex. 12: 11 - 13.

NOTE. --- For a full description of all the incidents connected with the first passover, the reader is referred to the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Exodus. Having before us the main points in the feast, it will now be in order to give our attention to the spiritual lessons taught therein.

Some Spiritual Lessons

The circumstances surrounding the celebration of the first passover in Egypt make it highly typical as well as figurative. Figuratively, Egypt represents this sinful world in which God's people are only sojourners, by the hand of whose rulers they have suffered, and will yet suffer, many and grievous oppressions. See Rev. 11: 8. Typically, the passover lamb represented Christ, by virtue of whose blood we may not only find protection from the just wrath of God, but final and full deliverance with all the ransomed hosts of God from the Egypt

of this wicked world, into the heavenly Canaan, the world to come. The bitter herbs reminded Israel as they ate the passover supper, of the bitterness of their Egyptian bondage. It also speaks to us of the contrition of soul, the bitter repentings on account of sins, experienced by all who partake of Christ, God's passover Lamb, and come under the protection of his precious blood. The unleavened bread represented the character of Christ, in which there is to be found no trace of sin (I John 3: 5; I Peter 2: 22) ; and as none were permitted to eat the passover without partaking of this bread, so in a spiritual sense all who partake of the benefits of the broken body and shed blood of Christ, must also be partakers of his character. I Cor. I: 30; I Peter I: 15, I6. And as none were permitted to partake of this feast except those who were circumcised (Ex. 12:48), so only the circumcised in heart can partake of Christ and come under the protection of his blood. Rom. 2: 28, 29; Phil. 3: 3; Col. 2: 11. In answer to question two, we have already learned that the time for sacrificing the passover lamb was three o'clock; this, as the following will show, was the exact hour at which Christ died: ---

Prophetic of the Month, Day and Hour of Christ's Death

5. At what hour of the day was Christ crucified?

“It was the third hour and they crucified him.” Mark 15: 25.

6. At what time of day did he expire?

“At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice . . . and gave up the ghost.” Verses 34 - 37.

NOTE. --- In Christ's time, the Jews reckoned the hours of the day differently' from what we do now. In .place of beginning the count of the hours of the day from noon and midnight, they began in the evening and in the morning at the hour we call “six.” Hence, their “third” hour of the day or night would be the hour we call “ nine;” their, “sixth” hour corresponds to our “twelfth,” and their, “ninth” to the hour we denominate as “ three” o'clock. Hence, when the Bible tells us that the Savior died at the ninth hour, it would be three o'clock, according to our present reckoning. Thus Christ died the very hour that all Israel were engaged in slaying the passover Lamb.

0 had they only known the time of their visitation, and comprehended the great event of that hour! It was the hour when the God of heaven was offering the Lamb which he had provided for the sins of the world. It marked the most solemn

occasion ever witnessed in heaven or earth. Although the sun refused to behold the scene, and inanimate nature was convulsed with sympathetic grief, yet man in his blindness discerned not the cause. But could they know? Yes, verily; for God had not only revealed through the prophet Daniel the year in which Christ would die, but through Moses he had revealed the very month.. day.. and hour of the day, when the Lord would offer his only begotten Son as the great antitypical passover Lamb. So completely had the Jews failed to comprehend the great truths which God designed to teach them by means of the passover festival, that even the Saviour's most intimate disciples looked upon his death as a disastrous calamity.

Day of Triumphal Entry, of Resurrection, and Pentecost Also Prophesied

Not only was the day, month, and hour of the Saviour's death revealed in this feast, but also Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On the tenth day of the month the lamb was to be taken from the flock and kept up until the. fourteenth day of the sacrifice. So on the tenth day of the month Christ came up to Jerusalem, the place of sacrifice, heralded by scores of voices as Messiah, where he abode until the fourteenth day, when he offered up his life for the sins of the world. John 12: 1-19.

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Not only this, but the day of his resurrection was also revealed. The passover was sacrificed at three o'clock on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan; on the morning of the sixteenth the high priest presented before the Lord the wave sheaf, the first fruits of the harvest. Lev. 23: 5 - 11. This was typical of the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits from the dead. I Cor. 15: 20. And on this very morning, while the high priest was engaged in this service, the Son of God came forth from the dead.

{Beginning with this day}, the Jews were commanded to number fifty days; and upon the fiftieth day a new meat offering was to be presented before the Lord, in the form of two wave loaves made from the flour of the first fruits, and baked with leaven. Just fifty days from the resurrection morning, as all Israel were engaged in worship, and the high priest was presenting before the Lord the new meat offering of first fruits, with their prescribed offerings, " suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they [the disciples] were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

As a result of the miraculous preaching of the apostles which followed the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Saviour, who had at this time begun his ministry as our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, was able to present before his Father the first fruits of his suffering while on earth, in the person of three thousand repentant, believing sinners, symbolized by the loaves of *leavened bread*.

Thus when the Lord instituted through Moses the pass-over and its associated feasts, he revealed the exact time when four momentous events connected with the plan of redemption would occur. **First**, the triumphal entry; **second**, the month, day, and hour when Christ would give his life for a sinful world; **third**, the day of his resurrection; and **fourth**, the day when the Holy Ghost would be given and the first converts be won to Christ through the apostles' preaching.

Description of a Modern Passover

Having thus considered the events foreshadowed by the passover and its associated feasts, we will now turn our attention to the institution of the Lord's supper by the Saviour as he ate his last passover with the disciples. But that the reader may be enabled more fully to appreciate all the events of the last supper, a description will be given of a Passover supper as it is now observed by the orthodox Jew, which is , almost the same as it was observed in the days of Christ, with the exception of the lamb. And in doing this we will quote largely from "Practical Lessons from the Experience of Israel," written by Evangelist F. C. Gilbert, a Christian Jew. In describing the removing of the leaven from their houses, he says:--

“On the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, the master of the house, with one of his boys, generally the youngest, searches the house for leaven. Some time earlier in the day, small pieces of bread are scattered in different rooms and halls of the house, wherever leaven of any kind has been used during the year. In the evening the man of the house generally takes a lighted candle and goes in search of the leaven. The son carries the candle, while the parent has a feather and a wooden spoon. Each place or corner is very carefully scrutinized, and every piece is gathered with great precision, so that not a particle of leaven may be left anywhere in the house. . Before this is done, all work and study must be put aside, and necessary preparations made. When this is fin-

ished, the pieces of leaven are securely tied and placed somewhere in an unused part of the house; they are removed the next morning about ten, and burned. This is known as “removing,”

or “purging,” the leaven. It is very punctiliously observed, and great care is taken that not one particle of the leaven remains.”--Practical Lessons, p. 237, par. 25.

All Important Spiritual Lesson

In commanding all leaven to be removed from the house before eating the passover, the Lord designed to teach an important spiritual lesson, the meaning of which Paul suggests, when in writing to the Corinthians, he said, “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.” 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.

Leaven is used as a symbol of sin. Those who would partake of Christ must first purge themselves from sin by repentance: for repentance embodies not only a sorrow for sin, but a turning away from it. The death penalty was pronounced against those who presumed to use leavened bread at the passover feast. Ex. 12: 19. From this we learn that whoever presumes to partake of the repast which God has provided in the sacrifice of his Son, while cherishing iniquity in his heart, “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.” “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. 10: 26, 27.

In view of these facts, how dangerous it is for a believer to tolerate sin in his life. How eagerly we should search our hearts with the candle of God's holy word, that we may discover and put away every vestige of sin. We are admonished by Paul to keep the feast “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

The word “sincere” is full of meaning. It is derived from two Latin words, *sina* -- without, and *cera* -- wax; meaning, literally, “without wax.” The origin of the word is said to have been due to a course pursued by unscrupulous cabinet-makers in ancient times; who in making furniture would use inferior material, filling the knot holes and defective places with wax, which, when polished and painted, defied detection until afterward revealed by use. This caused the purchaser

to look with suspicion upon all furniture, regardless of its outward appearance; and to avoid this suspicion, honest manufacturers marked their product with the words “*sina cera*” without wax. Hence the force of the word when applied to the believer's life. It was to this spirit of insincerity by the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus referred when he likened them to whited sepulchers, which appeared beautiful outwardly, but within were full of dead men's bones. Matt. 23: 27, 28.

Today the church is filled with a large class of persons whose polished manners, fine clothes, and worldly wealth serve as so much wax to hide the defects in a worthless character. Thank God for the *sincere* Christian, the believer who is without hypocrisy, whose only thought is to form a character that will meet the approbation of Him who shall reward every man according to his work.

Reverting to the original subject, we will again quote from Mr. Gilbert his description of a modern Passover feast: ---

“On the night of the fourteenth day the passover proper begins. It is then that the Passover supper is observed. Not now having any lamb, substitutes are used in the form of a roasted egg, boiled hard, and the shank bone of a lamb. In addition, they use celery, parsley, lettuce, and horseradish for bitter herbs, and a mixture called haroseth, a sort of sauce, to represent the mortar of which the brick was made when the ancestry were in Egypt.

“The table is always prepared before the evening, so that when the people return from the synagogue service they are ready to sit down to supper. . . . Soon after the family is gathered around the board; the man of the house will take a glass of wine, over which a blessing is pronounced. Each person at the table also has a glass at the same time. This wine is made of raisins. It is absolutely necessary to have this wine at the passover. . . . Not only must they have wine, but they must have sufficient that each member of the family shall have four cups. . . . These four cups were in existence in the days of the Saviour. . . . When the first cups of wine are drank, a blessing is pronounced, called the ‘blessing of the festival.’ Part of this wine is left in the cup. When this is finished, all the persons at the table are obliged to wash their hands.” -- Practical Lessons, pp. 240 - 242.

Ordinance of Humility

It was probably at this point in the feast that the Saviour washed the disciples’ feet, an event which we will notice before proceeding further with the main subject under consideration. By this act of humility the Saviour not only taught the disciples a much-needed lesson, but he instituted an ordi-

nance to be observed thereafter, in connection with the Lord's supper, by the church. There had been much striving among the disciples as to who should be the greatest; and the Saviour chose this act as a means by which to impress upon their minds a great truth which they had failed to learn from his previous instruction; namely, that he who would be greatest in the kingdom must be servant of all. Matt. 20: 25 - 28.

And this is a lesson which believers in all ages have needed to have constantly impressed upon their minds. Hence the Saviour's remarks: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye do well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13: 13 - 17. Certainly the "example" which the Saviour gave on this occasion, if followed by Christians would lead them to wash one another's feet, a thing which Christ says they "**ought**" to do. That this ordinance was observed in the early church is evidenced by the fact that Paul, when writing to Timothy, mentions the washing of the saints' feet as one of the tests by which applicants for certain favors were to be tried. : Tim. 5:9, 10. To follow the Saviour's example in this matter affords a peculiar sense of joy, and reminds the believers of the fact that they are all servants one of another; that their happiness is to be found by following the footsteps of, their Master, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Having thus noticed this point, we will proceed to quote from Mr. Gilbert's book a further description of the Passover. On page 242, par. 34, he continues:--

"The next thing in order is to take some celery or parsley and dip it in salted water and pass it around to each person. This is a sort of preparation for the bitter herbs to follow later. Then the middle cake of unleavened bread is broken. At the present time there are three special Passover cakes used, the middle one of which is broken at this period. It is claimed by some that this was observed in the days of Christ, and much significance is attached to this part of the service. If it were so, we can learn several beautiful lessons therefrom."

The Hidden Manna

“It is said that these three cakes represent the three persons of the Deity,-- Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The middle person is claimed by the rabbis, even, to be the ‘Mam-re,’ the the word, the Son of God. The breaking of the middle cake represents the breaking of the Son of God, the Messiah. When this custom was adopted is not generally known, but thus it exists today. After the cake is broken in two, one part is hidden under a pillow on the couch, the other part is used at the supper. This part that is hidden is called Aphikomon.. meaning 'manna secreted or hidden.' After a time this is brought forth, and a small portion is given to each of the persons around the table. This would very naturally suggest a forcible thought upon Rev. 2: 17: 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.' This hidden piece of cake is very precious to the man of the house, and he guards it with the greatest jealousy.”

The Dipping of the Sop

“After the cake is broken, the service proper takes place. The history of the exode is then discoursed upon, and the wonderful dealings of God with his people and with the Egyptians are all gone over. . Then the supper proper takes place. During this supper the bitter herbs., in the form of horseradish. are served to every member of the family. One form of this herb is served between two pieces of unleavened bread, then dipped in the sauce previously mentioned. To this evidently Jesus referred, after he had said, 'One of you shall betray me,' when he remarked, , He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.' John 13: 26.”

The Cup of Blessing and the Lord's Supper

“After this part of the service came the cup of wine, known as the ' cup of blessing.' It was during this part of the supper that the Lord spoke of the bread and the wine as emblems of his spilt blood and broken body." *

This, I hope, will enable the reader to better understand the events of the last supper , 'and the words of the Saviour when he took the cup at the beginning of the festival “and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.” This was termed, as previously 'stated, the “blessing

of the festival.” Following this the middle loaf was broken, and the Saviour, giving a portion to each of his disciples, said, “Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me..” Then came the .cup of wine, called “the cup of blessing,” for which the Saviour gave thanks, and after they had all drunk 'of this cup he said, “This cup is the new testament in.” my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, “ye do show the Lord's death till he come.” I Cor. 2: 23 - 25; Luke 22: 17 - 20.

Thus we find that in Christ has been fulfilled the meaning of the passover and its associated feasts. How impressive the lesson! how great the meaning! how perfectly fulfilled! Dear reader, my prayer is that you, with the writer, by virtue of the broken body and shed blood of God's passover Lamb. may have protection from the divine wrath, and be among the ransomed of the Lord who are soon to depart out of this Egypt of sin and oppression into the glorious kingdom of God's dear Son, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and where sorrow and sighing "shall flee away.