

San Juan Church of Christ

1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Montrose, CO 81401 | (970) 249-8116

What Does God's Word Say About . . . Passover - Part 1

It's really no mystery why there is so much confusion in the religious world today when ignorance of God's word is mixed with human religious traditions. This is caused by mixing scripture of the Old Covenant with that of the New Covenant. Combining the two covenants results in a religion like that of the Samaritans - all mixed up (2 Kings 17:24-41; John 4:1-23). We urge all people to return to the purity and simplicity of the New Covenant, given by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

The celebration of a "Holy Week" once a year, and the observance of the Jewish Passover with the Passover meal are not authorized practices taught in the New Covenant for Christians to follow. The Passover was authorized and commanded for the Jewish nation because of their departure from Egypt in the Exodus (Exodus 23:15; Deut. 16:1-8). While one may admire the spiritual service and rituals of the Law of Moses, we have come to a greater priesthood, a greater tabernacle, and a better covenant, which are not to be confused with the ordinances of the first covenant (Hebrews 3:1-3, 7:11-12, 18:19, 22:28, 8:1-7).

The apostle Paul wrote, "For indeed what HAD glory, in this case has no glory [Old Covenant] because of the glory that surpasses it [New Covenant]. For if that which fades away WAS with glory [Old Covenant], much more of that which remains is in glory [New Covenant]" (2 Cor. 3:10-11). Paul also wrote, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yolk of slavery [Old Covenant]. Behold I, Paul, say to you [Jews] that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man [Jew and Gentile] who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:1-4).

So from what has been written, should churches of Christ observe the Passover? First, we need to understand why God established the Passover for Israel. The Jewish Passover usually comes around each year in April. Those who are familiar with Old Covenant history understand the significance of the holy day for the Jewish nation. God delivered the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage through a series of ten plagues which broke Pharaoh's stubborn heart of rebellion. He would not let Israel go, for he refused to hear God's instruction through Moses, the spokesman for God and leader of Israel. The tenth and final plague brought upon Egypt was the death of the firstborn in every household. To prevent death in the households of Israel, the blood of a sacrificial lamb was to be painted on the lintel and over the doorposts of the houses. God's destroyer "passed over" the houses where the blood marked the presence of the faithful (Ex. 12:29-30).

At this time the Passover feast was ordained by God and given by Moses to the Israelites. This Passover meal consisted of sacrificing a lamb, without spot (Ex. 12:3-6), and unleavened bread with bitter herbs (Ex. 12:8, 15).

This was a significant event in the history of Israel, but it received no attention in the New Testament churches, for they were composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Paul wrote, "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups [Jew and Gentile] into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall [Old Covenant], by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man" (Eph. 2:14-15). "For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). "Put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him - a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised" (Colossians 3:10-11).

In next week's article we will discuss how Jesus established a "new meal" during the Jewish Passover before His death on the cross. Remember, Jesus lived in the Old Covenant and kept the Law of Moses flawlessly, including the Passover. We will argue, through scripture, that this "new meal" replaces the "old Jewish" Passover given to the Israelites in Exodus chapter 12.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
info@sanjuanchurchofchrist.org