

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #13

Passover

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Welcome to the Lord of the Sabbath weekly radio program. This is Brother Kenny, founder of LawstSheep Ministries.

In the last several programs, I have detailed why the Friday death and Sunday morning resurrection of Jesus is INCONSISTENT with the Bible. We Christians have all been taught this scenario, and have probably worshipped accordingly, as a tradition of men for so long that it is difficult to accept that it may NOT be true! I am certain that either the Bible is wrong, or the scenario is wrong. I lean toward the scenario being wrong.

Coming to grips with why this traditional teaching is wrong is not a simple task. It truly takes studying a little scripture here and a little scripture there. It is like putting a puzzle of many different pieces together. It takes a willingness to accept that our English Bibles were NOT inspired by God and can be misleading in their terminology. And, it takes an in-depth understanding of the Feasts of the LORD, which few Christians have, to get the real picture the gospel writers were painting concerning the passion week of Jesus.

To help you wade through the relevant, but often confusing four gospels (which seem to conflict with one another), I have written a booklet titled, "Resurrection Week: The True Days Jesus Died and Rose!" You may find it disturbing as you struggle to understand its conclusion versus your historic understanding. But, if you thirst for God's Truth, you'll have some new facts from the Bible to ponder. I pray that you can handle the Truth!

I'll send the booklet to you free if you will ask for it and give me your mailing address. If you can make at least a \$10.00 donation to LawstSheep Ministries, it will help pay for the cost of the booklet and the radio time to make these Lord of the Sabbath broadcasts.

Send your request to LSM, PO Box 203, Delmont, PA 15626. I will repeat that address near the end of this program, so be ready. And, if you can make a donation, make your check payable to Kenny Kitzke (that is K I T Z K E) FOR the Lord of the Sabbath Program. I will make sure your free-will gift is applied for that purpose within LawstSheep Ministries.

If one DOES NOT believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead on Sunday morning, it is naturally difficult to get excited about attending a Sunday morning Easter mass or religious service. I was also surprised when I searched for a command from Jesus, or His Apostles, to remember His resurrection and found NO SUCH COMMAND. In fact there is no example AT ALL in the entire New Testament of anyone celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, much less on an Easter Sunday morning.

Celebrating Easter is a very pleasing and emotional experience. I know that. I did it for

half my life. But, I knew deep down that the death and resurrection of Jesus was too serious an event to remember with an Easter egg hunt or a family meal with a baked ham.

I wanted to do what God commanded; and do it to His glory. I wanted to honor Him and remember what His only begotten Son did for me. That is what this program is about. I will share with you what I have learned. Then you can decide if it is also right for you.

First, I searched for what we, the disciples of Jesus, were told to do in the word of God concerning His death, burial and resurrection. There is nothing more powerful in this regard than what Jesus Himself said that His Apostles and disciples should do to remember Him.

We find what He told them to do at His last supper with them in Luke 22: 19:

And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Apparently His words and request stuck with His disciples. For we find in the Church at Corinth, long after the last supper and ascension by Jesus into heaven, the Apostle Paul instructing them to keep this remembrance of Jesus in 1 Cor.11: 23-26:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, 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.

When you read your Bible carefully, I think you will find what I found. There is not one command, or request in this command, or ANYWHERE in the Bible, to remember or celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It sort of shakes you in your spiritual boots.

Here, in very plain words, we are told to eat the bread and drink the cup as a remembrance of the Lord's DEATH until He comes. It is His death we are asked to remember; and NOT His resurrection! I was shocked. Aren't you? And if this disturbs you, please do not take it up with me; take it up with God or the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. Or, take it up with your religious leaders who want you to follow their tradition. Ask them why they do what is NOT commanded by God or by Jesus. Why was there NOT a resurrection day memorial practiced by the Apostles to worship our God and Father? See if these religious men have ANY Biblical scriptures that support what they believe and do? And, if they don't, why are you doing what they say and do?

Why then, despite what the word of God declares, do most Christians celebrate a remembrance of His RESURRECTION on what they call Easter Sunday morning? At this point, let me be very clear. I see nothing wrong with rejoicing about the resurrection

of Jesus. I rejoice about the death AND the resurrection of Jesus as much as anyone.

What I do question is any religious celebration of the resurrection (especially on Easter Sunday morning) WITHOUT an equally devout remembrance of His DEATH as it was written for our instruction? There are Christians who, to their benefit, remember both His death AND His resurrection. I applaud them. They worship God on two different springtime days each year. And, they should.

However, the vast majority of Christians ONLY hold a memorial celebration on Easter Sunday. As a Roman Catholic, Easter was one of the few Church holidays that I always kept. Only YOU can determine whether this is what God has called His people to do. Only YOU can consider whether doing what God does not command even pleases Him? Or, in humility, are we mostly pleasing ourselves by following traditions of religious men?

I frankly have wondered just how the commanded remembrance of Jesus in group worship could get so twisted around from what the Bible teaches? It is a mind-boggling!

I have done the homework. There is historic evidence on just when, why and how this tradition of celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, instead of keeping the commanded Passover feast, came about. It would take several programs to cover that. I will probably do that later in the year but, for now, with Easter, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread, rapidly approaching, I do want to cover how it relates to both the death AND the resurrection of Jesus and how and why I keep this Feast instead of Easter Sunday.

One of the main reasons I became convicted to celebrate the LORD'S "Passover" feast instead of Easter Sunday is the clear emphasis in scripture on Jesus as our Passover Lamb, or the Lamb of God, or simply the Lamb who is with God in heaven in the essential Revelation of the second coming of Jesus given to the Apostle John. The role of a sacrificial lamb is prominent in God's word and plan.

The word "lamb" appears almost 100 times in our Bible. And, what we can learn specifically about a spotless and innocent lamb in God's plan for the salvation of men can fill a lifetime of sermons during the LORD'S Feast of Unleavened Bread. It helps make the celebration of this feast meaningful and instructive to the old and young alike.

I will guarantee you that if you bring a live, one-year old, cuddly white lamb in front of a group of children, and teach them about Jesus being like this lamb, you will see their eyes widen every bit as much as when they see a basket full of colorful Easter eggs and candy in the shape of chicks or bunnies. More importantly, the story of the lamb will fill their hearts with hope; not just their stomachs with sugar.

To cement my point, I will give a couple of examples from the word of God concerning sacrificial lambs in worship. The first example of group worship in the Bible is actually the famous command by God to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. When Isaac asks his

father, Abraham, on the way up the mountain that God showed them to go to, where the lamb for the worship sacrifice was, look how Abraham responds in Gen. 22: 8:

Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

Now, you know the rest of the story. After Abraham proved he was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac, a lamb miraculously appears stuck in a thicket as a substitute for Isaac. And, I would hope you would have no trouble connecting the dots of how our Father, God Almighty, was also willing to provide His only Son as a sacrifice for us. The majesty of all this takes your breath away. Yet, I can't help but wonder how often you have heard this amazing account preached at Easter?

Or, perhaps you would be in awe when you read in John 1: 29, what John the Baptist said while baptizing people in the Jordan River as he saw Jesus approaching:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Here we realize that John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, has been anointed of God to even know this about Jesus at the very start of the ministry of Jesus. Isn't our God an awesome God?

Of course, this role for Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God was ordained and prophesied long ago in Isaiah 53: 7-8:

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is silent, so he opened not His mouth.

Jesus truly was the Lamb of God. We know Peter recognized this when he wrote in 1 Pet. 1: 18-20:

...knowing that 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. He indeed was ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you...

Peter not only acknowledges the shed blood of a spotless Jesus as being like the shed blood of a sacrificial lamb, but that His sacrifice was ordained before the foundation of the world! It is all so beautiful and marvelous as God reveals the things to come to those who will listen with ears to hear.

Paul, of course, gives the most important aspect of this analogy when in 1 Cor. 5: 7 he identifies Jesus with a very special worship command:

Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Isn't it glorious to know that Christ has become our Passover Lamb? No longer would an innocent animal have to be slain to pay the penalty for sin of those who trust in Jesus as the Lamb of God. With the blood of Jesus covering our house-like bodies in which we dwell, we no longer have to fear the death angel who slew the first born of Egypt while this angel passed over the houses of those Israelites who had the blood of their Passover lamb covering their door posts.

And, last, this ancient story of the Passover lambs continues on to the time of the first coming of Jesus and on to His second coming in glory. In the Revelation, concerning the future coming of Jesus back from heaven to the earth as the King of kings, we find Jesus still referred to as the Lamb being with God. This Lamb, who was slain, is worthy of opening the seven seals of revelation while serving in His role as shepherd of the sheep of God. Jesus, the Lamb of God, reveals the future to us who know Him as Lord of the Sabbath.

So, how can we remember this Jesus as our Passover Lamb? Simple. We need to keep the Passover Feast each year until He returns in glory to begin the Kingdom of God on earth. This is really quite easy to do.

Israel was commanded to keep three feasts of the LORD each year. The first feast is the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread in the first month of the sacred year. God calls this the month of the Abib. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the month called Abib, or Nisan, which is a high holy Sabbath day of the Lord requiring a holy convocation for worship.

As the 15th day of Abib begins at sundown, the Israelites were commanded to have their holy convocation and eat a meal which included their Passover lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The command is found in Exod.12: 8:

That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

This is referring to the lambs that every household was to select on Abib 10 and slay on Abib 14, the Preparation Day for the "Passover" feast, which is actually the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

God even gives reasons for this commemoration feast including the lamb, the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread. They are all reminders of the night when the Pharaoh of Egypt finally let the enslaved Israelites leave Egypt after God's ten plagues upon the land of Egypt. It was the night the death angel passed over the Israelites whose house door was covered by the blood of the Passover lamb. Without the blood, the angel killed the first

born sons and beasts of the Egyptians, even of Pharaoh himself.

The bitter herbs remind the people of God of the bitter times of hard labor they experienced while in slavery in Egypt under their ruthless taskmasters. The unleavened bread was to remind them of how they had to leave Egypt in haste, so quickly after the first born were killed that there was no time to use yeast to make the bread rise into loaves. It was this baked unleavened bread which they would take with them the next morning leaving Egypt on that same day of Abib 15.

But, of course, the most poignant constituent in the memorial meal was the Passover lamb. It was to be slain in the afternoon of Abib 14; the Preparation Day for the Passover and then cooked that evening and eaten until it was all consumed. None was to be left until the morning and if there was any left, it was to be burned and not taken out of Egypt.

That night of Abib 15, when the Israelites ate their Passover lamb, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread is a night God commanded be observed in all their generations. We see this in Ex. 12: 42-47:

It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations. And, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

Note that a careful word study will show that the Hebrew word translated as Passover will almost always refer to the lamb. Thus, we select, slay, roast and eat the Passover. There is a different Hebrew word for the pass-over of the death angel in Egypt.

Note also, the reference to Jesus as our Passover Lamb where none of His bones were broken. There might seem to be restrictions on Christians who are not Israelites against keeping the Passover feast and eating this meal. But, a proper understanding of the Old Testament terms, compared to those in the New Testament, help support the idea of a Christian keeping this permanent ordinance of God.

Time is again flying by too fast to get into much detail, but allow me to just comment on the requirements for eating the Passover ordinance meal. One is that only circumcised males may eat the Passover lamb. Of course, in the New Testament, it is the heart of a man, and not just his foreskin, that must be circumcised with the word of God which is like a two-edged sword. And, clearly, non-Israelites could also eat the Passover Lamb if they were circumcised. Lastly, even any foreign servants of God's people, who were bought for a price, could also eat it. This is exactly the expression used for those who are members in the body of Christ in 1Cor. 6: 20.

Many fellowships and congregations (including mine) do not allow children to eat the Passover meal---meaning eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood. This is in sharp contrast with Judaism which includes the children eating all the meal during their Passover Seder. Many Christian groups who celebrate the Lord's Supper, whether as part of a Passover meal or separately, also restrict this ceremony to those who are baptized. While I have opinions about what God intended regarding such matters, I do not have time to delve into them now and would not be dogmatic concerning them in any event.

With the remaining time in this program, I will describe a celebration of the Passover meal which I have found comports with both the old and new Testament worship practices ordained by God.

I suggest a meal along with a holy convocation for group worship on the night of Abib 15 with other like-minded disciples of Jesus; whom we all accept as our Passover Lamb. We gather after the sunset of Abib 14. The hostess, if at a home, lights candles for us in accordance with the acknowledgment of Jesus as our Savior in John 8: 12.

The day of Abib 14 is a busy preparation day for the meal and the ceremony for the holy convocation that night. If we have any leavened bread in the house, we remove it. We will eat only unleavened bread for the next seven days. If we have not already bought unleavened bread, we buy it, or bake it. We make sure we have a suitable amount of wine to share, including some non-alcoholic wine for those who prefer it or who may be diabetics and be adversely affected by alcohol.

Most of the preparation for the holy convocation on the night of Abib 15 is done on Abib 14 since it is NOT a day where work is prohibited. Besides getting the food ready for the Passover meal itself, there is also the setting out of our finest dishes and silverware. An effort is made to set an attractive dinner table possibly with picked early spring flowers or a purchased flower arrangement as a center piece. And, of course, there is the chore of making sure the house is clean and in order; ready for all who participate in the ceremony.

In that meal, we include lamb, bitter herbs and, of course, unleavened bread. But, this lamb is strictly symbolic. We neither slay a lamb as was prescribed for Israel nor treat it as anything sacred during the ceremony and/or the meal. It is just one main course entree (usually very delectable and often a pleasant change for new participants) as there are usually multiple main entrees such as beef, chicken or fish.

After an opening prayer, we ask the question, "Why we are gathered here this night?" And, "What do we mean by this Passover service?" We then have a group Bible study. Notice God's command included answering and teaching your children with heads bowed in worship. This is straight from God's instruction to the head of the family in Ex. 12: 26. Fathers, are you listening?

I feel it is vitally important to bring your children to this supper and worship service. If

the congregation agrees, it is especially sweet to give the children a gift after supper so they too look forward to this special night each year of remembering how Jesus died for their deliverance from the death penalty which we all deserve as sinners. They can also enjoy their gifts as the adults turn to the most serious worship activities for the night.

After the supper, the adults who have circumcised hearts, typically those who have been baptized into Christ, now examine their hearts and then humbly wash one another's feet just as Jesus commanded in John 13. Finally, we break the unleavened bread and drink the wine which symbolizes the broken body of Jesus and His blood shed for all of us. We then sing a hymn such as "Christ is our Passover" and everyone departs to their home for a wonderful night of rest. After all it is God's first annual Sabbath day.

The night seldom ends before 10:00 PM and may approach midnight. One of the glorious elements of this commanded spring night worship observance is that you will see the full moon God put in the heavens as a sign for this celebration. I have been awestruck by going outside near midnight and it being so bright that you could drive home safely without ever turning on your car's headlights! Our God IS an awesome God!

Next week, I will describe the significance and observance of the next seven days during God's commanded Feast of Unleavened Bread. If you want the Resurrection Week booklet, write to me at LSM, PO Box 203, Delmont, PA 15626. If possible, please include a check made payable to Kenny Kitzke for the Lord of the Sabbath Program. May our God be with you and bless you until His next Sabbath Day!