

THE PASSOVER

Should it be observed today?

Christianity today believes the Passover belongs to an age long past. To them it's no longer relevant. Yet even today they accept that Christ was their Passover Lamb, yet seem unaware of the reason why. Christ observed the Passover on the day He died, and gave instructions for this to be continued in remembrance of Him. To whom was He referring? Was it Christianity? The Jewish people? Or the whole world?

By Neville V. Stevens

At the time of Christ, many people would select and sacrifice a lamb for the Passover. Doing this at Jerusalem was **not** an absolute requirement; it was quite permissible to slaughter the lamb wherever they lived and to obey the instruction for this observance. The instruction was to slaughter a male lamb (or a kid) of one year old, and to gather in a house to eat it. They were to eat it all, so that nothing remained until morning. If anything remained it had to be burnt. They were not to break any of the bones, and they were to strike the blood on the doorframe; on the top and sides, wherever they ate the Passover.

The Passover was instituted in the land of Egypt. It marks the occasion when God determined to kill every firstborn, both man and animal, by sending His angel to inflict the deaths at the hour of midnight. And God says this: **Ex 12:26** *“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 the homes when He struck down the Egyptians.”* It is further described in an earlier verse: **V23** *“When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over the doorway, and He will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.”*

God also gave certain regulations for the observance of this special day: **Ex 12:43** *“The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover: “No foreigner is to eat of it. Any slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him, but a temporary resident and a hired worker may not eat of it. **It must be eaten inside of one house**; take none of the meat outside the house. **Do not break any of the bones**. The whole community of Israel must celebrate it. An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD'S Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you.”*

All this may appear to be a part of antiquity and not applicable to our day. Notice these words: **Ex 12:14** *“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as festival to the LORD – a **lasting ordinance**.”* It is certainly a lasting ordinance to span all the generations! The LORD'S Passover represents life or death! There is no middle ground!

But God says more in reference to the Passover, and refers to **days to come!** **Ex 13:14** *“IN DAYS TO COME, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought you us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and REDEEM each of my firstborn sons.’ And it will be like a SIGN ON YOUR HAND and a SYMBOL ON YOUR FOREHEAD that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with His mighty hand.”* Is it a coincidence that a certain beast will **enforce a SIGN AND A SYMBOL on the HAND OR THE FOREHEAD?** These ‘**days to come**’ refer to our time!

The time will come when all the Tribes of Israel will be required to make this choice: Whether they will serve the Almighty God, or whether they will serve Satan's appointee. In regard to the second Commandment concerning the worship of other gods, God says He is a jealous God (**Ex 20:4**). To worship the beast and receive his mark on the hand or forehead will ensure death forever (**Rev 14:9-12**). Those who worship the Almighty God will faithfully observe the Passover, and it will be **like a sign on their hand** and a **symbol on their forehead**. It is this sign and symbol that God will use to determine the sealing of the 144,000 (**Rev 7:3-8**) of the Tribes of Israel.

So the observance of the Passover is not so much a choice but an obligation. Ultimately, it will come down to a choice of life or death.

Christ's Passover

But what of the Passover that Christ instituted? Doesn't this supercede the Laws of old? **No, it does not!** The original Laws were for the **whole House of Israel**. Christ came with a message for **only** the lost Tribes of Israel, and He called a special group of followers from these tribes, who were to be distinct from the main body of Israel. They were to go to the lost Tribes of Israel with the good news that God will **redeem them** once more. God speaks of a time when He will gather all the lost Tribes of Israel together under the banner of Ephraim, the son of Joseph. It is Ephraim that is **God's firstborn son** (**Jer 31:9**). The time will come when they will choose to **keep the Passover as their sign an symbol** - **or** they will **accept the mark of the beast!** The choice is theirs!

For those who profess Christianity, this is not going to be an easy choice! When the Door slams shut, they will have no option but to obey the instructions that God gave their forefathers in Egypt. Remember the days of Noah? When God closed the door and the overwhelming flood swept them away? It will be like the days of Noah! (Remember these words!) At that time, knocking on the Door will do them no good! Forget about last minute repentance, or 'road to Damascus' conversions, today is the day of salvation – tomorrow is too late! Don't believe it? You will!

Christ issued a variation to keeping the Passover – but only for those He has called!

On the night of His betrayal, Christ arranged a meeting place that had been previously prepared for the occasion. Not only was this done on the very day as specified in the Bible, it was conducted in the very hour: **Luke 22:14** *“When **the hour** came, Jesus and His disciples reclined at the table.”* This is the hour **after** the sun had set. This is important! The Passover should be observed sometime after the sun sets.

The Bible speaks of the long night of darkness and of a **new dawn** that will emerge. You will recall the long night that Christ spent after observing the Passover. During this period He was betrayed and arrested, beaten and put to death.

The **new dawn** (**2Pet 1:19**) is when the **Light-bringer**, the **Morning Star**, the **Sun of Righteousness** will arise. It represents a **new day – the great and dreadful Day of the LORD**. Most should understand that Peter spoke of a future time, that is, our time, when he spoke of the **new day dawning!** This is why he reinforced the importance of prophecy (**V19-21**). It's significant that the Passover precedes all the annual Holydays of God.

In this Book of **2Peter**, we find it to be a staging point for many prophecies. This sun that has shone down on humanity for 6,000 years is about to be replaced with a **Sun of Righteousness** (**Mal 4:2**). The sun is the **lamp** in the sky that brings the light. So we are looking towards a **new dawn**, and this speaks of the **rising** of the **Sun of Righteousness**. And just so that we *know* this is the intended meaning, notice this verse in **Rev 21:22** *“The city does not need the **sun** or the **moon** to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is the Lamp.”*

Satan was formerly the 'light-bringer', but he is about to be deposed and replaced by the real Light-bringer! The **Light** itself is the **glory of God** (**same verse**). This is important in understanding the true identity of Satan the devil. One Sun will replace the other sun! This is a true statement!

Now Peter was speaking to those who *‘have received a faith as precious as ours’* (**2Pet 1:1**). He further says these *‘may participate in the divine nature’* (**V4**). He then lists some desirable qualities and says in **V8** *“For if you possess these qualities in **increasing measure**, they will keep you from being unproductive in your **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is near-sighted and blind, and has **forgotten** that **he has been cleansed from his past sins**.”* These words are the **link** to the **Passover**.

Peter was about to go to his death just *‘as the Lord Jesus made clear to him’* (**V14**). Christ made this clear in **John 21:19**. He was to follow Christ even to his death. So it was clearly in his mind that death was not far away. In the next verse, Peter said this: **V15** *“And I will make every effort to see that **after my departure** you will always be able to **remember these things**.”* It's difficult to speak of the Passover without bringing into focus the teachings of **2Peter**. It has everything to do with a very important endtime Passover.

As an aside, this Book was refused canonization until the third century CE. In fact, many of the Gentiles refused to canonize it even until the fifth century (see the **2Peter** foreword in the New American Bible). There were too many copies available (particularly among the Jewish people in Alexandria) for the Gentiles to change it to suit their doctrine. They cleverly altered many of Paul's letters, not all of which survived to be canonized. One notable exception being the book of Galatians. Too many Christians today believe that Paul's writings were set in stone the moment they were written. History records long and lengthy argument for and against all the writings of Paul before they were canonized; all of them more than a hundred years after he departed.

And why the arguments? The Gentiles claimed the right to be the keepers of the Word of God (the Bible says different – **Rom 3:2**). But as early as 50 days after the most famous Passover of all,

Peter and the disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem, and were present when the Spirit of Christ descended and was witnessed by some 3,000 people (**Acts 2:41**). Who were these people? Notice **Acts 2:5** *“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”* These nations are described in **V9**. Of the disciples, these **God-fearing Jews** said, *“We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does all this mean?””* (**V12**). It was Peter that stood up to address them all: **V14** *“Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who are in Jerusalem...”* He then began to explain many things to them from the only Scripture that existed at that time – today called the Old Testament. In the presence of Peter and the other Apostles, all of whom had the **Spirit of Christ – the Promised Counsellor** – these God-fearing Jews recognized the meaning of the writings of the prophets (Heb: Nevi'im). What they had read many times and never understood, they now understood!

It's significant that God had gathered God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven to hear this message and to receive the Promised Counsellor following baptism. These were the very ones who took the Word of God into the world at that time. As the representatives of larger groups scattered around the earth, these were entrusted with the very Words of God (**Rom 3:2**). Not the Gentiles!

Returning to **2Peter**, we find a statement that reflects badly on the Gentile teachings: **2Pet 1:16** *“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the Power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the Sacred Mountain (Mount Tabor).”* This account is given in **Matt 17:1**. Peter was very thorough when he said he would make every effort to ensure they always remembered these things. He left nothing out! He was about to depart exactly as Christ said, and they (those he was writing to) would be left alone. As the Jewish people, at the time of that first Day of Pentecost after Christ's departure, quite suddenly understood the prophecies of the Nevi'im, so all those who read the writings of Peter will be forced to remember in graphic detail, all that God requires them to remember!

In the next verse, Peter continues to remind them: **2Pet 1:19** *“And we have the sure word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL the DAY DAWNS and the MORNING STAR RISES in your hearts. After all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

Well, Christianity ranks prophecy very low in orders of rank. But they still feel an obligation to titillate their congregations with cleverly invented stories which they devise according to their own will – and NOT THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

Well the day is about to dawn when the Morning Star rises! This is the day that the Apostles won't see: **Luke 17:22** *“Then He said to His disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.”* How they must have longed to see it! All of them knew what was required of them, and they went to their deaths to await their resurrection. And believe it or not, the rest of this chapter describes exactly what will occur from this day forth.

Returning to the Book of **2Peter**, we come to the part where Peter condemns the evil ones among the people of God: **2Pet 2:1** *“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the Way of Truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.”* Have the people of God remembered what Peter wrote? Apparently not! They have allowed destructive heresies to be introduced secretly, and their destruction has not been sleeping!

And what does this mean? What destruction? Too soon the people of God have failed to remember the meaning of the Passover. Christ showed His faithful and obedient servants a new way of observing the Passover, and an additional meaning – which concerned Him! He became our Passover. But the Passover has another meaning, and this was reinforced in no uncertain terms in the land of Egypt. Those who observed the Passover, lived – those who didn't, died! But only the firstborn on this occasion. But remember this: even those who stepped outside the doorway were threatened with the same death whether firstborn or not! Following the carnage and destruction throughout the entire land of Egypt, which they witnessed through Moses (and by the Mighty Hand of God), they stayed indoors.

However, in the Passover ceremony that Christ instituted, He and the disciples did go outside afterwards. This clearly shows an alternative meaning to going outside the doorway.

So Peter was speaking of the **destruction** of the **false teachers among you!** Not the whole flock! After God deals with the false teachers, He will deal with the whole House of Israel, and the firstborn throughout the land.

You think this is a little far-fetched? Wouldn't this mean a lot of dead among you? Would God do such a thing? In this, Peter makes the strongest point possible! Notice what he wrote! Here it is, the **longest sentence** (like poetic **justice**, isn't it?) in the Bible: **2Pet 2:4** *"For if God **did not spare angels** when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment, if He **did not spare the ancient world** when He brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected **Noah**, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by **burning them to ashes**, and **made them examples of what is going to happen to the ungodly**; and if He rescued **Lot**, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of **lawless men** (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the **lawless deeds** he saw and heard) – if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the **unrighteous for the day of judgment**, while **continuing their punishment**."*

So if God brought judgment on millions of people, and sent them to their deaths, what right does anyone have to live who opposes Him? Especially those who know better! As Peter says, these **false teachers** are **already condemned**, but God doesn't plan to let them serially die, they will all die suddenly! Those who refuse to observe the Passover exactly as Christ stated had better keep it exactly as it was originally set out.

Do you believe the Death Angel still exists? The one who flew over the land of Egypt and did as God commanded? **YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT!!** Those teachers who delight in teaching **the stories they have made up** are soon to find that the Power of God will reduce them to ashes! And they will get what they deserve! **AFTER THIS**, God will deal with the whole House of Israel. And then the **whole House of Israel** will be required to **remember** the **Law of Moses (Mal 4:4)**, and **under the harshest conditions imaginable!**

Jacob fulfilled his 'week' for the hand of Rachel. This 'week' was a full seven years. Rachel, you will recall, gave birth to Joseph who was the father of **Ephraim** and Manasseh. The importance of this, in relation to this discussion, will be covered in an upcoming article. Just bear it in mind.

Peter wanted to ensure that all realized when **the day** would **dawn**. He constantly reaffirmed they must remember, or not forget, and to bring to mind, to recall. It was to be more than a passing interest – it was to be their life! And so he wrote this: **2Pet 3:8** *"Do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."*

And which **Day** is this? Peter explains what he is talking about: **V10** *"But the **DAY OF THE LORD** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare."* God says *"Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy..."* This is the day to which Peter referred when he said *"Do not forget this one thing..."* The six days are up, six long millennial days, and do you still **remember** which is the **DAY OF THE LORD?**

It's the **SEVENTH!**

Peter mentioned that the **Day of the Lord** will **come like a thief** – stealthily and almost unnoticed. Everyone will be saying: 'Everything continues as it was before. Nothing's changed, all is well.' Then sudden destruction comes – a veritable tidal wave of destruction. Christ explained it all, it's just that no-one believes Him. They twist the Scriptures to conform to their views. Let's examine exactly what Christ said!

Firstly, let's make it clear that Christ said the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that begins with the smallest possible seed and grows into a mighty tree (**Luke 13:18**). He also said the Kingdom of God is like leaven (yeast) that a woman mixes into a large quantity of flour which expands to fill the whole lump (**Luke 13:20**). Let's take a moment to dispel the fable that leaven (yeast) represents sin. If this is the case then the Kingdom of God represents sin. This teaching borders on insanity! Leaven represents **TEACHINGS** – either good or bad. And this could not be clearer in the Bible: **Matt 16:6** *"Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* **V11** *"How is it you don't understand that I was **not talking to you about bread?** Be on you guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He was **not** telling them to guard **against yeast used in bread**, but against the **TEACHING** of the Pharisees and Sadducees." This was the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees – **NOT the TEACHINGS OF GOD!** And notice this verse: **Mark 8:15** *"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of **Herod**."* And Christ always said that their doctrine or teachings were **hypocrisy** – the device of men. Of those of whom Christ spoke, their teachings were sheer **hypocrisy** – what they required of others, they would not do themselves! And Christ also said this: **Luke 12:1** *"...Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**."**

Now let's see exactly what Christ spoke in relation to these things, and note that Peter, like Christ, also spoke of Noah and Lot in relation to **the day**. It's a long quote, but here it is: **Luke 17:20-25** *"Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied,*

"The Kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the Kingdom of God is [among] you." Then He said to His disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in His day will be like lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first He must suffer and be rejected of this generation."

All the prophets spoke of this day! This is what Habakkuk recorded: **Hab 3:3** "God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth. His splendour was like the sunrise; rays flashed from His hand, where His power was hidden. Plague went before Him; pestilence followed His steps. He stood, and shook the earth, He looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal." **V8** "Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode with your horses and with your victorious chariots? You called for you bow, you called for many arrows."

Moses spoke of these things just before he died: **Deut 33:2** "He said, "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir (Teman); He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from His mountain slopes. Surely it is You who love the people; all the holy ones are in Your hand. At your feet they all bow down, AND FROM YOU THEY RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTION, the LAW THAT MOSES GAVE US, the possession of the assembly of Jacob."

Notice these holy ones who are with the Lord receive their instruction from Him – which will also include the LAW THAT MOSES GAVE US! The vast majority of Christians today say that the Law of Moses has been done away.

But what does God say? Here it is: **Mal 4:4** "Remember the Law of My servant Moses, the decrees and Laws I gave him at Horeb (Sinai) for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful Day of the LORD comes."

And now the reference to Noah and Lot as mentioned by Peter in **2Pet 2:4-10**; we find that Christ also referred to them in **Luke 17:26** "Just as it was in the days of NOAH, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People will be eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day that NOAH entered into the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of LOT. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day LOT left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. IT WILL BE LIKE THIS WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS REVEALED. On that day, no-one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no-one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together, one will be taken and the other left." "Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the [eagles] will gather together."

Did you notice what Christ did NOT say when asked 'Where?' He did NOT say they would be gathered into the air to meet Him at His return in glory. He said they would be gathered where the dead body (carcass or corpse) is.

What is this speaking of? The enemies of Christ rejoiced to see His dead body when He went to His death as our Passover. Christ came to destroy the devil's work (**1John 3:8**). But Christ triumphed over them! But what of the dead body or corpse that is mentioned here? Christ will not only destroy the devil's work and reduce it to rubble, but Satan has his fate sealed also! The being that was once the light-bringer or morning-star or son of the dawn is about to come to a crushing end: **Isa 14:12** "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!" **V15** "But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made the kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home? All the kings of the earth lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will not join them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people."

Just a couple of points....

Christianity has adopted many weird ideas. At the forefront of stupidity is the doctrine of the WCG who taught that Satan is immortal. They concede that the Christ, the Son of God, could and did die! But Satan? They say he can't die! What madness is this?

The Son of God died as a man! Because He was faithful and obedient even to His death, God raised Him from the dead.

Satan is to be given one final chance! To become a man just like Christ! If he lives a sinless life he will live. God knows in advance that he will not! God knows that what he became will continue forever. His fate is sealed. Now notice again what Peter said: **2Pet 2:4** "For if God did not

spare the angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...”

If God **didn't spare the angels** - then why is Satan spared any sort of punishment? Why would God spare the arch-rebel of the universe? There is a very good reason, and though it's bound to shock many people: SATAN IS THE **OTHER SON** OF GOD! Yes, he is Christ's brother and Satan hates Him. If you don't believe this, you will have great difficulty believing many other things to do with God's Great Plan.

Would God forsake His son, and claim the other as His **only** begotten Son? Yes, He would, **and He did!** He also required it of Abraham! When Sarah said to Abraham: **Gen 21:10** *“Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac”*, God agreed with her. And Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away.

Then God sent this instruction concerning his obedience in relation to the proposed sacrifice of Isaac: **Gen 22:15** *“The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by Myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and **not withheld your son, YOUR ONLY SON**, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed Me.”*

Christ spoke a parable about two sons. One stayed with the father and faithfully laboured and served him; the other took his inheritance and went away and squandered it. One was the faithful son, and the other was the prodigal son. It's the prodigal son that bears the title of firstborn son, just as God calls Ephraim His firstborn son (**Jer 31:9**). It should be noted that in the parable, the prodigal son was not the firstborn in the family, and neither was Ephraim the eldest (his brother Manasseh was the firstborn). It was Judah, and God's own Tribe Levi, that represents the faithful son. God took Levi **in place of** the firstborn: **Num 8:15** *“After you have purified the Levites and presented them **as a wave offering**, they are to come to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. They are the Israelites who are **given wholly to Me**. I have taken them as My own **in place of the firstborn**, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. Every firstborn male in Israel, whether man or animal, is mine. **When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for Myself**. And I have taken **the Levites IN PLACE OF all the firstborn sons of Israel**.”*

This has everything to do with the **Passover in Egypt**, when God struck down **all the firstborn**. And lest any should imagine that this refers to an age long past, the Bible says that its meaning and implementation is for our time: **Mal 3:1** *“See, I send my messenger, **who will prepare the way before Me**. Then **suddenly** the Lord you are seeking **will come to His Temple**; the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can **endure the Day of His coming**? Who can **stand when He appears**? For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify THE LEVITES and refine them like gold and silver**. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of JUDAH and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, **as in days gone by, and in former years**.” Without the Levites there can be no righteous offerings in fulfillment of these verses.*

It's amazing how many women have emerged in this endtime as closet-preachers. They appear on the religious newsgroups as preachers of 'righteousness'. They either present a sickening, syrupy doctrine of nothingness, or they hold slavishly to the 'gospel of Herbert Armstrong'. One particularly obnoxious woman keeps insisting that the Temple (**Eze 40-48**) will be built **after** Christ's glorious return. She apparently disagrees with God's statement that the **Messenger of the Covenant** will **suddenly appear** at **His Temple!** In view of the many Scriptures that say the same thing, what shall we say? Are such people really serving God with their lying deceit?

To add to her stupidity, we find that a certain beast will sit in the Temple of God and claim to be God – exactly 3½ years **before** the glorious return of Christ with all the saints. No Temple? Is she mad? By slavishly holding to the 'gospel of Herbert' she denies the very words of Christ (**Matt 24:15**).

Is there a need for God to call upon those whom God has taken as His own **IN PLACE OF the firstborn**? It's never been more obvious than it is today!

But what of those who **formerly knew God** and **honoured our Passover – Christ?** Most have now dishonoured Him and denied Him! They no longer accept that He is their **Passover**, they even replaced His memorial with a man-devised 'Lord's supper'. They reject the **Passover**, preferring to observe their own twisted rendition as often as they want. What greater insult could there be? What is more, they no longer commemorate our **Divine Passover** – they observe **their** 'Lord's supper' **after** the resurrection and call it the Lord's day. Where did they get this instruction? Certainly not from the **Word of God (John 1:1)– who is also our Passover!**

Christ told a parable and Peter asked Him about it: **Luke 13:41-46** *“Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?” The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the Lord puts in charge of His servants to **give them their food allowance at the***

proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he begins to beat the menservants and womenservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with unbelievers. That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows."

And now you know why that servant is no longer in charge. He began to beat on the menservants and womenservants of the Master, wielding the power of life and death as an overlord, scattering the flock and tearing off their hoofs. That 'Elijah', as he liked to be called, is now dead.

The true Elijah, of which John the Baptist was a fore-type, will precede the Lord's great and dreadful Day, and will be alive to receive instruction from the Master. This Elijah will disperse this instruction from the Master far and wide to all the House of Israel, and to all the nations of the world.

It was God's intent that the whole House of Israel served Him faithfully, obeying all the Laws that God gave to His servant Moses. But they didn't do it! During their long history, there were periods when they did serve God faithfully, but only when they had a faithful leader. During such times, they served their Father (**Jer 3:19-20, Mal 1:6**), and loved His Laws and obeyed them. But always waiting in the wings was an insurgent, a rebel who could rationalize away God's perfect way.

Such a man was Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, who was also a ruler of the heavenly realm. He wanted to take the inheritance and leave the Father. He certainly did this, and with God's consent. Jeroboam spoke of virtue and platitudes and deceived the people, leading them into the destructive way of life that would bring their downfall.

Why is it that the most evil of beasts bathe their actions in supercilious righteousness? They love to present themselves as angels of light, and then proceed to trample on everything that is sacred and holy. For the rulers of the heavenly realms it is not enough to win the rebels to their cause, they must destroy all those who can't be corrupted.

The whole House of Israel was sifted like wheat and passed through many foreign lands. Much of the chaff was lost along the way, but the good seed survived. The prophet Amos spoke of these things: **Amos 9:9** *"For I will give the command, and I will [sift] the House of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not an ear will fall to the ground. All the sinners among My people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake us or meet us.'"* In reality, Amos was speaking of a future time, yet he also reflected events of the past.

There was a time when Satan desired to have Peter for this very purpose: **Luke 22:31** *"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you (plural) as wheat, but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail."* Satan had in mind to fulfill Amos' prophecy, and put the whole House of Israel to the sword, and requested that Peter be handed over to him as his man on the ground. But Satan's timing was way off! God refused!

Have you ever wondered why Pharaoh didn't try to kill Moses and Aaron? They arrived as two men, not a mighty army, yet Pharaoh greatly feared them! Why?

Pharaoh was a ruler of the heavenly realm, and he knew these men had come in the Power of God. Nebuchadnezzar was also a ruler of the heavenly realm, and he greatly feared and respected the Wisdom of Daniel. So was Cyrus/Darius such a ruler. And so was Herod! The dynasty of this ruler survived many human incarnations – perhaps the most notable being Herod the Great who killed all the male children under the age of two to prevent the Messiah being born. Of the Herod that existed at the time of Christ and John the Baptist, the Bible says this: **Mark 6:19** *"So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him."*

The rulers of the heavenly realm know there is only one God and they fear and tremble before Him – but they hate His Way! Like the House of Israel, they continue to push the limits of permissiveness and licentiousness to reflect their desired way of life. And they even expect God to respect the majority view. To satisfy their predatory lust for power, and yet appease God's anger, they usually present a mixture of good and evil. To seize power they usually propose a way that seems right – a way that would appeal to many unthinking people. In the flowing tide of humanity, there is always a niche for licentiousness, and a philosophy to accommodate it. Once these rulers have a following who agree with them, it's a relatively simple process to turn persecution on those who don't agree. Those who oppose the Laws of God can be easily whipped into a frenzy. Such people are easily manipulated by the hypnotic power of the rulers of the heavenly realms.

Hitler was yet another ruler of the Heavenly realms. His overall objective was to rid the whole world of the Tribes of Judah and Levi to ensure that all prophecy would fail. Satan chose as his man on the ground a ruler of Simeon (Germany). Simeon, Levi and Judah are brothers, and were born of the same mother – Leah. It served Satan's purpose to enlist the services of one brother to kill the other. Don't blame the German people – they didn't know what they were doing. Only the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realm knew – and they were under instruction from the arch-rebel of the

universe. What a master stroke, to have one brother destroy his own brothers, and in so doing, destroy the whole Plan of God.

To achieve this, they first had to convince everyone that the Jewish people were undesirable and guilty of everything. To the secular section of the community they convinced them that the Jewish people had corrupted the economy. To the religious section, they convinced them that the Jewish people were the killers of Christ.

Perhaps they should have realized that God planned it this way. The Jewish people were the pawns of the **leaven of Herod**. Buoyed by his success at killing John the Baptist without retribution from God, Herod knew that Christ's death was possible. He would destroy this King as his forefather had tried to do. But he would make sure that Pontius Pilate took the blame. To accede his support, he became friends with Pilate that day. Pilate, looking at the frenzy of mob rule, knew that he was dealing with evil. Pilate wasn't real happy though, and tried to symbolically wash the blood from his hands. But his authority was on the line, and choking back his fear he gave the word to proceed.

Hitler was one of the great despots of the 20th century, and Hitler (for want of his real name) sensed victory. Millions of those he hated had been erased from the earth. His rolling behemoth was unstoppable and God had not intervened. With no-one left on earth to fulfill God's will, this ravenous beast assumed God would modify His judgment. With the whole world under his control, God would have no other option.

But God sent another brother, Ephraim, the son of Joseph, to inflict a deadly wound against these rulers and authorities. This is the one whom God calls His son (**Jer 31:9**). This is the one who was to gore the nations to the ends of the earth: **Deut 33:16** *"...With the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favour of Him that dwelt in the burning bush. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox, with them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim, such are the thousands of Manasseh."*

Those who think Hitler was the beast that is to come are deluded. He was merely a two-bit player in comparison to the beast that is to arise. How Christianity today loves to pontificate! They view the events of recent history and believe such disasters cannot come near them because they are so righteous! To 'prove' their 'righteousness' they hurl venom and hatred at God's Laws and refuse to obey them. They hate God's Laws! Their modus operandi is to speak of 'love', and make frequent references to 'Jeeeee...sus' the humble carpenter – and with feigned emotion!

God is a God of love, but not the sort of 'love' that these people exhibit! Was God a God of love when He erased all mankind and animals in the days of Noah? Was He also a God of love when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot? You'd better believe He was! **And you'd better believe God's Purpose is very different from yours!**

There are times when the rulers of the heavenly realms have a flush of righteousness, and attempt to do something right. Cain wanted to honour the Great God, but not in the manner prescribed by God. When God rejected his offering, in a fit of jealous rage, he killed his own brother – the righteous seed – Abel. Has anything changed?

And so the enmity (**Gen 3:15**) that God has placed between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman is in full bloom. The **seed of the serpent** hates the **woman who gave birth to Christ**; the woman that wore the crown of 12 stars. The enmity continues to exist even today and God has made sure it is so. He has a very great purpose in this. Christ said they (the seed of Satan) hated Him, and He said they would hate you also. Christ mentioned that this evil seed **killed righteous Abel**, and called them **snakes** and a **brood of vipers** (**Matt 23:33, 35**). Since none of the men present at the time were guilty of the death of Abel, Christ was actually referring to the **evil seed**. Christ was addressing the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realm.

I once heard it said that nearly every sermon Herbert Armstrong gave referred back to **Gen 3:15**, but he was never able to bring it to a conclusion. Secretly, I suspect that he knew this verse demolished the very core of his teachings. As often as he danced around this verse he fell into the hole he himself dug. Hence his saying, 'You just don't get it, do you?' He never 'got it' himself! He loved the doctrine he compiled so much, that he couldn't bring himself to damage it.

Well, the Bible speaks of the meaning of the **Passover**, and the very meaning of this name describes it – to **pass over**! Little wonder the snakes and vipers have substituted the name, 'the Lord's supper' **in place of the Passover**! They want the Passover consigned to antiquity as being irrelevant to our time. Nothing could be further from the Truth!

There is yet a Passover in the future that will have dire consequences for many. It precedes seven days of getting rid of the leaven they now possess. All of it! In their grief they will begin to search for Truth. The importance of the Passover today cannot be overestimated! It's a matter of life and death – literally! If you don't fear God now, then be assured you will shortly!

The kiddy games that many have been playing for decades are about to come to an end. They've trivialized the meaning of the Passover, and **rejected** their Passover and Lord.

You have two options: Either keep the Passover as God instructed Israel, or you can keep it as instructed by Christ. Those who keep neither **WILL** be cut off from God!

Christ said, “*It is with great desire that I keep this Passover with you.*” The NIV modifies this to: **Luke 22:14** “*I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*” Notice the word ‘desire’. You will find this is a description of Christ: **Mal 3:1** “*See, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to the Temple; the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you DESIRE, will come,*” says the LORD Almighty.” Yes, the One you are seeking will come to the Temple of God, to the place where the carcass is gathering his brood. Take a look at any map of the Holy Land today and you will see that Satan has surrounded it with his nations – his evil brood – whom he is preparing for his final onslaught against the people of God – the 12 Tribes of Israel. And contrary to all that is taught, even in the Churches of God, the Tribes of Israel are the ONLY people God has ever chosen! **Amos 3:1** “*Hear this Word the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel – against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: “You ONLY have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.*”

Moses wrote the same thing: **Deut 7:6** “*For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The LORD did not set His affection on you or choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were fewest of all peoples.*” **V9** “*Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His COVENANT OF LOVE to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His Commandments]. But those who hate Him He will repay to their face by destruction; He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate Him.*”

Samuel wrote of it also: **2Sam 7:23** “*And who is like Your people Israel – the ONE nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for Himself, and to make a name for Himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before Your people whom You redeemed from Egypt. You have established Your people Israel as Your very own FOR EVER, and You, O LORD, have become their God.*”

God made a COVENANT OF LOVE with His people Israel, through Moses; a Covenant that will last to a thousand generations and for ever! This Covenant was made only with the whole family of Israel whom He brought out of Egypt.

Those who once knew God are without excuse! They despise the COVENANT OF LOVE, and have replaced it with their own brand of ‘love’. What is more, like the slaving beasts that they are, they deny the very Words of God, and even contradict the Sovereign LORD of the universe. They call their substitute the ‘new covenant’!

There is a New Covenant coming, which will be poured out on ALL the House of Israel, but it is not a different Covenant, but a greatly enhanced one. The Covenant of Love was easy to keep for those who desired to do so. Many people today have obeyed this Covenant all of their lives in a way that is acceptable to God. James describes it as the perfect Law that gives freedom (**James 1:25**). In the distant past, the fault was with the people who didn’t have the heart to obey God, but who were constantly enticed to go the way of the Gentiles. And as often as they did, they lost their freedom, and were defeated and enslaved.

God gives us an insight into the pouring out of His Spirit that will transform His people Israel. This is the Spirit of His Son, the Heir of everything under God the Father (**1Cor 15:24-27**). This is the Spirit that God pours out in Christ’s name (**John 14:25**), which is called the Counsellor. Our Counsellor sits as our Advocate (both titles mean a lawyer who upholds law and defends the accused). The accuser of the brothers (of Christ) is Satan the devil (**Rev 12:10**), and he is soon to be cast down to earth forever. It’s at this time that Christ takes over the reigns of authority and establishes Kingdom of God (same verse). AFTER the establishment of the Kingdom of God, Satan sets out to destroy the woman that gave birth to Christ, but is prevented from doing so (**Rev 12:13**). So he turns on the offspring of this woman, the children who have the Testimony of Jesus, and who keep the Commandments of God (**V17**).

Do I have any expectation that these plain words that were written by the hand of the Father and given to Christ (**Rev 1:1**) will be believed?

No! Because it doesn’t agree with the ‘gospel of Herbert Armstrong’! He always taught that the woman who gave birth to Christ, and who wore the crown with 12 stars, was the Church that he founded. Herbert had one serious deficiency; he never had the Testimony of Jesus – because he never had the Spirit of Prophecy! Both are exactly the same thing! (**Rev 19:10**).

AND NEITHER DO ANY OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD! Not one of them has ever taught prophecy from the Bible; instead they teach their ‘prophecy’ from their own imaginations. Yet so many today feel they have the right to condemn Herbert Armstrong for his sins. Most of his accusers are far worse than he – perhaps all of them! Typically, their conduct makes them hypocrites! They have plenty of dark sins in their lives, not the least of which are the lies they have spoken in God’s name. Those who teach these lies have even greater culpability! **James 3:1** “*Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more*

strictly.” And what do we find? Everyone wants to be a teacher! Now even women are presuming to teach on the Internet and in the congregations. How little they respect God’s instructions.

The teachers will be judged more strictly. Which teachers are these? Christ made it plain for all: **Matt 13:52** *“He said to them, “Therefore every TEACHER OF THE LAW who has been INSTRUCTED about the Kingdom of Heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”* How long is it since you have seen any new treasures emanating from the Churches of God? And of those churches who are NOT teachers of the Law, you will never see any!

A new crop of TEACHERS OF THE LAW will arise (**see Mal 4:4**), and these will also have the Testimony of Jesus! These are the offspring of the ‘woman’, and these will be mercilessly pursued by Satan and all his brood. They will need to be faithful even to their deaths. These people will forsake their former leaven and purge it out. The sickening platitudes that so beguiled them for so many years will be cast aside as worthless. They must submit to the True Shepherd and go as sheep to the slaughter. You should recognize the True Shepherd as the Passover – the sacrificial Lamb that you are to emulate! There is nothing in the entire Bible that suggests that God requires less of you than He required of His Son!

Were all the followers of Christ saved from death after that famous Passover, and His resurrection? No! They had to suffer the same baptism as Christ (**Luke 12:50**), and this was made clear to them in these words when He spoke of the CUP from which He had to drink: **Matt 20:22** *“You don’t know what you are saying,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink from the CUP I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from My CUP, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.”* In the Book of Mark the Cup is linked with a baptism: **Mark 10:38** *“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”*

The CUP that Christ referred to, and which His disciples would indeed drink from, was spoken of just before His betrayal and death: **Matt 26:38** *“Then He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me. Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this CUP be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”*

At the time, the disciples reasoned that anyone can drink from a cup! And they assured Christ they could do it. At the time, they didn’t realize what the CUP meant that Christ was to suffer. Later they did!

Following Christ’s baptism of death, and after the drinking of the CUP, they were fully aware of what was required of them.

The evil brutes who teach that Christ did it all, and that they have no obligation to do anything but to swan their way into the Kingdom, are LIARS! Even the Apostles had to drink of the same CUP long after Christ’s departure!

Christ underwent two baptisms; one the baptism of life by John the Baptist, and the other the baptism of death: **Luke 12:49** *“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a BAPTISM to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on....”*

Christ underwent the baptism of John, not because it was necessary, but in order to fulfill all righteousness (**Matt 3:13-15**). Luke records an important point about the baptism of John: **Luke 7:29** *“I tell you, among those born of women there is no-one greater than John the Baptist; yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.” All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, ACKNOWLEDGED that God’s way was right, BECAUSE they had been BAPTIZED BY JOHN. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected GOD’S PURPOSE for themselves, BECAUSE they had NOT been BAPTIZED BY JOHN.”* So it seems that only those who were baptized by John were able to accept God’s Purpose.

This presents some problems! Should we believe it? If it means what it says, then no-one can understand God’s Purpose, because John the Baptist is now dead.

So what does it all mean?

In describing Christ’s dreadful death, it hardly seems appropriate to refer to it as a ‘baptism’. Yet Christ called it a baptism! Most of those who profess Christianity know there is a requirement to repent and be baptized (**Acts 2:38**). Peter also added this: **V39** *“The Promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* There is a further qualification to this, and that is, the final number will be those whom God has chosen.

John the Baptist came preaching this very message – hence his name ‘Baptist’. John the Baptist did baptize in water – where there was much water, and he taught a message of horrific destruction and global upheavals (**Luke 3:5**). John also spoke of two other baptisms: **Luke 3:16** *“John answered them all, “I baptize you [in] water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but*

*He will **burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**” And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the **good news** to them.”*

So the act of baptism in water is largely symbolic (even though necessary), but John spoke of other baptisms. Christ underwent a shocking baptism and John spoke of similar baptisms, and those baptisms John linked the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the wheat being gathered into the barn. And the baptism of fire is linked to the burning up of the chaff.

These two baptisms then, are the **baptism of the Holy Spirit**, and the **baptism of fire**. The **baptism of the Holy Spirit** is described as **gathering the wheat into the barn**, and the **baptism of fire** relates to **burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire**. John was certainly not speaking of a humble carpenter when he said this, but a Mighty Being who would wield all the Power of Almighty God. Christ confirmed that He was this Being – the Christ or Messiah! Yet He fulfilled none of these things while He was on earth. Even the baptism of the Holy Spirit came **after He departed**, in fact, 50 days after His departure – on the Day of Pentecost. This event was **witnessed** by thousands.

This Spirit was the **Spirit of Christ**, called the **Counsellor**, which God sent in **Christ’s Name**: **John 14:26** *“But the **Counsellor**, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in **My Name**, will **teach you all things** and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

So the **baptism of the Holy Spirit** was an outpouring on many people at that time who are also referred to as the wheat or good grain or seed. But bear in mind, the mighty wind and the pillars of fire were **present in the house where the disciples were** (**Acts 2:1-3**), and involved only them (numbering about 120 people – **Acts 1:15**). It was the noise of the rushing wind that brought many people to investigate (**Acts 2:5-7**).

So is this when the disciples received the Holy Spirit? Believe it or not, the answer is no! Immediately after His resurrection on the Saturday night (the evening of the first day of the week), Christ appeared to the disciples: **John 20:19** *“On the evening of the first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you!”** After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. **Again** Jesus said, **“Peace be with you!** As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” And with that **He breathed on them** and said, **“Receive the Holy Spirit.** If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven, if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”* By the very act of breathing on them, they **received the Holy Spirit!**

How can this be? Wasn’t the Day of Pentecost the time of the receiving of the Holy Spirit? Many would have you believe it was! Their argument being there is only one Holy Spirit, not two. In this they are partially right, but also partially wrong. Christ made it plain that the Holy Spirit is like water – living water! (**John 4:10-14**). Water added to water is more water – not two waters. In fact, the Bible term for this is a **double-portion of the Holy Spirit**. And Christ made this very clear when He said this: **John 14:15** *“If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you **ANOTHER Counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth.**”* This is the other Spirit, called the Counsellor - the Holy Spirit (**V26**).

It goes without saying that those who deliberately teach lying deceit **DON’T** have the **Spirit of Truth!** These are the lying deceivers who teach **LAWLESSNESS!** They don’t like the Laws of God, and so they substitute a lying brand of ‘love’ and call it the ‘law of love’.

A house divided cannot stand! Lying deceit and the **Spirit of Truth** cannot exist together!

When Christ submitted to John’s baptism in order to ‘fulfill all righteousness’, you can be sure that all His disciples did also. In fact, there is no evidence they were ever baptized again. They certainly baptized others though, in the name of Christ (**John 4:1-3**).

We know in the Book of Acts that Paul met his ‘12 disciples’ and found out they had never heard of the Holy Spirit, yet they had been baptized by John (**Acts 19:3**). This same situation existed with Christ’s disciples right up until His resurrection, after which they received the Holy Spirit when Christ breathed on them and imparted it. The Counsellor or the Spirit of Truth they received on the Day of Pentecost, and this was their ‘double-portion’. From this moment on, they were empowered to act, and they understood the Scriptures.

We are still left with the dilemma of the baptism of John, and the importance of it. It’s clear from the Scriptures that those who weren’t baptized by him, never understand God’s Purpose. Was John’s baptism an invalid one? A quick reading of **Acts 19:3** might indicate to some that it was.

John was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, and the angel of the Lord delivered these words: **Luke 1:13** *“But the angel said to him, **“Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the Spirit and Power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the Wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”**”*

This angel was the spokesman for Almighty God! John fulfilled all that was spoken of him. Christ drank wine and fermented drink, but John didn’t. Christ made the point that John was criticized

for not drinking, and He was criticized because He did. Christ said they called Him a drunkard. Those who want to criticize the righteous always find a way. If a righteous man drinks alcohol he's a drunkard! If he doesn't – then he's a wowsler! So Christ and John the Baptist were the target of both extremes.

Satan has determined that his brood shouldn't drink wine. He wants to ensure that none of his Moslem brood can observe Christ's Passover. Satan doesn't have the Wisdom of God so he cannot understand prophecy. There are a number of Scriptures that frighten him - especially those that speak of drinking of the cup of the wrath of God.

John fulfilled the prophecy delivered by the angel – he never drank wine! He, of course, died before that most famous Passover of all. Had he been present then he would've participated as required by the Son of God. Like Christ, he was filled with **the Holy Spirit** and **the Wisdom of God** from birth, and it was not necessary for him to undergo any baptism – except one! This was the final baptism of death – just like Christ!

Those who have the Online Bible (Ver. 8.11) may like to look at the Strong's meaning of the word 'baptism'. This is what it says:

908 baptisma baptisma *bap'-tis-mah*

from 907; TDNT-1:545,92; n n

AV-baptism 22; 22

1) immersion, submersion

1a) of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed

1b) of John's baptism, that purification rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up. This was valid Christian baptism, as this was the only baptism the apostles received and it is not recorded anywhere that they were ever rebaptised after Pentecost.

1c) of Christian baptism; a rite of immersion in water as commanded by Christ, by which one after confessing his sins and professing his faith in Christ, having been born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, identifies publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church.

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In #Ro 6:3 Paul states we are "baptised unto death" meaning that we are not only dead to our former ways, but they are buried. To return to them is as unthinkable for a Christian as for one to dig up a dead corpse! **In Moslem countries a new believer has little trouble with Moslems until he is publicly baptised. It is then, that the Moslems' know he means business, and then the persecution starts.** See also discussion of baptism under No. 907.

End of quote.

Now here's a new slant! Notice the last couple of verses! (the emphasis is mine). The hatred and venom of the Moslems, which typifies their father the devil, is becoming very evident even to those who write commentary today. These evil hordes, which have the Holy Land surrounded, hate any kind of service to the one True God.

John came preaching a doctrine of repentance. It was necessary for him to counter the madness that develops when there is no prophet around. Notice the words of **Luke 1:76** *"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which **THE RISING SUN** will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."*

The two great prophets of John's time were Christ and himself. Christ confirmed that of all those who were born of women, there was none greater than John the Baptist. Yet those who are least in the Kingdom of God will be greater than he (**Luke 7:28**).

I don't want to put any emphasis on the word 'least', because these are **the brothers** who are mentioned in **Rev 19:10**. All of these will be infinitely greater than John the Baptist was, and will do even greater things than Christ did at His first coming: **John 14:11** *"Believe Me when I say I am going to the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My Name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My Name, and I will do it."*

All those who are in the fledgling **Kingdom of God** that begins like a **mustard seed**, or the **leaven** in the dough, will receive very great Power! For Christ to do anything they ask, they must have the very Spirit of Christ. The Power of God – His Holy Spirit – is given to only to those who obey Him! (**Acts 5:32, Heb 5:9**). Anyone who has hang-ups over what they will accept or believe are not included! These people are expected to live righteous lives (even though from time to time bad

judgments will be made and they will sin). Christ knows all about human frailty and has made provision for these wrongs.

But in the area of doctrine – which is leaven – there is no excuse or compromise! Those who cling to their own leaven will be **FORCED** to purge it out! It will be the toughest week in all history! It will follow the **REALITY** of the Passover! God is about to shatter their doctrine, the leaven they have stored for years, together with their **cleverly invented stories!**

How should you keep God's Passover? Read on in PART 2.