



AFTER this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, *I thirst*. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. 31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (John 19:28-31)

On this Good Friday, many of us are isolated in homes and offices minimizing travel and social interactions. These inconveniences cannot be compared with the profound pain and suffering of our Lord on this day two thousand years ago. In fact, our present-day quarantine is not the first – neither was that of old when the Spanish Flu ravaged the land. The first Quarantine occurred some 3,500 years ago in the land of Egypt. The whole of the Children of Israel was confined to their quarters during that long and dark night in Goshen. As with the present quarantine, that one-night quarantine was to protect from a great plague that was to strike the land – the death of the firstborn of every household including children and beasts.

The people were to remain inside their homes with the doors shut and the blood of the Passover Lamb smeared over the lentils and both door posts of their houses.

*1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3 ¶Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. (Ex 12:1-4) The lamb to be sacrificed was no ordinary lamb of the flock. The lamb required was to be spotless and without blemish. This represents the righteousness of the Lamb of God to be offered on this very day 1500 years later at Calvary. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: * 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (Ex 12:5-6)*

The evening refers to a time well before the beginning of the Passover at sunset. It was the customary practice to sacrifice the lambs in the Temple at Jerusalem precisely

at 3:00 pm in the afternoon, or the 9th hour – the very time that our Lord gave up the Ghost.

*8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. 11 ¶And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. * 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. * 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.*

God had passed a severe judgment on the land of Egypt which is often compared with the land of sin. The people of God were confined to their quarters for that night. Should they wander from the protective symbol of the covering blood, they would be subject to the same judgment of Egypt. So, they were quarantined.

The first (14 Nisan) and last days of Unleavened Bread were consider High Sabbaths. The first day, after sunset, was the Passover meal observed. Christ endured the cross until 3:00 pm and was taken down and placed in the tomb before sunset. The evening and day that followed were both a High Sabbath and the 7th day Sabbath of the Lord.

What has the crucifixion of Christ to do with the first Passover? That first Passover was an exact type of the True Passover fulfilled in our Lord. Just as the Passover Lamb was sacrificed before evening of 14 Nisan, so was our Lord who died at 3:00 pm outside the gate of Jerusalem. *10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* (Heb 13:10-12) Remember the blood of the first Passover Lamb was applied on the outside doorpost of the house just as Jesus was crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem.

The blood sacrifices of that first Passover were a shadow of the true Sacrifice to come. The people of God had only a primal understanding of the duties they owed to God. Elementary teaching required that they must be taught, as modern educators will attest, from the simple to the complex – from the known to the unknown. They must learn that the works of their hands and minds in being righteous would never avail. They learned that it was impossible to keep the Commandments of God in their own strength. Something else was needed – a Redeemer who would bear their penalty for sin on the cross and whose righteousness would be imputed to all whom the Father gave Him.

Today, we call this Passover day, 'Easter,' and that will suffice as long as we are aware that the day we call Easter is actually the ancient Passover that began in Egypt and was fulfilled on a cross at Golgotha. Our Holy Communion Service is an observance, too, of that Passover.

Do you have your Passover Lamb? Do you need a sacrifice? No, your sacrifice has already been provided and fulfilled in Christ. So what is our Passover Lamb, and

do we yet keep the Passover? 7 *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: 8 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.* (1 Cor 5:7-8)

In our Holy Communion observance, the red wine of the fruit of the vine, and the unleavened bread of which we partake represents that Lamb of God that was sacrificed for us before the foundations of the world were laid. The red wine is His Blood which gives us an enlivened spirit (for the life is in the blood), and the unleavened bread (a Body created for service) represents His body which, being unleavened, is absent any blemish or spot of sin.

At the Passover meal of Holy Communion, we acknowledge that we belong to the one family of God purchased by the Blood of His only Begotten Son; and we recognize that in this dark night of the world, the Angel of Death that hovers over things worldly has passed over the children of God. He has passed over us because of the Blood on our doorposts and lintels. We drink from the same cup as a family, and we partake of the same spiritual nourishment which is the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ of which we have become a part.

*23 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: 24 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.** 25 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.** 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* (1 Cor 11:23-30)

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. (1 Cor 10:16-21)