



YOUR glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷Purge 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: ⁸Therefore 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 5:6-8)

We are yet still in the Easter Season, but what is Easter all about? Is it about fertility eggs and Easter bunnies, parades and Easter bonnets? No, Easter bears a far greater significance than that which occupies the awareness of the Church in general. We may say the proper responses, read the applicable Scriptures, and perform the proper worship routines, but, like the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, it may simply be an exercise in rote memory – and neither the Lord's Prayer nor the observance of Easter should be looked upon in any less reverence than awe and humility. Writers such as Hislop (in *Two Babylon's*) and many others have tried to cast dispersions upon the term 'EASTER' itself claiming that it is derived from some pagan holiday. Though I will readily admit that some customs that have arisen over the years in observance of Easter do, indeed, have pagan origins, the original observance of Easter had no such connotations. In establishing Easter as a credible holiday, I believe Rome inculcated many Spring fertility practices in order to make Easter more palatable to the pagan world. This was a great error of Rome, and they still so blunder in every part of the world the Papacy is honored.

When I ask a young child what is special about Easter, or even Christmas, I will unfailingly get the response, *the Easter Rabbit*, and *Santa Claus*. Thus have the true meanings of our holidays (Holy Days) been corrupted by the traditions of men. The Easter egg, supposedly laid by a bunny, probably derives from ancient Babylon and their extreme observance of fertility rites. The egg is still center piece at Spring Festivals (No Ruz – New Years) in Iran today (Old Persia). The Iranians also build bonfires in the streets at No Ruz and have their children 'pass through the fire by jumping through the flames. I observed this custom on numerous occasions. If we teach our children the lie

of the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus, how will we ever unteach them that lie and replace it with the true meanings?

There is no question that Easter is simply an English translation for Pascha (or Passover). In 28 out of 29 places in the Bible, it is so translated; and we find only once in Acts 12:4 in which it is translated 'Easter.' This is not an error in translation, but merely a difference in approach. In old English, Easter derives from the word for new dawn, and that is precisely what the Resurrection brought to us – a New Dawn and a New Day. You will recall that Christ rose at, or shortly before, Dawn on the first day of the week. *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.* (Matt 28:1) & *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.* (John 20:1) It is impossible, and unnecessary, for us to stipulate the exact time of our Lord's rising since, biblically speaking, the next day began to dawn at the end of the previous day at sunset. So Christ arose sometime between sunset on the sabbath and sunrise on the first day. The end of the Sabbath came at sundown on the seventh day.

There is a particular significance to the first Day of the week. It was accounted the eighth day when speaking of the new week. The day was not named Sunday at the time. Eight is the number used to express new beginnings in God's Word. There are seven notes in a musical scale and the eighth is the beginning of the next scale. There were eight souls aboard the Ark of Noah in order to perpetuate the New Creation after the Flood. So, the Resurrection of Christ hails a New Beginning for all who believe and are under the calling and election in Him. And the sons of Israel were circumcised on the eighth day.

I have heard well-meaning, but ignorant, preachers declare we no longer need the Old Testament since the New Testament has given us the Gospel and the history of the Church. That is an error of tremendous proportion! There is no way we can fully understand and appreciate the truths revealed in the New Testament, without understanding the foreshadowing of those truths in the Old Testament. If we are discreet scholars, we can find the Gospel gloriously presented in the Old Testament. The more complete discussion on those Gospel presentations must await another day since today I wish to point out just ONE of those glorious revelations of truth – the PASSOVER! Even so, there is time only for a brief and superficial discussion of just that one truth.

God had conceived the Passover (Easter) well before the earth was formed, and the stars were scattered in their distant orbits. In the Eternity Past, God provided a Savior Redeemer in His only Begotten Son for fallen man. God was not shocked that Adam fell for the Serpent's lie. He was not shocked that the greater measure of old Israel would reject His Son. In fact, the sovereign of the Universe is not surprised at any event involving His Creation. The Creation adheres together moment by moment by the magnetic power of God. Our lives, too, and the number of our heartbeats are dictated by our Maker. We cannot surprise Him by either failing in faith, or succeeding in our Christian walk.

In the very ancient Book of Job, we are reminded of that coming Redeemer long before any priest or high priest knew of the prophecy. *23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! 24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! 25 For I know that my REDEEMER liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* (Job 19:23-27)

Man is weak of understanding such high things as the unlimited love and providence of God. He needs physical illustrations to make these great mysteries become even remotely understood. So God oversaw His people of Abraham's descent in all their travels and turmoils. He provided Joseph (as a type of Christ) to go down into Egypt as a slave in preparation of the salvation of Jacob (Israel) and his sons. In order to learn the contrast between bondage and liberty, Israel was enslaved in Egypt. But God had not forgotten them. He predestined a man to be trained in Egypt's royal courts as a leader of His people in bringing them out of bondage – Moses!

What event heralded the beginning of the freeing of the Children of Israel? Was it not the final plague God sent against Pharaoh? The Angel of Death would Passover the land of Egypt and take the firstborn male child of both man and beast. *4 . . . Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: 5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. 6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7 But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. (Ex 11:4-7)*

Such an event would strike terror into our hearts today as then. God knew Pharaoh would not heed even this warning. *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: 4 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. 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. 7 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. 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. (Ex 12:2-14)*

The Angel of Death is not finished! He is destined to make another pass over all the land at the Last Day. Since all who are not under the Blood of Christ remain dead in trespasses and sins. (see Eph 2) All have sinned, and only Christ can redeem us therefrom. Note that the blood of the spotless lamb was smeared both vertically on the side post of the door, and horizontally over the lintels of the doorpost (cross beam). Reminds one of the cross does it not?

The time of the lamb's sacrifice was the Eve of Passover – not only the same day, but even the same time of our Lord's death on the cross. Our Lord was sacrificed on the 14th day of Nisan which was in the spring of the year at Passover. Since Spring is a time

of new life and new beginnings, I consider that most appropriate. It may even be so that Christ was conceived on that same date and born nine months later in late-December.

If we do not understand the historic Passover, how could we ever conceive of Christ as the Lamb of God? *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* (John 1:29) It was decided long before the worlds were made that our Lord would come as redeemer, savior, and Lamb of Sacrifice – our Passover – in the process of time and at God's own discretion: *1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.* (Rev 13:1-9)

Our Holy Communion is a Passover Meal. The Unleavened Bread represents the pure and sinless Body of Christ, and the wine, the sacrificial Blood of the Lamb. Have you considered this at the Lord's Table?