

CHRIST JESUS, OUR PASSOVER LAMB (1)

By Keith Greer

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” {Romans 15:4} The Old Testament is filled with types, shadows, and figures of things to come. None of these is more apparent than the Passover Lamb that was introduced during the first Passover feast. God used this lamb to symbolize Israel’s release from Egyptian bondage and servitude. But to those who are students of God’s word, the Passover lamb has a deeper meaning. In every detail, it portrays a much greater (in fact, the greatest) memorial – the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. When the angel of death passed over the land of Egypt, the presence of the Passover lamb’s blood on the doorpost saved the Israelite family’s firstborn. This was a foreshadowing of the greatest drama ever acted out on the world’s stage – the sacrifice of God’s Son for the world’s sins.

Many animal sacrifices were offered under the Old Covenant. Much blood flowed from the altars of Israel, but it carried limited meaning, or symbolization of worth. Now, we see the symbolic meaning when we compare the blood of the animal sacrifices to the blood Christ shed in death.

Remember the words of John the Baptist when Jesus approached him? “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” {John 1:29} In the same way, when they killed the Passover Lamb, the application of its blood during the later memorial feast was simply a foreshadowing of the true sacrifice – the saving blood of Christ. Paul clearly showed the powerful meaning: “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” {1 Corinthians 5:7,8} Let’s more closely examine this to see the symbolism.

Chosen by the Father. Old: “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.’” {Exodus 12:3} The head of each house, the father, would chose a lamb for his household. New: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” {John 3:16} God willingly gave His only begotten Son to be the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Without Blemish. Old: “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.” {Exodus 12:5} The paschal lamb had to be chosen on the tenth day of the first month, but it was not to be offered until the fourteenth day. This allowed ample time for inspection – the lamb had to be without blemish. Israel’s God demanded, and refused to accept any but, defect-free offerings. New: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” {1 Peter 1:19} The Father Himself chose Jesus. Prior to His death on the cross, He endured six mock trials, but He was not found guilty. “...You have brought this Man to me, as one who

misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him." {Luke 23:14,15} Even the civil authorities knew Jesus was innocent of the charges the Jews brought against Him. God's perfect Son had no sin. Herod knew they had delivered Him because of envy. The Jews were worried about their position and authority and wanted Jesus out of the way! Jesus never violated one of the Jewish laws He lived under as a man—thus a perfect life. He suffered temptation, as we do; yet, He did not yield {Hebrews 4:15}. He was a perfect, defect-free sacrifice that would pay the penalty price for the world's sins! ***