The Mirror in the Cross

Christ, Our Passover

When we remember the cross, we remember our sacrifice. The death of Christ is our perfect sin offering (Heb. 9:26). His blood is the blood of the new covenant, the sacrifice that ratified it (Matt. 26:28). But we see in the cross not just our offering for sin and the sacrifice of our covenant. We see also there our passover lamb. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

Once a year, at springtime, Israel used to keep the passover. Each family would take a lamb and sacrifice it to God. They would then gather around and eat the lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

The first passover was eaten in Egypt. Before God sent the last plague on the Egyptians, he told Israel to eat this passover lamb and to smear its blood on their doorposts. Where God saw the blood, he would "pass over" that house, and not strike it with the plague. And so, the lamb and the feast was called "passover." Year by year they kept the feast in remembrance of their deliverance.

Our passover, however, is no lamb from the flock. As Paul said, our lamb has already been sacrificed (1 Cor. 5:7). Christ is the lamb that was slain.

It was no accident, but by God's holy plan, that Jesus was slain at the passover (see Jn. 13:1; 18:28,39; 19:14). During the very season when Israel offered its passover lambs, the true lamb of God was offered. We can see, then, why John the Baptist said of Christ, "Behold, the lamb of God!" (Jn 1:29,36; see also Rev. 5:9)

It was no accident, either, the occasion when the Lord gave us his supper. It was as he ate the passover that he did so. Even as the lamb lay spread on the table, Jesus our lamb instituted this feast. The connection is obvious. Christ is now our passover lamb, and the supper, in a manner of speaking, is our passover meal.

We eat this supper, therefore, in the faith that our lamb has been slain, and the blood applied. When the great judgment comes on the world, God will see the blood, and he will pass over us (Exod. 12:13). This we believe, and for this we are thankful.

We eat this supper, as did Israel its passover, looking back to our salvation. God has carried us out of Egypt. In baptism we crossed the Red Sea (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-2). He has freed us and made us his own. We eat, then, remembering our salvation, and anticipating eagerly what lies in store ahead (1 Cor. 11:26).

Our passover lamb has been offered already. It only remains for us to eat the meal and "keep the feast" (1 Cor. 5:8). But as we do so, let there be no leaven in our houses (Exod. 12:19). As befits those who eat this unleavened bread, let us remove any leaven of sin that is in us. Repent, and pray God's forgiveness. Our passover is not completed nor does it benefit unless "the leaven of malice and wickedness" be cast out (1 Cor. 5:8).

Furthermore, we should go forth from the table and keep the feast with the whole of our lives. Moment by moment, we must cast out the defiling leaven wherever we find it. The lamb has been offered, and the blood is on the post, but if we would be passed over then the leaven must go.

Let us think on these things as we eat the Lord's supper:

Levite priests ate the sacrifices offered to God. Eating and drinking Jn 6:35 and separating the Carnal & Spiritual Rom. 12

How we approach the Lord’s Supper in Prayer