

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Lesson # 7

THE PASSOVER AND THE LAW

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In the previous courses (Lessons 1 through 6), we established that the whole Bible provides us a *holistic Vision* and **Plan** of God for Humanity: that is a divinely comprehensive, all-encompassing and integrated **vision and plan** of God for Humanity. Therefore, *the only way* to understand the *when, why, what, and how* questions we have about *our existence* on this Earth is by reading, receiving, and believing the Scriptures from **God's Perspective**. We will do well to remind ourselves of Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 to 31. **It is God who created the Universe and it belongs to Him. That is why God is Sovereign!** As disciples of Christ, we must endeavor to *see* how God *sees* (*Vision*), *seek* to faithfully abide in His Will and *fulfill* His Purpose for our lives (God's Plan of Salvation).

A. Historical Background

A comprehensive overview of the Bible *reveals* that the Believers (Israelites/Christians) often pursue their plans (short-sighted, selfish, exclusive, flesh-driven, etc.) instead of God's Plan (eternal, inclusive, society-oriented, Spirit-led, purposeful, etc.). *The consequences of doing so are severe and regressive. On the other hand, God always used/uses the few faithful and obedient servants of His who aligned themselves with His Vision and Plan in mighty ways!* In other words, the Sovereign God will always have His way to advance His Kingdom on Earth! God used men and women of faith to advance **His Kingdom** on earth in all the generations! We should find it extremely helpful, insightful, encouraging and inspiring to read the stories of Abraham & Sarah, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Rahab, Hanah, Samuel, David, the Prophets, etc., Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, Barnabas, Presilla & Aquila, etc. God worked through few faithful, obedient and courageous men and women to advance His Kingdom! **His Plan of Salvation has been translated into reality because of such men and women!** Hallelujah!

B. Biblical Context

God's Plan of Salvation is undergirded by The Covenant. The *relationship* between God and the people of the Faith was/is based on a **Covenant Relationship** [Read **Exodus 34:1-35**]. *The Law was given to reenforce and expand the scope of the Covenant Relationship.* Please reread/review the Biblical Context of Lesson #4 to refresh your memories regarding this aspect.

II. THE LAW

THE LAW given to Moses by God is found in the first 5 Books of the Bible (collectively known as the Pentateuch) in the Old Testament, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and **Deuteronomy**. **THE LAW** is the fundamental *eternal document* – a **living, unchangeable and divine word of God** – that constitutes *the essential elements* upon which **The Kingdom of God** is built and sustained.

The LAW, generally speaking, consists of three major categories:

A. The Spiritual Dimension.

This Dimension covers *the basis* for **the Relationship** between God and Humanity, especially the “People of the Faith” both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. When God “breathed in Adam’s nostrils **“the breath of life”** which literally means Adam’s form made out of dust (a) *came alive spiritually*, (b) became *conscious mentally*, (c) acquired *conscience, morally* (d) heart began to beat, blood started to flow and (e) lungs began to pump – all of these things happened *instantaneously and simultaneously!* When God “breathed into Adam,” He essentially *put in him* His Spirit that “awakened” everything in him! *That is why when we die, the “spirit” leaves our body and goes back to the One who gave it!* And the body becomes “life-less.” The Relationship between God and us (the Redeemed) is essentially spiritual in nature. Recall that God is a Spirit and becomes manifest in the **physical** in *tangible ways*. Also, recall all the things God established in the Law symbolize *spiritual aspects in heaven*. Understand that The Law was *necessitated* because of **SIN** which needs to be dealt with for God to **Redeem** sinners so that they who believe can be **Reconciled** back to Him through **the Blood of the Lamb**. That is why it is crucial to understand *the eternal significance* of Genesis 17 regarding the *necessity* for **circumcision** (which involves blood) and everything in Exodus chapters 11 and 12 (which also involves shedding of blood) in relation to **The Covenant**. Understand **The Kingdom of God** is based on **The Covenant Relationship** with the Redeemed who must advance God’s Plan of Salvation *by Faith* in *obedience* to God’s Word (which includes The Law).

During the time of Moses and Joshua, God dealt with the Israelites directly to advance His Kingdom. In the New Testament era, God uses the Holy Spirit through **His Church** to advance His Kingdom. Even though there are some fundamental changes regarding The Priesthood, animal sacrifices, etc. because Jesus Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the Law and the prophecies, the **Covenant Relationship** remains, for example.

The **Spiritual Dimension** consists of three components:

- a) **The Covenant of Blood** (Genesis 17; Exodus chapters 1 to 12);
 - **The Covenant of Blood vis-à-vis the Circumcision (Genesis 17);**

- **The Covenant of Blood vis-à-vis the One-year-old male lamb without defect (Exodus 12).**
- b) **The Priesthood** (Exodus chapters 28, 29, 30 & 39);
 - **The Priests**
 - **The Levites**
- c) **The Sanctuary** (Exodus chapters 25, 31, 35 through 38).
 - **The Tent of Meeting/Tabernacle**
 - **The Ark of the Covenant**
 - **Sacred Articles.**

Let us now examine **Exodus chapter 12** in detail to understand, especially, *why* God *initiated The Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread before the journey* toward the Promised Land began. Exodus Chapter 12 is *marked* by the following *eternally consequential events based on divine commands* which *consecrated* the Israelites as God's people.

1. vv. 1-13. THE CALENDAR GOD INSTITUTED FOR THE ISRAELITES WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE EGYPTIAN CALENDAR.

(I need to do thorough research why God changed the Calendar for the Israelites, but I suspect it was *to distinguish it* from the Egyptian Calendar which *identifies with their gods* in the way they calculate their months and years).

On The Day God decided to *free* the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, oppression and exploitation, He also *commanded* Moses and Aaron to *mark* the month as the **First Month** of *their year* (vv. 1-2). On that First Month of their First Year, God also *initiated, instituted and established* **The Passover and The Feast of the Unleavened Bread** to be *commemorated* and celebrated by the Israelites generation after generation. And God told them what must happen before they leave Egypt for good.

- a) **1st Day of the Month.** The 1st Day was the day God told Moses and Aaron about their new Calendar. That **1st Day marked day 1** of their **First Month**.

On the 1st Day of the Month, God *commanded* Moses and Aaron to communicate the following divine instructions which each household consisting of the Israelite Community must do on the 10th Day of the Month.

- b) **10th Day of the Month.**

A Year-Old-Male-Lamb without Defect Per Household. "Each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each will eat."

“The animals you choose must be **year-old-males without defect**, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the 14th Day of the Month.”

c) 14th Day of the Month. The Passover Blood and the Meal.

The Blood of the Lambs on the Door Posts of Each Household. The Lambs must be slaughtered at **Twilight of the 14th Day**. The Blood from the Lambs must be Put on the Top and Side Frames of the Doors of Each Household.

The Meat of the Lambs must be Eaten the same Night of the 14th Day.

- The Meat of the Lamb must be roasted over the fire;
- The **roasted** meat must be eaten along with **bitter herbs** and **bread made without yeast**.
- The roasted meat of the Lamb *must be eaten completely* before morning; **the left over meat must be burned**.
- The Lamb meat cannot be eaten boiled or raw.
- The Meal must be eaten with *everyone dressed and ready* for the journey.

d) God's Judgement on Egypt.

On the Night of the 14th Day, God said He will “bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt by striking down every first-born – both men and animals.” On the other hand, God will “Passover” the households of the Israelites **marked** by the “blood of the lambs.” God promised by saying “No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”

e) 21st Day. The Feast of the Unleavened Bread.

For 7 Days, the Israelites are to eat “**Bread made without yeast.**” The preparation begins on the 1st Day of the First Month of the Year.

- All Israelites must **remove the yeast** from their houses.
- Anyone who is found eating bread that has yeast in the 7 Days “**must be cut off from Israel**” (v. 15).
- Israelites must “**hold a sacred assembly**” on the **1st Day** and the **7th Day** (v. 16).
- In every household, from the **Evening of the 14th Day** to the **Evening of the 21st Day**, “**No yeast is to be found in your houses**” (v. 19-20).

This command applies to both native born and aliens.

2. vv. 14-20. The Passover Established as a Lasting Ordinance.

- i. The Passover to be Commemorated Yearly on the 14th Day as a “Festival to the LORD.”
- ii. The Feast of the Unleavened Bread. For 7 Days, Israelites are to eat “Bread made without yeast” as part of The Passover.

3. **vv. 24-30. The Passover to be Explained to Children in Every Generation.**

The Passover Commemoration is extremely significant for several main reasons. It has Eternal Implications, it is Most Sacred and Spared the Israelites from God's Judgement. God told the Israelites to explain the Passover this way: "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean *to you?*' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when He struck down the Egyptians.' Then the people bowed down and worshipped" (vv.24-28).

- **Eternal Implications.** It is the basis for the establishment of **the Priesthood** in the Law and points to Jesus Christ (who becomes the Ultimate Priest).
- **Most Sacred Sacrifice.** It is Most Sacred Sacrifice because it is the *prelude* to The Lamb of God being **sacrificed** on The Cross at Calvary.
- **Spares sinners from the Judgement of God.** The same way God **spared** the Israelites because of **the Blood** of the sacrifices of the "lambs without defect," the **Blood** of Jesus Christ will **spare** the sinners from God's Ultimate Judgement who *believe in Him* for **Salvation**.

The Passover is the Prelude to The Lamb of God – the Blood of Christ – which Redeems and prepares the disciples of Christ for the Journey to Eternal Life.

The Passover is the central, essential and integral part of the Covenant of Blood. God's Kingdom is *distinguished* from all other earthly kingdoms because it incorporates the spiritual element, divine nature and eternal magnitude associated with God. **God's Kingdom *must reflect*** His Divinity, Character (Truthful, Faithful, Unchanging, Gracious, Merciful, Loving, etc.) Virtues (Holiness, Righteousness, etc.). **The Law** was given for the purpose of *transforming* the Israelites spiritually, morally, ethically, and educationally so that as a **Community of Faith** they will be *distinguished* from other idols worshipping nations/people/kingdoms. Hence, Israelites/Christians must *reflect His divine characteristics* in their lives – in the way they speak, act, serve, and live.

B. The Moral and Ethical Dimension.

This Dimension is *the structure* for the **Socio-Economic** aspects of the Community of Faith based on the **Moral and Ethical Values** as laid out in the "**do and do not**" commands vis-à-vis the various **statutes, precepts, and decrees** of God.

C. The Truth, Love and Righteousness Dimension.

This Dimension is *Eternal Fountain* which runs through everything *breathing life* since **Truth, Love, and Justice *flow*** from God's own Power, Virtues and Character – **His Abounding Holiness, Goodness and Righteousness!**

III. THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE SANCTUARY.