



**A**ND the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, *Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.* And his disciples remembered that it was written, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Then answered the Jews and said unto him, *What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?* Jesus answered and said unto them, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* Then said the Jews, *Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?* But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. (John 2:13-25)

### **The First Sunday after The Epiphany.**

*The Collect.*

**O**LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

[January 6.]

The Collect.

**O** GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be said daily throughout the Octave

In a previous devotion on marriage, we discussed the great value God places upon the estate of marriage as being a shadow and relationship existing between Christ and His Church. We now turn to the Passover which Christ never failed to observe in Jerusalem during the years of His ministry. The Passover, the observance of which being so highly esteemed by Christ, must have a like value to our own hearts, but of what meaning does it have for us? In the Land of Egypt (spiritually compared to the land of sin), God was preparing to force Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave that land of hard bondage. Sin is also bondage to us and we remain in that land without our own Passover Lamb being slain for us. God sent plague after plague upon Egypt, but Pharaoh did not relent. Finally, God had Moses warn Pharaoh of the tenth and last plague – the death of all firstborn sons of both man and beast in Egypt. This would lead to the institution of the first Passover: *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 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: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 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. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. (Ex 12:1-14)*

When God sees the BLOOD on door posts and lintels of the houses of the Children of Israel, He will PASSOVER that house. The same is true for the final Judgment: if we are under the blood of the Lamb, we shall not suffer loss.

*And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting." Have you read of what preparation should be made BEFORE Passover? If not, read it here: "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses:*

*for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.* (Ex 12:15) You have just read that at PASSOVER, there must be a house-cleaning! All leaven (sin) must be cast out! Christ is about to clean house at the Temple when the Passover is at hand for no evil must be in the house. Christ is our Passover. His sacrifice on the cross as our Passover Lamb cleans our Temples (bodies) of sin. Then the days of unleavened bread following represent our sanctification in Him.

*And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables.* You may wonder where a man of effeminate features depicted by the Renaissance artists got such masculine strength as to drive a house full of Jews from their money tables – it would have taken quite a man to do this! Jesus was not the weakly figure painted by the Italian artists such as Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Carragio, and others. He was a carpenter whose trade He practiced with Joseph. He was muscled and masculine and a perfect specimen of a man. He apparently cast quite an impression of strength to these money-lovers of the Temple. Tables of the Temple in those days were not made of light plastic or plywood, yet he turned them over and drove out man and beast who were practicing commerce in the Temple of God. How many churches today raise their needed CASH by car washes and garage sales? The House of God must not be made beggar to the commerce of the world, but stand upon the shoulders of Godly men and women. If resources are NEEDED (not that which is lustily desired), let the people of God satisfy the need, not by cheapening the name of Christ through garage sales, but by the charity and due offerings of God's people. *And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.* Need I illumine this text more? I believe the statement stands clear and stark!

Christ is master over His own House: *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* (Heb 3:5-6) Jesus both cleaned the Temple at His first Passover after baptism, and His last Passover: *And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.* (Luke 19:45-46)

*And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* It is important we read, study, and remember God's Word – not just the Word we currently read, but ALL of His Word both past and present. The trust in God's Word was enhanced in the minds of the disciples when they remembered the Psalm: *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ....* (Psalm 69:9) Do we have that kind of zeal for the House of the Lord, or for His Temple which Temple we are?

*Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?* These Jews were much like those false professors today: rather than questioning truth, they attempt to undermine or belittle the messenger. They wanted to know what 'credentials' or sophisticated parchments did He have? *By what AUTHORITY do you do these things?* That is like asking a field battery commander by what authority he orders the pulling of the lanyard of the cannon. Christ, Himself, is the embodiment of ALL Authority, and He is the Lord of the Temple! These priests and scribes of the Jews are the usurpers of the Vineyard, to which the Owner has now sent His own Son to look into. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* The Jews would, indeed, destroy the Temple (which was Christ's Body), but He would rise from the Tomb on the third day as prophesied here! *Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple*

*of his body.* The stone Temple, like the stone Tables of the Law, was only a dim shadow of that Temple to be resurrected in Christ. His Temple, like the Law of Commandments in Love, is made of Heart Tissue. We now have His Law written in the soft sinews of our hearts, and it is our hearts and bodies that comprise the Temple of God.