

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ² This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴ If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of

*Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord.
¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses
where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass
over you, and no plague shall destroy you when
I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ This day shall be a
day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate
it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your
generations you shall observe it as a perpetual
ordinance.....*

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed
on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when
he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and
when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
'This is my body that is for you. Do this in
remembrance of me.' ²⁵ In the same way he took
the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is
the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often
as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶ For as
often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he
comes.....*

*Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus
knew that his hour had come to depart from this
world and go to the Father. Having loved his*

own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' ⁷ Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' ⁸ Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you?’

¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, “The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.” ¹⁹ I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.’

²¹ After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³ One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ ²⁶ Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’^[a] So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.^[b] ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘Do quickly what you are going to do.’ ²⁸ Now

no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival'; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Prayer: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."

The redemption of Israel from “the house of slavery” is rooted in the Passover event which is then later remembered in the Passover festival and meal.

The significance of God’s redemptive action is seen in several different ways:

- It was the start of a new era
- It was something to be embraced
- It brought salvation and judgement
- It was a memorial day / event

Firstly –

- Passover was the start of a new era

God commanded that the Hebrew people should reorient their calendars around this new era that began with the Passover. The first Passover was the first day of a new beginning for God’s people and it was instituted to mark the new beginning of each and every year after that.

Next –

- Passover was something to be embraced

The substitution of the lamb (dying in the place of God's people) was given for a particular people, (God's own): God decreed that there would be a lamb for each household or group of households. The sacrificial lamb of Passover was not given for everyone, but for those families who identified themselves as being God's people. The death of the lamb on behalf of a family or group had to be accepted and embraced. God's people were chosen by Him and they in their turn needed to choose to be delivered through the death of a spotless lamb.

Thirdly –

- Passover brought salvation and judgement

The Passover focused on the provision of both salvation and judgment—God's people were saved from death whilst the people of Egypt were punished. The lamb's blood was applied to the doorposts of God's people's homes and the

angel of death literally passed over those homes and the people inside did not die. But for the Egyptians who did not have the blood of the lamb's sacrifice for their protection the angel of death took the lives of their firstborn.

Fourthly and lastly –

- Passover was a memorial day / event

Passover was a unique (one-off) day of salvation and judgement. However, the instituted Passover festival was also to serve as “a memorial day” in which the Jewish people would remember the day when salvation and judgment occurred. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron:

“This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance”.

Passover was an historical event of salvation and judgement that looked forward to a future greater salvation and judgement. Jesus, “the Passover lamb” was killed so that all humankind

could be saved from eternal death. In Jesus' death, a new era was inaugurated and realized. In a way Christians could wish each other a happy New Year on Good Friday because Jesus' blood shed for each one of us has bought our freedom from slavery to Satan, sin and death. Jesus' blood has given us all a new start in life. Jesus' sacrifice was the start of the new Christian era.

It follows that Jesus dying on the cross for all humankind is like the Passover in that each person needs to accept and embrace what Jesus has done for them. Jesus laid down his life and shed his blood for all the people of the world, but what Jesus has done for all needs to be accepted and embraced.

A similarity between Passover and Jesus' death on the cross is that both hold a warning. Passover brought salvation for those who embraced it and judgement for those who did not. Jesus' blood is the only thing that is able to bring salvation and forgiveness to anyone and to reject the benefits of Jesus' sacrificial death sadly brings judgement.

Lastly, just as Passover instituted a new memorial, a new festival; so the death of Jesus remembered with bread and wine is our means of remembrance and instruction, our new memorial of the only way that we can become cleansed from our sins and become members of God's family. The day Jesus died was the day in which salvation and judgment was brought about for the whole world. Jesus' death was the "once-for-all" sacrifice that delivered His people from judgment and death.

Jesus knew all of this; He knew what His sacrifice would mean for all the people of the world. That is why on Maundy Thursday (the night before He died) He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said,

'This is my body that is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

And then He took the cup and said,

'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

With the bread and wine we remember God's mercy and forgiveness for us all bought with the sacrifice of Jesus (the Lamb of God) on the cross, and we remember that for all who have accepted and embraced what Jesus has done for us we have been given a new start in life – we have been born again – we now live in the new era of God's love and the New Covenant promises of eternal life.

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