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Presentation Transcript
Jesus and the Passover of Moses
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This is the first in a series on *Jesus and the Holy Days*. The title is *Jesus and the Passover of Moses*.

Good afternoon to all of you on this beautiful day. I'd like to wish everybody a joyous spring festival season. God's festivals are such an amazing gift to us, aren't they? We were all sitting around enjoying each other's company last night. And that pictured the time when God took Israel out of Egypt and they were set free. And they celebrated. And we celebrated being free from sins last night after the Passover. So an amazing thing!

Where does Christianity come from? Does it come from denominational doctrine? Does it come from theological seminaries? Where does it come from? Who knows where it comes from? Where is it supposed to come from? How does He communicate that to us? Through the Word. That's right. The Bible is the foundation of knowledge. Now there's a lot people who will tell you that there are so many different beliefs that you can prove anything out of the Bible. But, you know, there is another explanation for that that makes a lot more sense. And that is that people have gone their own way, and done their own thing, and used their own human reasoning to the point that it's confusing to people.

So I'd like to take a little trip through some of the scriptures today. And I'd like to begin – I'm not actually going to quote this scripture, but you can find it easily enough, if you want to – I'm just going to tell you a little bit about when Mary was carrying Jesus and about her cousin, Elizabeth, who also pregnant with a baby, who was later to be called John. And then later, when John was an adult, he was called John the Baptist and he conducted a ministry across Jordan, we're told. And people would go way out in the desert to listen to him, because he was talking about the prophesied Messiah. That was very interesting to those people at that time, because they were looking for someone to save them from the Romans. They needed a deliverer. So John had this ready-made audience, because people misunderstood what he was talking about.

And just before Jesus started His ministry, He also went out to see John out in the desert. And when John saw Him, he said something very interesting. Do you know what it was? It's in John 1, verse 29.

John 1:29 – *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”*

What a curious thing to say! Why would John call Jesus a lamb? And why would he be God’s Lamb? Well, you know, God, in the Bible, folds meaning into meaning, and over on top of meaning. And He weaves things together. And He layers truth upon truth for us to unravel and discover. So today we’re going to take a look at that statement of John’s and we’re going to do that from the perspective of someone who doesn’t know that much about the Bible. For those who understand the significance already, this can serve as a way to explain what it means to those who don’t yet understand.

So, at that time when John said that, they were under Roman rule, and the people were looking for a deliverer, and they were focusing on the prophecies about the Messiah – well, at least the ones that said He was a conquering king. And they’d read those scriptures over and over again, but they failed to realize the Messiah was going to come twice. The second coming He was to come as a conquering king, but the first one was for a completely different purpose.

John mentioned it. He knew. He knew that He was coming to take away the sins of the world – not the Romans. That was foretold, in plain language, by an angel to Joseph. Maybe John heard the family story about this. It’s in Matthew 1, and verse 18.

Matthew 1:18 – *Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way: when His mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph – before they come together – she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. There is so much packed into that verse. If you really want to understand more about what that was like, watch the movie, *The Nativity Story*. There are a lot of inaccuracies in that movie, but the one thing that they really do is point up what it must have been like for Joseph and Mary – for her, in that society, to become pregnant out of wedlock – and for her to become pregnant without ever having had relations with anybody.*

V-19 – *And her husband, Joseph, being a just man, and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. He didn’t believe her story. But, as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”* And John knew, and, I imagine, Elizabeth knew it, and Zacharias, his father knew it, and Joseph knew it, and Mary knew it, and Jesus knew it, but maybe not too many other people knew it. And that’s because they were looking for another kind of deliverance. They missed what God was doing, because they were focused on their own perception. It’s kind of a warning for us, really, isn’t it? We can read all kinds of things into the Bible that come out of our own hearts, and our own minds, or from the minds and hearts of others through tradition or denominational doctrine, or just weird doctrine from weird people. And all of these things can blind us from the truth of God’s scripture, and the true meaning of it, and the purpose of God, and the activity that He is undertaking at the time – if we can just stick with the Book. And

we can know that John the Baptist didn't miss what He was doing. So he was a guy that understood what the scriptures meant. He knew that He came for a reason – that Jesus came for a reason – other than the Romans – a much, much bigger reason than that.

Let's look at another scripture. It's in 1 Peter 1, verse 17, down to about verse 21.

1 Peter 1:17-21 – *And you shall call on Him as Father, who judges impartially, Peter said, according to each one's deeds. Conduct yourself with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a Lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown, before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who, through Him, are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

So, there it is – right there in the New Testament – that Jesus was the Lamb of God, because He was the sacrifice – much bigger than the Romans. We think we know what God is doing, but it always turns out to be bigger than that. We're only limited by our own humanness to understand what God is doing.

I know twelve years ago, I thought God wanted me to start a ministry to the Church of God to help parents with their children. And I see now that that was just a smaller part of it, actually. It turned out that I help people with their children every day in my counseling office. I wasn't even thinking about that! And gradually I gained the realization that all of us have a part to play in the faith development of all children. So that took me places I'd never thought about and doing things I never thought I would do. It's just so amazing what happens when God involves Himself in our efforts and when we let Him!

So the Jews were seeking relief from the Romans and God was bringing them relief from something much worse! He was taking care of our mortality and ransoming us from the devil, who would have killed us all through our sins.

That brings us to the question, "Why a lamb?" What is the meaning folded into additional meaning and wrapped with more meaning yet of a lamb in the plan of God? Did He just say that because they sacrificed lambs? Well, that's probably the smallest part of it.

Let's go to Exodus, the 12th chapter. Of all the lambs in the plan of God, the one we're going to read about here is *the* lamb – the quintessential Lamb. Verse 1:

Exodus 12:1 – *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you." So they had a religious year. "Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of the first month every man shall take a lamb." It started in the spring – their year did. "...take a lamb according to their fathers' houses – a lamb for a household." So every household was to have one. "And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons – according to what each*

can eat – and shall make your count for the lamb.” So, for three households, and it takes three to eat a lamb, that’s how many would get together and share that lamb.

V-5 – *“Your lamb shall be without blemish – a male – a year old.”* Remember what Peter said about the Lamb of God – without blemish – a male? *“You shall take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that night – roasted on the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted – its head with its legs and its inner parts – and you shall let none of it remain until morning. Anything that remains until the morning, you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You shall eat it in haste, for it is the LORD’s Passover.”* So this famous lamb was called the Passover lamb.

V-12 – *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn of the land of Egypt.”* In the movie, *The Ten Commandments*, it was the green fog, right? Well, that’s Hollywood. *“I will strike all the firstborn of Egypt – both man and beast.”* Firstborn of Egypt – both man *and* beast. Did you know that, in the Bible, when they talk about the populations of ancient cities and civilizations, they always counted the animals in the count – the herd animals? They did. It says that there were so many people that lived in Ninevah when Jonah went there. Well, that included all the animals, too. So He’s going to take His vengeance on not only the people, but He’s going to kill the animals, as well. *“I will execute judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.”* Now we know that there was a series of plagues, and each one of them was a direct assault on one of the gods of Egypt. So this is the last one.

V-13 – *“The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no plague will befall you to destroy when I strike the land of Egypt. And this day shall be, for you, a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. As a statute forever you shall keep it as a feast.”*

And then, dropping down to verse 29, it says:

V-29 – *At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn of the land of Egypt – from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive, who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. And Pharaoh rose up in the night – he and all his servants and all the Egyptians – and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. And then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Up, go out from among my people – both you and the people of Israel – and go serve the LORD as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds as you have said and be gone! And bless me, also.”* I think he probably had his own safety in mind. *So they picked up and departed.*

And it says that they had been there for 430 years! Almost twice as long as we've been a country, they were in slavery. They lost so much of their culture, and so much of their tradition, and so much of their religion that God had to rebuild them block by block. But in a moment – in one terrible evening – they were all set free. And, of course, after the shock wore off – and it didn't take long – the Egyptian army pursued after them. And we know that God caused a miracle to happen. The Red Sea opened and Israel passed through on dry land. Then, when the Egyptian army pursued them into the sea, the waters closed back upon them and the Egyptian army was destroyed. And ever since that time, the Jews have been observing that day – the Passover – as a holy day.

So, if Passover is the sacrifice of a perfect male lamb, and, if Passover is a Jewish ceremony and a festival, why did God call Jesus the Lamb of God? Why is that in the *New Testament*? Why did God use the symbol of a Jewish festival to symbolize the sacrifice of Christ? Why don't we still use the symbol today to picture the sacrifice He made?

We use another symbol, don't we? Christianity has taken *a* symbol to every continent – to almost every nook and cranny of the planet. Do we know what that symbol is? It's the cross. Right. And where did we say our religion was to come from? From the Bible, right? Is there anywhere in the Bible where we've been told to switch? There isn't, is there? Get your concordance out and look and see all the places in the Bible where the word *cross* is used. And tell me if you can find one place where Jesus, or any of the original apostles, told us that the cross should become the new symbol for Christianity. You won't find it there. That is *not* a biblical symbol. Now, I know He was crucified on a cross. And I understand the reasoning that was used. But, you see, that's how we get off track. That's how we get focused on the wrong thing.

Let's look at something else. Let's look into the New Testament now. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 10, verse 1. Did you know that the apostle Paul – even though he wasn't one of the original apostles – went away with Jesus Christ for a time and was personally taught by Him after He was resurrected and glorified? That Bible says that. Paul tells us that. He said:

1 Corinthians 10:1 – *For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea – the cloud was God – that's what represented God – and they passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses – that's a curious thing to say, isn't it – that they all went through the Red Sea and he said that they were baptized? – and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the same spiritual Rock that followed them. And that Rock was Christ. He was the God of the Old Testament. And He was there! Nevertheless – it says in verse 5 – with most of them, God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.*

I want you to look at that word, *examples*. The Greek word is *typos*. And it's spelled t-y-p-o-s. Typos is probably how we would probably pronounce that. And it's not talking

about a typo either that you would make on your computer keyboard. According to Louw & Nida, *a model or example, which anticipates or precedes a later realization; an archetype, figure, foreshadow or symbol*. So it's not just example. The things that were going on there pictured – that was the type and then the antitype came later – pictured Christ. That's what the baptism remark is about.

When they went through the Red Sea, what were they being freed from? Egypt. When we go through the waters of baptism, what are we freed from? Sin. It's a metaphor. The whole Old Testament is a metaphor. It's quite amazing, really. The whole history of ancient Israel is a picture of Christ and the church. It all pictures what's to come.

Have you ever looked down on the Old Testament or favored the New Testament over it? Well, if you have, you've looked down on the Word of God, because it's *all* the Word of God. And it's all about the same thing.

Let's look further into the New Testament. There is something else that Paul said. 1 Corinthians 5:6. He's taking the Corinthians to task. He did that a lot. They needed it. He said:

1 Corinthians 5:6 – *Your boasting is not good. (Why he is telling them this is a story for another day. We'll just go from here.) Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened, for Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven – the leaven of malice and evil – but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* When they went through the Red Sea, they didn't have time to make bread that night that was leavened – to let it rise. They ate unleavened bread. So that, also, was a symbol of how we're supposed to live without sin in our lives – the old leaven of malice and evil – but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

We've got to just back up there one more time. Who is he talking to? Well, he's talking to Gentile Christians. Right? Corinth, not Jerusalem. Gentile Christians. And what does he tell them to do? *Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival* – what festival? Well, the feast of Passover and the following Festival of Unleavened Bread. So does that mean that Christians are supposed to celebrate the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread? *Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival.* Where does your religion come from? Christ is our Passover. And they were observing the Passover many years after He died. And they were celebrating the death of Christ.

Quite interesting, isn't it? They didn't talk about the cross. They talked about Christ, the Lamb of God and Christ, our Passover. And that is the message they carried to the world.

Let's look at another thing that he said. 1 Corinthians 11:23. Paul said:

1 Corinthians 11:23 – *I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you – so what he's going to tell us now is what he got straight from Jesus Christ – that the Lord, on the*

night He was betrayed – so He was betrayed the night before He died on the Passover. He was killed at the time that the Passover lamb was killed. How interesting! It's all a metaphor. It's all a symbol – type and antitype. So the night before He died, *He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."* In the same way, *He also took the cup, after supper, saying, "This is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* You proclaim what? His birth? No. His resurrection? No. His *death* till He comes. *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.*

So the night before He died, He instituted a new ceremony, really. But it was on Passover. Passover starts at sundown the night before the day part. And there He is. It was on Passover, but it was just the evening part of the Passover day.

V-27 – *Whoever, therefore* – I'm in verse 27 now – *eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, and then so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

Now, when did Paul say that we were to do this? It was the same night when Jesus did it. We'll follow the example, right? Some weak argument has been made that because of that word, *whenever you do this*, that means whenever you want to. That isn't what it says. That is a *weak* argument. It's all about the Passover.

So he said that we eat unleavened bread and drink wine the night before He died on the Passover *to proclaim His death*. And He instituted those new symbols for Christians. And He said, "If you don't do this, and if you don't do it realizing your sins cost My life, you're eating damnation to yourself." So what do we do with that? We turn it into the Eucharist – something that has nothing to do with the Passover that Jesus instituted. It's a tawdry sham is what it is.

How did all that change? How did it get from what they said to what it is now – with the bunnies and the eggs, and Lent and all of that? People today don't think of Jesus as our Passover Lamb. They don't think about taking unleavened bread and wine on the Passover, as a New Testament symbol – a celebration of the death of Jesus Christ. Yet we read that, plain as day, right there in the Bible. They don't understand that we're told, in the New Testament by Jesus and the apostles, to celebrate His death rather than His birth or resurrection. How did that all change? Well, that story is a humiliation, or ought to be, to the Church of God.

In the Bible, we read into the late '90s AD, when John was still writing, and just as John was in his old age, we see a church that observes the Passover, that observes the Festival of Unleavened Bread and all the other biblical holy days. There is no mention of Easter in

there and no mention of Christmas. And they were keeping the 7th day of the week as the Sabbath. And then, for a period of about a hundred years, there is no information about what happened in the church. Nothing. It's like a curtain goes down. What probably more likely happened is information was destroyed. But it goes silent, at any rate. And when the curtain comes up, in the late 100s or early 200s, the church is almost unrecognizable from the church of the New Testament in the Bible. Everything remotely related to Israel and Judah has been stripped away and labeled as Judaistic. Many practices of Roman religion have been implanted into the church. And now, rather than being persecuted and hounded as they were – because the Romans hated the Jews – the church is starting to become popular and it's growing – because it has incorporated all of these Roman celebrations.

Is that a good thing that it's growing? Or is it a complete and total sellout – a caving into the pressure of the times for growth, power and control? No, that's a turning away from the pure religion of Jesus and a turning toward anti-Semitism and pagan religion. Does it make a difference, though? Since the church is growing, maybe we could justify repudiating all the things that God tells us to do for the sake of growth. Maybe a more relevant question would be, “Can human beings improve on the religion that Jesus brought?”

Let's look in Jude 3 and 4. Jude said:

Jude :3-4 – *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation – ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

I was looking, yesterday, in my *JFB Commentary* on this verse. And, as only they can do, they inserted a very terse remark about this scripture: “A strong argument for resisting heretical innovators.” *Heretical innovators*. Most of the time, when we're doing our own thing, innovation is good. But you cannot innovate the biblical truth of God. We do *not* get to decide how to worship God. He does! We only get to decide whether or not we're going to do it His way.

I don't know why this is so hard for Christian people to understand. I have a friend who is an agnostic – an atheist, actually – and he was asking me about why I did what I do, and I was telling him that I was quite different from most Christians. And he said, “Well, why are you?” And I said, “Well, because God is God.” And he nodded his head. He doesn't believe it, but he knew what I meant in his own way. And I said, “And God gets to tell us how we should worship Him.” And he said, “Makes sense to me.” But, if you're deeply invested – you know, we've got a great big box up in the attic full of little glass balls that we hang on trees and spent a lot of money on lights and stuff, and we've done it forever, and our kids like it – then we just go with the flow – away from what it says to do in the scriptures.

The title of this message is *Jesus and the Passover of Moses*. And we saw that the Jews of Jesus' day were blinded to Jesus because of the assumptions, based on human need, and understanding. What gets in your way of understanding what the Bible says and what it means? We read the scriptures today that show plainly that the Passover is not just a celebration for ancient Israel or for modern-day Jews. It's an observance deeply imbedded into fabric of the New Testament church with Jesus Christ right at the center of it. And we have seen that the Bible tells it is not for us to change the observances that God put in place – not just the observances, but *any* doctrine that is in the New Testament.

True worship, undiluted by the human mind, is that Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world.