

The Passover Season

The Passover is the beginning point of the plan of God. Nothing else could happen without the sacrifice of Jesus. It is the fulcrum around which turns the plan of God. How fitting His plan of love would center around His greatest expression of love – the sacrifice of His Son.

The “love feasts” or *agapes* of the early Christians alluded to by Jude (Jude 12) were none other than the feasts of Leviticus 23. God calls these feasts of love His Feasts, “[The Eternal’s or Jesus’] appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed times are these...” and He begins with the weekly Sabbath, followed by all the annual feasts and/or holy days.

Obviously under the New Covenant our sacrifices are not of the animal kind. Jesus gave Himself as our Passover Lamb, so the blood of lambs, bulls and goats is no longer necessary. We offering financial gifts, ourselves in dedication and often problems we need to turn over to Jesus at the cross. God hasn’t changed; He’s still a God of exchange. Our New Covenant “offering by fire” represents burdens or sins we turn over to Jesus to be burned on the spiritual altar.

The nature of the sacrifices has changed because of Jesus’ blood. But when God says something is holy, He means it. He blessed it for good. He didn’t take away His blessing or His holy presence from these days. His name is holy and He commands us in the third of the Ten Commandments to refrain from taking it in vain so as to profane it.

Nothing is different with the fourth commandment. As with His holy name, He expects us to love and obey Him by keeping His Sabbaths holy. The holy days are simply statutes of this fourth commandment. Our faithfulness to God’s covenant involves obedience to all His commandments and statutes. God’s “lovingkindness” or faithful covenant love is eternal only for “those who keep His covenant And remember His precepts to do them (Ps. 103:17-18).”

Disobedience to His Sabbath commands has always grieved God. He promised to “gather those who grieve [like Him] about the appointed feasts [not being kept]...(Zeph. 3:18).” He will bless the remnant of His people today who repent of grieving Him by keeping pagan feasts instead of the ones He ordained.

God’s people don’t realize the joy, knowledge, understanding and training in righteousness they have missed by observing days of their own choosing. Like Adam, they have chosen to take for themselves the knowledge of good and evil. They do it their way and miss out on God’s Sabbath blessings.

It’s somewhat akin to taking a course in chemistry and refusing to do any lab work. The feasts are concentrated, intensive lab sessions where we live out what we learn. We celebrate Jesus and God’s plan for all mankind by observing these feasts. While we do receive special instruction about God’s ways, we act out God’s prophetic plan. God is

the Master Educator. He knew what He was doing in establishing these important times of celebration with understanding.

Although each feast pictures a different stage in God's plan of salvation and a different aspect of the person and work of Jesus, there is some overlap and some themes in common. The first Day of Unleavened Bread, for instance, celebrates the first day of the new man while Trumpets celebrates our birthday in Jesus in addition to the day of the coming of King Jesus. Both the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles focus on casting out fear, the first by the foot washing and the last by the love of Jesus.

Satan has established his times of celebration and has convinced the Christian world that these feasts are Christian. As Lucifer the worship leader of heaven he began to play his own tunes instead staying in sync with God's drumbeat. Instead of following the One who became the Way, the Truth and the Life, he decided to go his own way. He perverted God's ways, twisting them with his lies and deception, leading to death. Perversion, deception and the ways of death seem palatable even to the Christian world, who have gotten out of harmony with God's tune.

Satan has used two of his right-hand "men", betrayal and mockery, to spin a web around the body of Christ to deprive them of the fullness of the joy of Jesus. When we worship Jesus in spirit and in truth on the right days, under the anointing of these days we increase our level of praise and rejoicing and thus our faith. Keeping the days of Baal pollutes our praise and our faith. Such falseness mocks the true feasts of Jesus and betrays Him, bringing in a multitude of demonic henchmen under betrayal that sully the Bride of Jesus.

Satan cleverly replaced Passover by "Ishtar." And yet Jesus had nothing to do with Easter, nor did his early followers in the first century. Knowing He would be Himself the Passover Lamb in the day portion of Passover, He blessed the bread and wine to be His body and blood, instituted a foot washing ceremony, and commanded his disciples to do as He had done (John 13).

And what an irony! The most powerful demon under Satan, the spirit of betrayal got rid of the very feast that gets rid of him! The foot washing at the Passover breaks off betrayal. Remember how quickly traitor Judas left after the foot washing?

When we wash each other's feet at the Passover, we declare to the person whose feet we wash, "I now see you clean before God and man." We sometimes add, "All your sins are forgiven, in Jesus' name," and "I see you clear from fear." All the unrecognized sins of the year that have accumulated on our "feet" in our walk in this world are washed away (John 13:10).

Our Father, in His eternal love, sees the end from the beginning. Before He even created the first man, He had a plan of love set in place and He had already foreseen all His feasts revealing that plan. The spotless bride that would be raptured at Trumpets would have to be cleansed. So He gave up His Son before the world began, designating the Word, Jesus, to be born as a man and die for all men and specifically shed His blood to cleanse

the bride that would marry Jesus at Trumpets and rule with Him on earth, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Passover cleanses the bride. Then follows the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a feast of purification of the bride. She must learn to come out of sin. It's one thing to have the blood of the Lamb spread on your doorpost to free you from Egyptian (sin's) bondage. It's quite another to walk free of sin and put on Jesus' righteousness, represented by eating unleavened bread for seven days. Blessing that bread without leaven (depicting sin) every day of the feast in communion, along with the wine blessed as the blood of Jesus, brings home the lesson that we need to depend on Jesus' righteousness to be the Pentecost first fruits and persevere to the time pictured by Trumpets – the marriage to Jesus.

All the feasts fit so beautifully together. In fact, keeping them makes the Biblical puzzle fit together as well. God has written the Bible like a book with a hidden code (independent of the famous Bible code). The key to decipher the code is amazingly simple, at least in theory. It's obedience! When we approach the Word like little children, believing it means what it says and simply doing what it says, the Bible opens up to us.