

Why Study Passover

By Mark E. Benjamin

Why should a Christian study, or even care about, Passover? It's just a old Jewish holiday. We are on this side of the cross and have Easter and Communion, so we don't need Passover. Sure, communion comes from Passover and Easter occurred at the time of Passover, but that's as far as we need to take it. Right?

These types of questions and statements may not be wrong, per say, but they aren't exactly right either. First off, we should never turn away from learning something, especially if it has to do with our heritage. I think most can agree that Easter and Communion have their roots in Passover. Communion comes from what Christians commonly call "the last supper". The last supper was in fact the Passover ceremony led by Jesus. And of course Easter was the Sunday after Passover.

Still, why study the Jewish Holy day? I hope to answer this question, but first let's play a couple of games. I will trust that you will be honest in your answers.

The Phrase Game

The first game is to fill in the blanks of some familiar phrases. I'll list a phrase and you answer with what you think goes in the blank. Some of them do have more than one answer, so if you don't get the one I'm looking for, that's ok.

- 1) Be ye not unequally ____
- 2) God is ____
- 3) I will make you fishers of ____
- 4) God helps those that help ____

How well do you think you did? Here's the answers I was looking for: yoked, love, men, themselves. Did you get all four? It's not a big deal if you didn't, this is just to demonstrate a point. Let's go over each one and where the answer comes from.

- 1) **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: (II Cor 6:14 (KJV))**
- 2) **... God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (I Jn 4:16 (KJV))**
- 3) **"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt 4:19 (NIV))**
- 4) **???**

Number four doesn't come from the Bible, old or new testament. The word "help" is in the Bible many times. In fact it's in there a couple of hundred times in different forms. But the phrase "God helps those that help themselves" isn't in the Bible.

Before you get worked up about all this, I'm not saying in any way that God doesn't help us. We all know that's not true. The Bible is full of verses that show He does indeed help us. From simple truths like, **My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Ps 121:2 (NIV))**. Then there is the promises of the LORD, as in, **This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; ... (Isa 49:8 (NIV))**. We also have the day-to-day helping of God. For instance, **But I have had God's help to this very day, ... (Acts 26:22 (NIV))**

"Help" is all over the Bible. But again, the phrase "God helps those that help themselves" is no place to be found. So, does this mean it's untrue? Of course not. Point being that we need to

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be somewhat open minded, or at least enough to see truths that may not be spelled out for us. The Bible does not have in it the exact wording of the phrase, but it is still very much true.

A side note and word of caution here; don't become so open minded that anything becomes a truth. We must scrutinize outside sources or things that are not directly from the Bible, by placing them against the Bible's teachings to see if they can stand up to the test.

Who Has A Watch

One more game. If you have a watch on or own a watch, I want you to NOT look at it. In fact, put it behind your back, so you can't sneak a peek. Let me ask you some question about your own watch. Remember you cannot look at it. I'll start with some easy questions first.

- 1) Is your watch digital or the old fashion kind with hands?
- 2) Even if it is digital, does it have numbers, lines, diamonds, or something else around the face of it?
- 3) Even if it is digital, what is at the 3, 6, 9, and 12 o'clock positions?
- 4) Does it have a second hand?
- 5) What is written on the face of your watch? Every thing written on it.
- 6) What position on your watch does it have the brand name?
- 7) Where was it made?
- 8) Where does it say where it was made, on the front or back?

Ok now, the moment of truth. Look at your watch and see how you did in answering these questions. So how did you do? Your watch is something you look at many times a day and I would venture to guess you got some of the questions wrong – be honest. Now that I got you to truly memorize your watch, let me take this a step farther. When you checked your answers, what time was it, to the second? You don't know, do you?

So now, what's my point here? Your watch is something you look at hundreds of times a day, every day, and you still didn't know all the answers to some simple questions. You learned something new about an object you have looked at countless times before. Also, you forgot what you just looked at seconds ago, you didn't know the exact time. Since this is true, then maybe old familiar verses of the Bible may hold new teachings for you and me. Even if you just finished an exhaustive study, you can still look at the same verse and find something you never noticed before or had forgotten. Never take the Bible for granted or assume you know what a verse is saying – even if you have it memorized.

Consider the Source

Let's say you do want to do a little studying on Passover. So where would you go to start to find out about Passover and what it means to a Christian? First, you will most likely want to know what it means to a Jew.

The Old Testament is a wonderful place to begin. Especially since that is where it all originated. Ah, but you already went over the whole book of Exodus. We all know about the tenth plague, the blood on the doorposts, the Angel of Death, and all of that. Heard it all since

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first grade Sunday School class. Remember your watch? Looking at something you've looked at before and seeing something new or that you forgot about. Give it a try.

The New Testament has plenty about Passover too. Christians call it "the last supper" and sort of forget that Jesus and the disciples were partaking in Passover – not a last supper. You don't really think that Jesus never took part in the Passover before that, do you? Every year of his life he did. Look at **Luke 2:42 (NIV) When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.** Jesus celebrated the Passover each and every year. It must have some tremendous significance and great importance if The Messiah decided to follow its regulations year after year. Since we say we will follow Jesus, well then... follow.

We also have a wealth about Passover from other Jewish writings. The customs of this Holy day are all written down. Not only is it all written down, but it is still followed to this day, the same way it was by Jesus and going back through history. Before you say that it's not a source from the Bible, remember neither is "God helps those that help themselves".

So Why Again Should We Bother

To start, and this really should be enough, as already mentioned, Jesus himself celebrated it and found it very important to do so. Not good enough? How about this one, Jesus (and us) will be celebrating it in the future. Read it for yourself, **Luke 22:15-16 (NIV) And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."** Jesus said himself that he will eat the Passover again, but not until the kingdom of God. And he will eat it with us.

Still not convinced? How about what we read in **II Cor 5:8 (NAS) Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** This shows with what kind of bread we are to celebrate the feast. Since Paul is telling us what kind of bread to celebrate with, then I would imagine we should at least be celebrating. Otherwise, the kind of bread is pointless and this verse meaningless. In case you didn't notice, it's from the New Testament too, you know, the part some Christians say is the part we are in and need to follow. (We need to follow both Old and New, but for some reason there are those that think we only need to follow the New.) How about this other verse from the New Testament; **I Cor 9:20 (NIV) To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.** We may not be under the law, but Paul tells us to become as one that is – so that we can save those that are. To do that, you must first know what is in the law. Therefore, study it.

If you're still not buying any of this then all I can say is; take another look at your watch, try and find "God helps those that help themselves" in the Bible, look around the VoydPhil.org website, and (most importantly) ask God to open your heart to his leading.