

Week of February 5-11

PASSOVER 2.0

Scripture Reading: Read Matthew chapter 26

It seems like every few years a new piece of technology or a new version of software is created that promises advancement over a previous edition. The recent technological craze is 4G. According to advertisers, with the power of a 4G network and a capable device, you can “enjoy enhanced data speeds,” experience web browsing and video streaming at “blazing-fast” speeds, and download documents, photos, apps, and music “in a blink.” Usually, when upgraded software or technology is introduced, the name reflects the upgrade. For example, 4G is the fourth generation of cellular wireless systems as opposed to the previous family of 3G and before that 2G. In 1985, when Windows was first released as an operating system for computers by Microsoft, it was known as Windows 1.0. This was soon followed by Windows 2.0 in 1987.

Almost 3,500 years ago, God created what we can call Passover 1.0. It's an amazing tale of God's deliverance of his people, Israel, after centuries of bondage in Egypt. He accomplished this by raising up a deliverer, Moses, through whom he worked 10 plagues. The last plague, the death of the firstborn of Egypt, was connected to God's command to Israel to slay a lamb and to place its blood on the two door-posts and on the lintel of their doors. When the Lord saw the blood, he would pass over the house and its inhabitants would be safe. The amazing deliverance has been celebrated by Jews the world over ever since through the Passover Seder.

Fifteen hundred years after Passover 1.0 was launched, the Lord produced an upgrade, Passover 2.0. It was released during the course of a last supper Jesus had with his disciples before his crucifixion. Interestingly enough, it took place during the celebration of Passover 1.0 as our chapter reading today reveals. Jesus took unleavened bread that would be eaten before the main Passover meal, and infused it with new meaning by connecting it to his death on the cross: "Take and eat; this is my body." Imagine the thoughts going through the disciples' minds at this point: "What did he just say?" A tradition celebrated their entire lives, a tradition they probably knew by heart, transformed before their very eyes. But Jesus wasn't through. After supper, he took a cup of wine (in the Passover tradition this would have been the third cup and known as the cup of redemption) and reinterprets it as well: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

In Passover 1.0, a lamb's blood brought deliverance for the Jews from slavery to the Egyptians but in Passover 2.0, the blood of the sinless Lamb of God secures deliverance for all from slavery to sin's power and penalty. Now, that's an upgrade worth having and the good news is that it's free to anyone who asks for it. It's already been paid for by the Creator! If you haven't received a copy, do so TODAY!

Action Step: This coming March, the churches of Schoharie County will be hosting a Christ in the Passover celebration. Plan on attending.

Prayer Focus: Thanksgiving for deliverance through Christ from sin's penalty & power

Take-a-way: *Passover 1.0 was wonderful. Passover 2.0 is extraordinary!*