

TJCII for YOU

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Passover



Two Passover Questions:

WHY JESUS? AND WHY THE BLOOD?

By Rabbi Marty Waldman

***“Why did there have to be a Jesus, anyway?
What’s all this talk about blood?”***

These are questions my wife, Marleen, heard as she was attending a class on anti-Semitism at the Jewish Community Center in Dallas. The woman who taught the class held the basic premise that at the root of anti-Semitism is Christianity.

This understanding of anti-Semitism is a sad commentary of Jewish-Christian relations over the last two millennia (see *Romans 11* for the proper relationship between Jews and Christians). However, the questions asked by an anonymous Jewish man in this class are extremely pertinent to G-d's redemptive plan for mankind, Jew and Gentile alike.

The redemptive plan of G-d is most clearly revealed in two extremely significant historical events.

- The first is the Passover in Egypt.
- The second is the crucifixion at Calvary.

Passover is celebrated annually with a "seder" meal by the Jewish people in commemoration of G-d's redemptive and covenantal work on Israel's behalf. Both of these propitious events are celebrated in memorial fashion.

Almost thirty-five hundred years ago, when G-d delivered Israel out of bondage in the land of Egypt, He said: *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you."*

The judgment of G-d would befall Egypt, but when He saw the blood, His judgment would pass over those who had by faith applied the blood of the innocent lamb to their homes. In essence, the lamb's blood was the only protection provided by G-d against His awesome judgment. It wasn't enough to be Jewish back then...every Jew needed that blood in order to be shielded from G-d's wrath and to be set free by G-d's redemption.

Christians around the world also herald G-d's redemptive work upon Calvary's tree by celebrating the "L-rd's Supper" (or communion as some call it). This is also a commemorative celebration remembering the redemptive work of Jesus (His death on the tree) on behalf of all those who would place their trust in Him. Sadly, most Christians observe the L-rd's supper in a historical vacuum

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Historically, Yeshua (Jesus) initiated the L-rd's Supper in the context of the Passover celebration. Immediately after Yeshua's seder meal with His disciples, (some people call it the "last supper") He voluntarily gave His life as the innocent Passover Lamb. So, when Yeshua lifted the cup of wine and said: "*this cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood,*" (Luke 22:20) He was making special reference to the cup of redemption, which is the third cup of wine in the seder.



The Four Cups of Wine

To fully understand the significance of the relationship between this cup of wine and the blood of the new covenant, one must realize that four different cups of wine are lifted up and consumed during a seder. These four cups are traditionally based on four representative phrases found in *Exodus 6:6,7*:

- 1 - The cup of Sanctification, verse 6 "...I will bring you out..."
- 2 - The cup of Plagues, verse 6 "...I will deliver you..."
(also *Exodus 3:19-20*)
- 3 - The cup of Redemption, verse 6 "...I will redeem you..."
- 4 - The cup of Praise (also known the cup of Consummation), verse 7
"...I will take you for my people and I will be your G-d..."

The cup Yeshua equated with the blood of the new covenant was the third cup, the cup of Redemption. To "redeem" means "to buy back" or "to recover by paying a price." The price paid for redemption in both Passover and the L-rd's supper is the blood of a lamb.

The astonishing element which took place at Yeshua's last Passover was not the fact that He and His disciples ate the sacrificed lamb, or that they drank the Passover wine, but, the astounding realization that Yeshua, at the third cup of wine, compared Himself to the Passover lamb which was sacrificed for the redemption of the people of G-d!

Marvin Wilson, in his excellent book, *Our Father Abraham, Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, provides some relevant discussion in reference to Yeshua as the Passover Lamb:

"In referring to His death as a sacrifice, Jesus was comparing Himself to the Passover lamb (cf. Rev. 5:12, 'Lamb who was slain')."

"John the Baptizer calls Him 'the Lamb of G-d' (John 1:29,36). Paul reflects this same symbolism: 'For Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed' (1 Cor. 5:7). Peter describes G-d's children as redeemed 'with the precious blood of Messiah, a lamb without blemish or defect' (1 Pet. 1:19)."

"This blood-redeemed community is also described as 'a new batch [of dough] without yeast' (1 Cor. 5:7). The prophetic significance of Jesus' death, 'Not one of His bones will be broken' (John 19:36), is clear from those Old Testament passages which state that the bones of the Passover lamb were not to be broken (Exod. 12:46; Num. 9:12; cf Ps. 34:20)."

So, "why did there have to be a Jesus, and why the blood?"

The Torah explains in *Leviticus 17:11* that *"The life of the flesh is in the blood and I (the L-rd) have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."* Innocent blood was and is required by G-d as a ransom for every soul of man.

Where do we get that blood today?

There is no longer an altar in a Temple and there are no more Passover lambs being sacrificed year after year.

The question then becomes, "Is Yeshua truly this final sacrificed lamb whose innocent blood would make expiation for my soul and redeem me from a fate of destruction?"

The prophet Isaiah answers this question as well as "Why did there

The prophet Isaiah answers this question as well as "why did there have to be a Jesus?" in *Isaiah 53:6-8*:

"All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the L-rd has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

"By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?"

The fact that Isaiah was speaking to the people of Israel about one who would die in order to make expiation for sin cannot be overlooked.

Though some of my Jewish brothers and sisters may differ, my conclusion concerning Isaiah's prophetic word is simply undeniable – Isaiah is speaking of none other than the **Messiah Yeshua!** One of the remarkable elements of Isaiah's prophecy is the fact that it was written seven-hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus.

Why did there have to be a Jesus?

Because G-d said that He would use the death (and blood) of an innocent man to redeem His people from their iniquity. Thus, G-d's judgment could pass over His people. Though tragic for this innocent One, G-d's people could rejoice over His redemptive work on their behalf, because Yeshua was no ordinary man, and death could not hold Him. Yeshua, the Passover Lamb, is alive and seated at G-d's right hand!

To my Jewish brothers and sisters who might ask, "**Why Jesus?**" or "**Why blood?**" I would say that the **Passover season is the season of redemption.** You can be redeemed and set free by believing in Yeshua the Messiah today! G-d's word says that today is the day of redemption, so do not harden your hearts!

To my Christian brothers and sisters, I would say that G-d's redemptive plan for mankind was historically born out of a Jewish context. In fact, Scripture states that *"Salvation is of the Jews."*

It is time to recognize the fact that G-d has had only one redemptive plan for mankind, which included the Jewish people. G-d has not replaced Israel with the Church but has placed Christians into the commonwealth of Israel (*Ephesians 2:11-13*), and grafted you into a Jewish olive tree (*Romans 11:17-24*).

This year, as we all celebrate G-d's redemptive work for His people, may I remind you that Yeshua said in *Mark 14:25* that He would wait to drink the fourth cup (the cup of consummation and praise) with us in the Kingdom of G-d!

Maybe next year in Jerusalem!

CHAG PESACH SAMEACH!

HAPPY PASSOVER!

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