

## Should Christians Observe Passover?

By Denise Bostic

**Fact or Fiction?** I have heard some ministers on Christian television say that believers should celebrate Passover today. Should Christians observe Passover? I thought the Church is supposed to keep the Lord's Supper or should we observe both?

**Fiction.** There has been a disturbing trend among a growing segment of Christians today that are embracing the works of the Mosaic Law under the guise that God is restoring this to the end-time Church. Some believe that they are obtaining God's favor by observing Old Testament feasts days although the New Testament teaches otherwise. (*Galatians 2:15-16, 4:6-11*) Others teach that the Jewish Festivals (of which Passover is included) are to be observed forever, that they have not been abolished and that *it is a command of God* for all believers even under the dispensation of the New Covenant. Although these are only a few of the many reasons that some are accepting and practicing Jewish days, seasons and years, they do so in error, for their doctrine goes contrary to the Law of Christ in the New Testament. Believers in Christ are not under the Mosaic Law but instead are under grace.

The teaching that Christians should observe Passover causes confusion in the Church and tries to place believers under an Old Covenant that has been fulfilled and abolished in Christ. (*Matthew 5:17, Ephesians 2:14-16, Colossians 2:16-17, Hebrews 10:9*) Although this is not an all-inclusive list, here are some scriptural reasons why believers should not keep the Passover observance of the Old Testament, but instead are to observe Communion or what is also commonly referred to as the Lord's Supper instead. To understand why, we must understand the *symbolism* behind both observances.

1. **The Old Testament Passover prefigured or symbolized the first coming of Christ as the Passover Lamb.** Jesus became the real Passover Lamb when He died upon the cross and so brought the literal fulfillment to what this day pointed to. (*Read Exodus 12:13-14, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8*) Now that Christ has been sacrificed, we cannot observe an Old Testament day that *foreshadowed* or represented His first coming because as Christians, we believe that He has already come and is the Passover Lamb of God, slain for our sins and that He has given us eternal life. To continue to observe according to an Old Testament day would be to dishonor His ultimate sacrifice and send a confusing message to other believers and the rest of the world. (*Especially the Jews*)
2. **God only commanded the Nation of Israel, *throughout their generations*, to observe the Passover under the Law of Moses and only until the coming of the Messiah.** The observance of Passover was not given to the New Testament Church to observe because its purpose and the entire Mosaic Law has been fulfilled in Christ. Now that this feast day has been fulfilled, the purpose for its observance is no longer necessary and has been abolished in Christ. (*Ephesians 2:14-15, Colossians 2:16-17, Hebrews 9:8-10, 10:1*) Men have been delivered from the Law and are now under grace. (*Romans 7:6, 6:14*)
3. **When Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples in *Luke 22:16-20*, this became the last Passover, because He was going to the cross to fulfill what this day symbolized.** During this last Passover that Jesus had with His disciples, He instituted new symbols for a New Covenant that He would usher in when He sacrificed His body and shed His blood on the cross for the remission of sins. The symbols of the sacrifice of Christ are the bread (the body of Christ) and the fruit of the vine (His shed blood). Those

of us who have accepted His sacrifice observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His sacrificial atonement until He comes again a second time. The Old Covenant (which includes Passover) was taken away so that the second (or New Covenant) could be established. (*Hebrews 10:9, 8:13*)

4. **The Communion or Lord's Supper that the Church is commanded to observe symbolizes or points to the second coming of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.** It is important for New Testament Christians to understand the symbolism of the Lord's Supper and why we are to observe it. The Apostle Paul received from the Lord Jesus instructions concerning the Lord's Supper and he passed this along to the Church. Paul gives us a greater insight to the meaning of this New Covenant observance in *1 Corinthians 11:23-34*. The bread that believers eat of during this observance symbolizes the body of Jesus. The cup (which holds the wine) is symbolic of the New Covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus. Christians observing the Lord's Supper are in *communion* with Christ and His Body, the Church, since the Lord's Supper is commonly practiced among a body of believers. By this observance we are showing that *we have already received Him as our Passover Lamb* that has saved us from our sins.

In summary, the Passover observance of the Old Covenant symbolized a Lamb that *was to come* to be slain for the sins of the world. The Lord's Supper that we observe in the New Covenant symbolizes the Lamb *that has come* and who has shed His blood nearly 2000 years ago. Whereas the Old Covenant observance of Passover pointed to the first coming of Christ, the Lord's Supper points towards the second coming of Christ. The Apostle Paul explained, **"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup (observe the Lord's Supper), you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."** (*1 Corinthians 11:26*) The Church proclaims that Jesus Christ, the Savior, *has already come* and *is* the Lamb slain for the sins of the whole world. (*Revelation 1:8*) We preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The Church is preaching this message in obedience to the Lord's command. We are proclaiming His death (the atonement on the cross), burial and resurrection and that salvation and forgiveness of sins are available through Him for all those who will receive Him until His second coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (*Mark 16:15-16, John 1:29, Matthew 26:28, Acts 2:38, Hebrews 9:22*)

We in the Church cannot keep the Old Testament observance of Passover simply because of what it symbolized. We are not looking for a Lamb *to come (as are the Jews)*; we proclaim that the Lamb *has already come*. To proclaim anything else would not be in line with the truth of the Gospel. By observing the Lord's Supper, we are acknowledging and affirming that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Lamb slain for our sins and that He is the Messiah or Savior that fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament scriptures