



"It is not your hold of Christ that saves, but his hold of you!"
—Charles H. Spurgeon

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Evaluating the Price of Redemption

As the pace of this world increases, and we are distracted by its many problems and our own troubles, we can find it difficult to prepare properly for God's [holy days](#). It seems that we rush into them and then rush back to our everyday lives in this world, wondering how all our time has disappeared.

Of all of God's appointed times, the [Passover](#) is one that we should not just rush into without thought and preparation. If we do so, we will miss the awesome depth of its meaning, placing ourselves in danger of taking the Passover unworthily. To avoid this, we must stop to consider all that [God](#) has done for us and how we are to respond properly.

I hope we truly appreciate what God has revealed it to us, and never take the attitude of "Oh, here comes the Passover again." [The world](#) has little understanding of Christ's sacrifice. With pagan trappings, they worship His resurrection—on the wrong day and at the wrong time—and ignore the tremendous sacrifice made for sinful humanity. They argue that keeping the Passover would be "Jewish," despite Jesus Himself commanding us to observe it in remembrance of Him ([Luke 22:19](#); [I Corinthians 11:23-26](#)).

To help us pause and consider this year, we will focus on what it cost to free Israel from Egypt juxtaposed with the price that was paid to free us from [sin](#).

At the time of the Exodus, Egypt was the most powerful nation on the earth, one that had remained strong for many centuries. It had maintained an advanced civilization in science, arts, architecture, and warfare. The rich Nile Valley made it the granary of the world, a place of refuge when other nations fell into famine. It was renowned for its great cities and monuments. God would display His power by bringing His people Israel out of this great nation despite its vaunted power and wealth.

To accomplish this, He began to perform miracles through [Moses](#) and Aaron, a process that He stretched out over several months. He started with miracles, such as Moses' serpent swallowing the magician's serpents, turning the water to blood, and calling up frogs, wonders that Pharaoh's magicians could duplicate. The next plagues, however—those of lice, flies, cattle disease, boils on people and animals—they failed to counterfeit. Beginning with the eighth plague of great hail, thunder, and fire running along the ground, God sped matters up, following quickly with swarms of locusts that ate up Egypt's crops. At this point, Pharaoh's servants asked him, "Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" ([Exodus 10:7](#)).

After this came a thick darkness that lasted for three days. No one except the Israelites in Goshen could see anything or move from their places. Finally, on the evening of the Passover, God sent an angel of death to destroy Egypt's firstborn. Moses warns Pharaoh in [Exodus 11:5](#): "And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the mill and the firstborn of the animals." [Exodus 12:30](#) reports there was not a house in Egypt without at least one death.

Many thousands died from this plague; it destroyed the elite of Egypt. In some homes, many family members were firstborns: father, mother, child, grandfather, grandmother, servants, pets, and livestock. This was the great price paid to free God's people from their slavery to Egypt, to pagan beliefs and worship, and a culture of sin. The devastation God wrought did not finish the nation, but it severely crippled Egypt, no doubt for many years.

A price also had to be paid to redeem us from bondage to sin and death, its penalty, as Paul writes in [I Corinthians 6:20](#), "For you were bought at a price." And that price? Peter answers in [I Peter 1:18-19](#): ". . . you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." For us, it took the death of the Creator God, the very One to whom we owe our existence. The same apostle later writes, ". . . who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness" ([I Peter 2:24](#)). We can summarize what we have learned:

1. By the priceless cost of our redemption from sin and death, we now belong to God.
2. The price of our redemption was the lifeblood of the Son of God, [Jesus Christ](#), our Creator.
3. No other price could have paid our enormous debt of sin.
4. By accepting that sacrifice and Him as Savior, we have a responsibility to devote ourselves to Him in [love](#) and obedience.

Because of this, we should never take Passover lightly; it is most solemn because our God had to die to bring us salvation. Thus, we are told to consider the Passover seriously. Paul instructs in [I Corinthians 11:27-28](#): "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

The word "examine" is *dokimazo*, meaning "tested, approved." It has the sense of trying, proving, discerning, distinguishing, or approving. Paul advises us to look deeply within ourselves to discern what we are. In the past, some have seen themselves as so unworthy that they felt they could not take the Passover. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the individual who glosses over his faults and weaknesses with a shrug.

The purpose of this self-examination is to pause in the rush of this life and to consider how well we have done during this year of our calling, setting goals to correct our shortcomings. The standard that we measure ourselves against is the perfection of Jesus Christ. We all fall short. Indeed, we are all sinful, all unworthy, which is why *we all need to take the Passover*.

God expects all baptized members to take the Passover every year, but in this examination, He wants us to remember the price Jesus paid for us in suffering and death. He also desires that we realize His great love for us in paying this price, using it as incentive to work to correct our flaws in preparation for life in His Kingdom. Knowing this, we will take it humbly and reverently.

We should also consider the other body of Christ, His church, evaluating if we are treating it with the love and concern that we should. This formed the background of Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 11, as the church there was divided into cliques, and some had entertained [heresies](#). They were not serving and submitting to each other, thinking only of themselves. In short, they were not living up to the high standard of Christ's commandment of loving one another as He loved them ([John 13:34-35](#); [Matthew 22:39](#)).

Passover recalls the unbelievable, awesome sacrifice that Jesus made for each of us. We need to set time aside to examine ourselves, possibly with fasting, reviewing what He suffered. We should set goals to overcome the flaws we find so that we will grow and truly please God. Though it may seem early to do this, there is no time like the present.

- John O. Reid

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Passover \(Part One\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The annual reaffirmation of the covenant—through the Passover—is at the

heart and core of an on-going relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father, a life-and-death choice beginning the process to perfection. The Passover, specifically commanded on the fourteenth at twilight (dusk), is a memorial of God's passing over the firstborn covered by the blood, distinctly different from the memorial of "going out from Egypt" (Unleavened Bread).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Christ, Our Passover](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Many people, even in the church of God, believe that Passover focuses on our sins—but they are wrong! We are certainly to examine ourselves to take it worthily, but the Passover's central figure is Christ, the Lamb of God. John Ritenbaugh explores His awesome, gracious sacrifice that enables forgiveness of sin and opens a relationship with God. How well do we know Him?

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