

Christ Christ Our Passover

Introduction

There are among many verses three which present the truth of Christ our Passover in a specialized way. They do not all mention the Passover yet they do contain truths which are so relevant.

- a) Dr. Luke wrote: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk. 22:15).
- b) The Preacher (Eccl. 1:1) wrote: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him" (Ecc. 3:14).
- c) The writer to the Hebrews wrote: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:19).

In the consideration of the sacrifices of the Old Testament it is soon discovered that they divide into two major groups:

- a) Those which are non blood sacrifices, for instance, the Meat Offering (actually a meal offering for the principle ingredient was the fine flour) (Lev. 2:1).
- b) Those which have the shedding of blood, for instance the Burnt Offering (Lev. 1:5, 11, 15).

Concerning the blood offerings, they also are divided into two groups:

- a) Those which the Lord provided and offered
- b) Those which God provided but man offered.

In Eden God provided the sacrifice, and while blood is not mentioned, there was the slaying of an animal which was offered for the sin of Adam. The final offering provided by God and offered by God was that of the Lord when in fulfilment of Abraham's words to Isaac, he said: "God will provide Himself a Lamb" (Gen. 22:8), and that was when God gave the Lord to be an offering for sin.

Interestingly, we never read of the blood of the sacrifice until the Passover in Exodus 12, for while there had been multiple animal sacrifices, that which was emphasized was the "fat" of the offering. (Gen. 4:4)

The Passover of Exodus 12 came at the end of eleven plagues God sent upon Egypt. In them we find that God is an exceedingly patient and long-suffering God, for He did not just speak once or twice, but through eleven afflictions He had sought to show the Egyptians that He was to be feared and their gods were nothing before Him. The last plague was to be the death of the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt. There was no extenuating circumstances for the animals, but for those human beings, both Egyptian and Israelite who would obey God, the life of the firstborn would be saved. It was an "either" or "or" situation. This judgment from God was God's last word to the unsaved unrepentant world, and His first word to those who would be redeemed.

Yet, while this ancient Passover was very real, it was still only a shadow, an illustration of a greater sacrificial Lamb, he who the Holy Spirit designates as "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Unusual Words Spoken By The Lord

When one is about to enter a dark experience, and that which was before the Lord was more dreadful than any other had or ever will have, He said: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer" (Lk. 22:15). The Greek word "desire" indicates a driving force and can be used within the context of good or evil.

Why did the Lord so earnestly desire to eat this Passover with the disciples?

- a) For the Lord this was the hour He had looked onward to since eternity (Titus 1:1), the hour when He would glorify God to the fullest measure. This was the hour which would cumulate by His sufferings on the cross for sin, and His death, and resurrection. This hour was that which He looked on to when He set his face to go to Jerusalem, for it was the final steps on His pathway to God and the Father.
- b) This was the beginning of the end of the Old Testament system of law. There was going to be a new era having better promises, an eternal salvation, eternal redemption, a superior High Priest officiating in a superior place, and a complete remission of sin when God pledged: "I will remember their sin no

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more” (Jer. 31:34). The animal sacrificial system which had lasted for approximately 1400 years was not pleasing to God, for those sacrifices could never fully take away sin. It was a system which spelt death, was so much dependent on man keeping the law, and had been shown to be a complete failure. Despite being a Holy law, and with the best of intentions, and men who worked constantly in the purpose of God, the final answer was it “Could never take away sin”. We must ask, “How could the God whose ways are perfect ever be satisfied with sacrifices that could never function as He desired, and what sort of a sacrifice would be acceptable to Him?”

- c) That which the ancient sacrifices could never do but that the sacrifice of Christ could do. Let it be noted that when we speak of the ancient sacrifices we are speaking of the whole law, and the message in a nutshell is that the law can never take away sin. It is simply to show us how far short we are.
 - i) The ancient sacrifices could never cleanse the conscience, but the blood of Christ can. How emphatically the writer to the Hebrews records for us, as He compares the many sacrifices that could never cleanse and the one sacrifice of Christ: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14)
 - ii) The ancient sacrifices could never give to man fullness of fellowship with God. The people lived outside the Tabernacle court, and only one man on one day of the year could approach God (Lev. 16:34; Heb. 9:7), but now through the sacrificial death of the Lord redeemed man is told to: “Come boldly unto the Throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16). Furthermore, Christ our Forerunner has entered Heaven, and as such is the Guarantor of our entrance.
 - iii) The ancient sacrifices could never provide a perfect High Priest who would ever live and constantly be able to succour and sympathize with His people as they walk this earthly pathway. But now through the Passover sacrifice of Christ, we have a High Priest who not only lives forever, but has taken hold of the seed of Abraham and will keep us (Heb. 2:16; 7:25).
 - iv) The ancient sacrifices could never deal with man’s fallen nature. Man has a triplicate problem:
 - (a) That which he does, the sins he commits (Rom. chs. 1-5)
 - (b) That which he has inherited from his ancestor Adam, a relationship under condemnation (Rom. chs. 5-7)
 - (c) The sin nature imbedded in him (Rom. Ch.7)

How could the Holy God ever have fellowship with such an individual? It was an impossibility. God cannot change and neither can man if left to himself, no matter what he tries. However, such is the sacrifice of Christ that all my sins, my natural impulses, conscious ones and those committed unconsciously, sins by commission and sins by omission, all can be eradicated through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. What I am by my relationship to Adam is another major problem for God can forgive what I do but cannot forgive what I am! That old relationship had to be completely severed and the nature of God implanted in me. That could only be done by the death of Christ, thus severing the old relationship and His resurrection which put me into a new relationship of fellowship with God. What about the sin imbedded in me? For that I need power to overcome its natural impulses, and that is through the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling me, and the power of the resurrected life of Christ being outlived through me.

- v) The ancient sacrifices could never show the heart of God in His love. They indicated that God was holy therefore, the sacrifices had to be without blemish or spot. In a very limited way they indicated that God longed for fellowship with His people, but they did not and they could not really reveal the fulness of the love of God. Under the Old Covenant he told them that He loved them and it was demonstrated in His care for them, but how genuine was His love. Suddenly we read the most startling words: “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Don’t you see it? God would say, I love you so much I gave the Son of my love, my beloved Son to be your substitute. And wait for it, He paid the full

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price, for read it: “Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8); “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6); “We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Rom. 5:10); “He that spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

Well, did the hymn-writer pen the words:

ON such love my soul still ponder
Love so great so full so free
Say, while lost in holy wonder
“Why O God such love for me”?

- vi) The ancient sacrifices could never satisfy God with that which can never take away sin, or: “make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. 10:1). The law and its passover and all its sacrifices could not cleanse a single sin. God found no pleasure in them. Thank God through the sacrifice of Christ, God has shown His satisfaction in Him by his justification, His raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in heavenly places.
- vii) The ancient sacrifices could never provide perfection of cleansing so that not a stain could ever be replaced, and the individual always seen as Christ Himself in perfect righteousness. Looking at Christ the spotless Lamb of God, His Passover Lamb, we read some of the most beautiful words that could fall on human ears: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14); and “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7).
- viii) The ancient sacrifices could never provide perfection because it was a two sided covenant.
Example: When I got my house built it was a two sided covenant. The builder would do so much and I would pay so much, but if he failed to do the expected or if I failed to pay, the covenant was broken.

God and Israel made a two sided covenant. If they did such and such, a series of things, then He would give them abundant blessings. The problem was they could not keep the terms of the covenant which was the law, and so the covenant was broken. God sought for a better covenant, one which was one sided, that is all depended on Him, and that was found in the perfections of Christ and His sacrifice. Man had to do nothing, no church going, no Bible reading, no baptism, no holy communion, nothing at all. God put on Christ all the penalty for all our sins for all humanity, and all the individual has to do is accept the free gift God offers. Then, like the firstborn in Egypt who could say: “The Lamb died for me that I might have life”; each individual can say: “Christ the Lamb died for me, and by accepting His free gift of cleansing from my sin, I have eternal life”. Furthermore, because it is a one sided covenant depending on God, the individual can never lose their salvation.

Hallelujah, What a Saviour

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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