

Christ Our Passover

Introduction. The passover and the exodus from Israel are the most important events in the Old Testament. Likewise, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are the most important events of the New Testament. But there is more to connect these events than just the fact that they are the most important events in their respective testaments.

The events of the Old Testament are designed to set the pattern for the events of the New Testament (Hebrews 10:1). Many times in the Old Testament, what was done in the material realm will set the pattern for what will be done in the spiritual realm in the New Testament.

The basic principles by which God redeems or saves man are first revealed in the Old Testament as God redeems, or saves, Israel from their slavery in Egypt. That sets the pattern for how He eventually will redeem all men from the slavery of sin in the New Testament. This connection is most clearly seen by noting the parallels between the passover in the Old Testament and the crucifixion in the New Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Christ is called our passover, which points us toward a connection between the two events. The hour of double sacrifice was drawing near. The passover lambs are being prepared for sacrifice, and the Lamb of God is likewise sentenced to death. How do they compare to one another?

I. ***Both Events Are Acts Of Deliverance From Bondage***

- A. In the Old Testament it is Egyptian bondage (Exodus 1:10-14); in the New Testament it is bondage to sin (Romans 6:6; 7:14; Luke 4:18).
- B. In the Old Testament the children of Israel were in great misery because of their bondage (Exodus 6:9); in the New Testament we are in misery because of sin (Romans 7:22-23).

II. ***Both Events Involve Elements Of Salvation***

- A. Both involved salvation by redemption.
 - 1. The word "redemption" means to "buy back by paying a ransom." In the song of Moses after the crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites recognized that they had been redeemed and purchased from slavery and allowed to dwell in God's holy habitation (Exodus 15:13, 16).
 - 2. The concept of redemption continues into the New Testament. We are redeemed from the bondage of sin (Romans 7:14; Matthew 20:28) by the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18) and are allowed to dwell in the church, the holy habitation of God (Ephesians 2:19-22).

- B. Both involved salvation by grace.
 - 1. The Israelites had done nothing to deserve rescuing from the land of Egypt (Exodus 15:13). God brought them out by His mercy as a part of His plan to bring all men to Christ.
 - 2. We have done nothing to deserve rescuing from sin. God has brought us out by His mercy for the purpose of bringing men to Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).
- C. Both involved salvation by faith.
 - 1. The Israelites had to believe in what was done for them (Exodus 14:22).
 - 2. We must also believe in the sacrifice offered for us (Romans 3:21-25; 5:1-2).
- D. Both involved salvation by obedience.
 - 1. Faith was not enough. The Israelites had to act in obedience upon their faith (Exodus 12:26-28).
 - 2. We must also act upon our faith and let it bring forth the fruit of obedience (Romans 1:5; 16:25-26; James 2:17, 24).

III. ***Both Events Require The Sacrifice Of A Perfect Lamb***

- A. In the Old Testament it was a literal lamb (Exodus 12:3); in the New Testament Christ Himself is the lamb (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; Revelation 5:6-12). Sins can only be forgiven by the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22; Leviticus 17:11); however, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4).
- B. In the Old Testament the lamb was physically perfect which meant that it had no broken bones, spots, etc. (Exodus 12:5); in the New Testament Jesus is spiritually perfect which meant that He had no sin (1 Peter 1:19; 2:22).
- C. In the Old Testament the blood was applied to the door posts and the lintels (Exodus 12:7); in the New Testament the blood is applied to the believer (Hebrews 9:13-14).

IV. ***Both Events Involve A Commemorative Meal***

- A. In the Old Testament the sacrificial lamb was killed and eaten (Exodus 12:8-10); in the New Testament we symbolically partake of the body and the blood of Jesus in the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).
- B. In the Old Testament the meal was eaten once a year at the passover as a permanent memorial for the Israelites (Exodus 12:14). After it was eaten in Egypt, it was eaten again the second year (Numbers 9:1-5), but then it was not eaten again until the Israelites entered Canaan (Exodus 12:25; 13:5; Joshua 5:10). In the New Testament the Lord's supper is eaten every first day of the week until the Lord comes again (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:26).

C. In the Old Testament the Israelites had to observe the passover in haste with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hands (Exodus 12:11); in the New Testament Christians observe the Lord's supper in a discerning manner (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Conclusion. Perhaps all this will help us see why the song of victory the Christians are singing in Revelation 15:3 is called the song of Moses. In its theme, if not in its very words, it surely is the same song of victory that Moses and Israel sang when they first experienced God's salvation and deliverance.

We are not to think that God has designed the crucifixion of Jesus to be like the passover. It was the other way around. The passover was designed to set the pattern for the crucifixion of Christ. It is in this way that the Old Testament functions as our tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:23-25).