

Should Christians Celebrate Passover?

(The Creation of the Christian Seder)

by Tony Warren



One of the more disturbing trends in the church today is the proliferation of people who no longer seem to understand the error of returning to observances of Old Covenant ceremonial laws. It is a testimony to this confusion that many have asked, "*should Christians celebrate Passover?*" They are seeking honest answers as to why there are so many in the church today willing to partake in this obvious Old Covenant practice?

The answer is that people have become acclimated to such ideas as the Christian Sedar. Chiefly this is due to Dispensational influences so that a growing number of professing Christians actually believe that the Bible teaches that the political nation of Israel remains God's chosen people. They thus surmise that if they can just align themselves with Israel's Old Covenant culture, land, language, history and traditions, this will bring them some favor with God. We can make the analogy that it is akin to the mindset of taking out extra insurance. In truth, those who have such mindsets are actually placing themselves back into the Old Covenant shadows and signs that prefigured things that have already come. Anyone looking to the nation of Israel and its Old Covenant ordinances to curry favor with God, is doomed to failure from the start. God's chosen people today are a spiritual nation made up of the elect from all languages, lands and tribes, including Israel.

1st Peter 2:9-10

- "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, *an holy nation*, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
- Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

God looks upon every soul that was regenerated unto salvation as His sons and

daughters in Christ, by His blood. There is no one who is a child of Israel who obtains mercy by flesh ([Romans 9:6-8](#)), because ultimately we are all of one flesh (*Adam*), and all Sons of God through the second Adam ([1st Corinthians 15:45-47](#)), Christ. God is no respecter of persons. We are all children of Israel by being born of God through His Spirit, and each child God is fully accepted of Him, receiving a full inheritance, regardless of fleshly lineage.

Acts 10:34-35

- "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:*
- But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Peter is declaring that he very plainly understands that the partition wall between Jew and Gentile has been broken down ([Ephesians 2:13-15](#)). All the nationalistic peculiarities, sanctification, special rights, covenants, and unity of body, are now found in the New Covenant body of Christ. This is the only place where both Jew and Gentile may find their excellence. It will not be found in physical heritage or blood line, for God is no respecter of persons. What that means is that God does not favor or reject anyone based on his or her outward respects, and no genealogical qualifications will engender favor and acceptance with God. Contrary to popular opinion in our day, there is no Christian Sedar. There are no Jewish Christians, Italian Christians or African Christian in God's sight, as we are all now "one body" in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27-29

- "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- *There is neither Jew nor Greek,* there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
- And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

There are countless people who read those scriptures, and yet they still do not truly comprehend exactly what is said. In other words, they are still attempting to separate God's people a Jewish sect and a Gentile sect, affording the Jew a higher position because of Old Covenant history. In doing so, they are indeed not only making God a respecter of persons, but also contradicting the scriptures at every turn. This erroneous understanding of God's example of Old Covenant Israel is the core reason why many professed Christians have looked at Jewish or Hebrew feasts, and have concluded that they should take part in the Passover celebration. They have even labeled it, "*The Christian Seder.*" Some are of Jewish heritage and prefer to be called Messianic Christians, which in reality is really a double identifier. The word "Christ" is simply the New Covenant way of saying "Messiah," so it's like saying "I'm a Christian, Christian." Today the phrase has come to mean a Christian of Jewish heritage. Strangely enough, anyone who affords Jewish people "equal" status with non Jews, are more often than not labeled anti-Semitic. How equal equates to anti-Semitic no one can rationally explain, especially since God is no respecter of persons, has broken

down the wall and made us all fellow citizens, one body ([Ephesians 2:16-19](#)) and declares there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ. There are still those who want to place the nation of Israel on a pedestal and look at their Old Covenant types and ordinances as physical and eternally binding.

Nevertheless, the question remains, should Christians celebrate the Passover? Is the biblical justification for the Christian Sedar? I believe that the only Biblical answer to these questions is an unequivocal no. Of course, I fully understand that by giving such a definitive and absolute answer in an age of irrational caution, political correctness, church compromise and appeasement will be disdained and leave many aghast, but I believe that such observances unquestionably would be unbiblical. The fact is, Christians should not go back to celebrate the feast of Passover, the feast of Weeks, or any other Old Covenant feast day, such as Tabernacles, Rosh Hashanah, or Purim. The reason is not because we are anti-Semitic (God forbid), the reason is because Christ our Saviour has already come and fulfilled (completed) these festivals that prefigured Him. As all of the Old Covenant ceremonial laws were, the Passover feast was also instituted as a "sign" or token foreshadowing Christ's atoning work on the cross. It is one of the oldest festivals in Judaism, commemorating God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and ultimately pointing toward Christ fulfilling a greater spiritual, more perfect deliverance.

Exodus 13:3

- "And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for *by strength of hand the LORD* brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten."

This was a token for Israel signifying that as it was not by the work of man, but only by the sovereign hand of God that Israel was saved. Deliverance or salvation is by Grace of God alone. The festival of unleavened bread signifies that truly they would be delivered only by eating of the broken body of Christ. He would be their sacrifice Passover Lamb and their unleavened bread of righteousness. The Old Covenant/Testament Passover in Exodus was merely instituted as a "pattern" or "model" that pointed to the the coming Messiah/Christ, who was the better sacrifice that truly delivers God's people.

1st Corinthians 5:7-8

- "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even *Christ our Passover* is sacrificed for us:
- Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The feast we keep is not with Old Covenant observances of bread or leaven, but with their New Covenant realities. Here in this verse it is plainly illustrated God's instruction concerning who was the new bread, the Christian Passover. It is Christ that we eat of, and so to go back to the Old Covenant Jewish observance looking forward to Christ would in essence be a denial that our Passover had come. Christians who are Jews or Gentile should understand from the Old Covenant "types" that the true exodus

was from spiritual Egypt, and the true deliverance was from spiritual bondage to Satan, and that Christ fulfilled that as our true Passover. His sinless body is our unleavened bread and His shed blood is our wine. It was for this reason that Christ became flesh and dwelt upon earth, that the "sign" of the New Covenant with Israel might be fulfilled. Partaking of the bread in New Covenant communion, rather than Old Covenant Passover is part of our personal relationship with God.

Hebrews 2:14-15

- "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
- **And deliver them** who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Clearly it was by the death of Christ that God's people were delivered from the taskmaster Satan, and were brought out of the spiritual bondage prefigured in Egypt. Like the token or sign Israel, we were delivered by the hand of sovereign God and set free ([John 8:33-36](#)) as the chosen people of God. Thus we cannot go backward to the Old Covenant feasts that pointed forward to this reality. The first Passover celebration was actually a prophecy of the coming Christ and His true deliverance of the children of God from bondage. The Jewish people call this the Seder. It commemorated their deliverance from being bond servants in Egypt. Christ's death on the cross represented the "true" act of deliverance that the Passover looked toward. All the Old Covenant festivals were given to teach God's people (through these rituals and ceremonies) the true nature of His magnificent plan of salvation. Unfortunately, today there has come a new breed of professing Christians who claim that we are missing out on something if we do not go back and embrace the Old Testament Hebrew ceremonies, rites and traditions. They neglect that these holy days were shadows of things to come, and thus passed away with the coming of the New Testament congregation.

Colossians 2:16-17

- Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:
- ***Which are a shadow of things to come;*** but the body is of Christ."

The reason why Christians should not judge with respect to meats, times, or holy days is because those ceremonies were only a [*skias*] or shadow that was merely a figure of things to come. They were dark patterns showing only the outline of the "true" that was to come. Should Christians celebrate Passover, when it was the pattern of this reality of the work of Christ? Should we be a part of any Christian Seder? The Apostle illustrates that Christ is the body and substance that those shadows (*such as the Passover*) represented. Consequently, to continue to observe the old ceremonies in the New Covenant dispensation is in effect saying, Christ the body has not yet come. Most of national Israel do not believe that the Messiah has come, however, this belief is an offense to Christians who know that He has. To join them in this ceremony is in effect to deny the gospel of Christ, which is a heresy and rejection of the New

Covenant era. In the original Passover sign, the firstborn of Israel were saved from the angel of death by the blood of the sacrifice lamb that marked the door of their house. Again, should we now point back to the old sign after Christ has fulfilled it? God forbid! Therefore, Christians should not observe the Passover feast as Old Covenant Israel did and as many Jews do today. We should understand that to do so would be to observe the shadow "as if" the true had not yet come in fulfillment of it. No conscientious Christian would want to do this.

Hebrews 9:22-25

- "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.
- It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
- For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:
- Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;"

The festivals and sacrifices in the Old Covenant holy Temple weren't meant to continue, they were only temporary figures of the true. Likewise, we don't today kill a literal Lamb and spill his blood because we are in the New Covenant observance of Christ. In Christ we observe it having put off the sin of the flesh by the blood of His Passover sacrifice. He has already come as our unleavened bread through which we are purged from the leaven of sin. Knowing this, we cannot go back to observances in Old Testament rites that look forward to His coming. Even the history of this Jewish custom of putting away leaven from their houses at Passover was that they showed forth Christ until He came. While with the coming of the "true," the shadow is passed away. Unfortunately, there are many misguided souls who are attempting to bring it back.

Luke 22:16-20

- "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:"

When Christ gathered the Apostles in the small room in Jerusalem, he led them in the annual Seder or Passover dinner. And there in instituting the Lord's table, He effectively did away with the Old Testament Passover observance. His words, "*this do in remembrance of me*" is declaring that the Passover festival is replaced by this ritual of His broken Body and His shed blood, and this is the New Covenant ceremony for New Covenant Israel. This is our feast observance that was instituted by Christ, and we cannot righteously go back to observing the Old.

Luke 22:16-20

- "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the

kingdom of God.

- And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
- For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
- And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, ***This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.***
- Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, ***This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.***

In instituting this New Covenant bread observance, Christ was endeavoring to have His disciples (who were Jews) understand that the "whole purpose" of the Passover feast was to prefigure His broken body. The New Covenant observance supersedes the Old Covenant Passover sacrifice. Any New Covenant requires a new seal and symbol. Thus we have the communion service and are baptized into His death by the Holy Spirit. So Christians, as partakers in this New Covenant with Israel, have had the Passover celebration replaced with the Eucharist of bread and wine. God himself has thus substituted a new Covenant/Testament feast ceremony in place of the Passover. Because the original ceremony "represents" the Old Testament/Covenant observance, it is of no current significance to Christians today. It stands today only as "an Old Covenant sign" of the rejection of Christ by those who still hold to this practice. This is a clear message to the astute Biblically minded observer of the error of continuing to practice these sundry Old Testament ceremonial rites. Why Should Christians celebrate Passover? There is no reason. Christ is not coming again to die as sacrifice, He was the Lamb slain once and for all so that any Old Covenant Passover sacrifice will only serve to bring in errors in practice, to convolute and to confuse the issue.

Romans 6:9-11

- "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
- For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
- Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As Christians who study to rightly divide the word of truth, we should recognize that our Christian Seder was in the body of Christ. That was our Passover feast. We were given the elements and symbols of the New Covenant with Israel in what is known as Communion. By Christ first doing this at Passover, He is transitioning from the "shadow" to the "true," illustrating that His broken body is the transformation. It's not that the true meaning has changed, but the position and observance has changed. Thus the symbol had to change for the New Covenant Israel (Hebrews chapters 8-10) congregation representation. We would no more desire to go back to the old ways as we would want to go back to Gentiles being unclean, or to sacrificing lambs blood, or to the laws of separating threads ([Deuteronomy 22:10-11](#)) in our clothing. To do so would be to illustrate that we do not understand its meaning and purpose.

1st Corinthians 11:23-26

- "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:
- And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
- After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup *is the new testament in my blood: this do ye*, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
- For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Jesus' death on the cross did away with the Old Covenant ceremonial laws, Holy days, animal sacrifices and rituals. He instituted the New Covenant/Testament dispensation in the shedding of His blood.

Hebrews 10:8-10

- "Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;
- Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*
- By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of *the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*"

Once and for all, the Old Covenant Passover sacrifice is of no value to do anything, because Christ has come and established a New Covenant in His shed blood. Should we then offer the body of Christ again in Passover observances? God forbid!

Yet, there are other reasons given for these ideas. I have heard some say that the reason they celebrate a Christian Seder is because it is historically beneficial, or is part of our Christian heritage, or leads to a greater understanding of Judaism and gives us a first-hand experience of the Jewish tradition. However, the truth is that just the opposite is the case. It perpetuates erroneous genealogical vanities and stereotypes, it reveals a fundamental lack of understanding of the purpose of Old Testament figures and shadows, and it presumes that observing Old Testament ceremonial feasts or laws is harmless. We all should have a fundamental problem with going back to the shadow that was done away with in the coming of that which it prefigured. Yes, it is part of our heritage as the family of God, but only in the same sense that God's people sacrificed lambs, carried an Ark with them and received the law from God by Moses on the mountain. It doesn't mean that we continue to kill lambs because they prefigured Christ, or build an Ark to carry with us, or that we look for tablets of stone from a mountain. On the contrary, being a Christian "should" mean that we have the Spirit of wisdom and should understand the folly in continuing to sacrifice a Lamb in Old Covenant ceremonies, building an Ark for our camp, or going to the mountain looking for tablets of stone to put in it. They were types, a sign or token, a figure of other things.

Hebrews 10:11-14

- "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:
- But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;
- From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.
- For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

We cannot continue to offer sacrifices, observe Old Covenant feasts, and eat unleavened bread of Passover "as if" doing this is of some New Testament significance. A man who looks forward to the true by observing the shadow until it comes, does not then return to the shadow "after" the true has arrived. That is fundamentally flawed rationale and logic that is contrary to the Biblical motif.

Moreover, observing the Old Covenant Passover would negate the Lord's Supper "as if" it is a sign of some different fulfillment. Because these people have the erroneous idea that the Lord's supper gives a new or different meaning to the ancient Passover feast of bread. The truth is, The Lord's Supper "is" the New Testament Passover observance of eating unleavened bread, which is Christ. Why do we think Christ instituted it on the Passover? Did we not just read that Christ was our Passover? How could anyone think there should now be two observances of Christ's broken body? The Passover was a glorious ceremony picturing Christ's atonement for His people. The Jewish Passover transitioning into the Eucharist or Christian communion is the only doctrine that makes sense "Biblically." That is to say, if we are truly professing Christians who are under authority of the Word of God. And it's not insignificant to this issue that the Jewish people celebrate Passover looking forward to the deliverance of their Christ, as if He has not come. Indeed, they reject the Christian idea that Christ is the prophesied Messiah. Christians (Messianic or otherwise) should never join them in Passover feasts, as Christians know Christ has already fulfilled the feast and "become" our Passover. Being led by the Holy Spirit, they "of God" should know better!

In conclusion, I do not believe that the question, "Should Christians celebrate Passover" or "Should we have a Christian Seder," is a matter of Christian liberty or of the conscience of each individual Christian. Rather it is a matter of discernment, understanding of biblical principles, and of spiritual wisdom. When I hear the question, "Why don't Christians celebrate Passover?" My answer is threefold.

First, Christianity has New Covenant rites and observances that commemorate the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. If we celebrated Old Covenant festivals and practices, these observances would put us under the same Old Covenant laws and beliefs that those festivals and practices clearly "signify." Namely, a first coming of Messiah to restore all things and break the reliance upon works of the law by the nation Israel.

Second, Christians don't celebrate the Jewish Passover for the same reason that they don't keep the Saturday Sabbath, do not observe Old Testament unclean meats, do not sacrifice Lambs or oxen, and do not hold to laws against mixing two different types of

thread in a garment. Because these ceremonial laws were patterns for spiritual truths, and when Christ finished His work on the cross, the Old dispensation was over. The feasts were "completed" or "fulfilled" in Christ so that it would be unbiblical for us to turn again to the bondage of the law.

Third, we don't need to recover a Christian Seder, or observe a Passover for Christians, because we never lost sight of the Passover observance in the first place. Christ's death on Passover day established the New Covenant Passover feast for us, just as pouring out of His Holy Spirit on the feast of weeks (Pentecost) was the New Covenant fulfillment of the feast of firstfruits. By God pouring out of Christ's Spirit to all tongues and nations, we better understand the feast of weeks and how we receive the firstfruits (Romans 8:23) of the Spirit. i.e., these Old Covenant feasts were merely pointing to a completion in Christ. May the Lord who is gracious and merciful, guide us all into a better understanding of His will and His word, and instruct us in the way wherein we should go.

Amen!

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