

SABBATH THOUGHT 2024-04-20—PASSOVER THOUGHTS

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Being called by God and having a heart convicted of sins that are transgressions of the Way of the Law of agape love leads us to true repentance, which cannot be feigned since the Holy Spirit reveals the thoughts of the mind. Repentance is fulfilled in baptism, whereby we join in the death of our Savior in a watery grave. DYING to our sins is the only way unto TRUE life as we are raised up from the baptismal grave to live by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But none of this would be possible without the Passover.

Passover is special. It stands above all the holydays (Passover is not a holyday) because it is a very unique feast:

EXODUS 12:14 ‘So **this day [Passover] shall be to you a memorial**; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Passover is a memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The New Covenant was established by the sacrifice of the true Passover Lamb—through the blood of Jesus Christ¹:

LUKE 22:15-20 Then He [*Jesus Christ*] said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 “for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; 18 “for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me**.” 20 Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**, which is shed for you.

HEBREWS 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood of the everlasting covenant**.

Many times over the decades I have heard it said that Passover is a renewal of the covenant with God. Let me assure you, however, it has nothing to do with renewing any covenant. Our covenant with God is eternal and everlasting—it does NOT expire nor does it need to be renewed annually like a magazine subscription.

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Is Passover important? Absolutely. Those who disrespect it bring judgment upon themselves because our Savior COMMANDS us to REMEMBER His death:

¹ Heb. 10:29; 12:24; 13:20; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 7:14; 12:11.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29 For I [*Paul*] received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* [*Passover*] night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**” 25 In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. **This do,** as often as you drink *it*, **in remembrance of Me.**” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death** till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord **in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For **he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself,** not discerning the Lord’s body.

Some say Passover is a renewal of vows; however, the New Covenant with God is established with vows, which are made at baptism. No vows are said during Passover. Our covenant with God is finalized at baptism, which is ETERNAL. For that reason, a person IS (present tense) baptized not WAS (past tense). Someone is either baptized or not—in covenant with God or not—and only those who are can partake of the Passover:

EXODUS 12:43, 48 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: **No foreigner shall eat it.** ... 48 “And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. **For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.**

Only circumcised citizens of ancient Israel could keep the Old Covenant Passover; likewise, only those who are baptized may keep the New Covenant Passover. They, too, have a unique citizenship—they are members of the household of God through the unique circumcision of the heart:

EPHESIANS 2:19 Now, therefore, **you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,**

PHILIPPIANS 3:20 For **our citizenship is in heaven,** from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

ROMANS 2:29 but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit,** not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

Passover also cannot be kept by those who are unclean or defiled:

NUMBERS 9:10, 13 Now there were *certain* **men who were defiled** by a human corpse, so **that they could not keep the Passover on that day;** and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. ... 13 ‘But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.

2 CHRONICLES 35:6 “So slaughter **the Passover offerings,** **consecrate** [*cleanse, sanctify*] **yourselves,** and prepare *them* for your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.”

EZRA 6:20-21 For **the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were clean.** And they slaughtered the Passover *lamb*s for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 Then **the children of Israel** who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who **had separated themselves from the filth of the nations** of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel.

Even though baptism is itself a cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ, *remaining* clean requires constant examination and effort. Are there unreconciled offenses? What about unrepented sins? These things defile us:

MARK 7:20-23 And He [*Jesus*] said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 **“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil** thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 “thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 **“All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”**

1 JOHN 1:7, 9 But if we walk in the light as He [*God the Father*] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** ... 9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just** to forgive us *our* sins and **to cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.

It is vital to only partake of the Passover in a spiritually clean state. For that reason (and other legitimate issues) there is a second Passover:

NUMBERS 9:10 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: **‘If anyone** of you or your posterity **is unclean** because of a corpse, **or is far away on a journey,** he may still keep the LORD’s Passover. 11 **‘On the fourteenth day of the second month,** at twilight, they may keep it.

The importance of keeping the Passover in a clean and undefiled state cannot be overemphasized. If need be, simply keep the second Passover 30 days later.

Another misconception is that Passover commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While the Passover would be meaningless without it, His resurrection occurred just before the evening of the Wavesheaf offering on the first day of the week, which was three days and three nights AFTER His crucifixion. Passover is a memorial of His crucifixion whereas the Wavesheaf offering was the day that the risen Jesus Christ was glorified upon His triumphal entry into the heavenly Mount Zion:

JOHN 20:1, 17 Now **on the first day of the week** Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ... 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for **I have not yet ascended to My Father;** but go to My brethren and say to them, **‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’**”

PSALMS 24:3, 7-10 **Who may ascend into the hill [*Mount Zion*] of the LORD?** Or who may stand in His holy [*of holies*] place? ... **7 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.** **8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.** **9 Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.** **10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah.**

Some have suggested that Passover is a day when leavened bread can be eaten but I believe Scripture is plain:

EXODUS 12:18 **'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month [Passover] at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread,** until the twenty-first day of the month [*last Day of Unleavened Bread*] at evening.

I have also heard it said that the Passover ceremonial bread was leavened because the Greek word refers to 'normal' bread. However, consider these verses:

EXODUS 34:25 **"You shall not offer the blood of My [God's] sacrifice with leaven,** nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of **the Passover** be left until morning.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8 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.** 8 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.

Even though *bread* in verse 8 is not specifically written in the Greek, it is obvious that the Passover is to be kept in an UNLEAVENED manner. How is that accomplished if LEAVENED bread is eaten???

Jesus Christ is our true Passover Lamb, sacrificed at the hand of God the Father to ransom us from the penalty of death for sins. They gave everything so that we might be called the children of God². There are a few who will be partaking of the Passover for the first time and I say, "Hallelujah!"—God be praised! To all who will be partaking of the Passover, I pray that God the Father and Jesus Christ are with you and blessing you. May your hearts be filled with humility and reverence as you keep this day of remembrance as we await the fulfillment of the New³ Passover in the Kingdom:

LUKE 22:15-18 Then He [*Jesus Christ*] said to them, "With *ferve*nt desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 "for I say to you, **I will no longer eat of it [the Passover] until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**" 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; 18 "for I say to you, **I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God** comes."

LUKE 22:18 "Assuredly, I [*Jesus Christ*] say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day **when I drink it [brand] new in the kingdom of God.**"

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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² Hos. 1:10; Rom. 9:26; 1 Pet. 2:10.

³ Also Matt. 26:29.