

Spring Issue

TEACHING OBEDIENCE, DISCIPLESHIP, AND AGAPE TO YOUTH

2004

FOR CHURCH, HOME, AND SCHOOL

“THE PASSION OF CHRIST”

By Shelby Faith



There is a movie out called “The Passion of The Christ”, and from what I understand, it is supposed to reflect the last few hours of Jesus’ life. I have not seen it but there was tremendous pressure from different groups to not show it at all. The word “passion” from the Latin “passus” means “having suffered” or “having undergone”. I can neither defend the movie or speak evil of it, but it got me to thinking.

Jesus lived here on this earth approximately 33 1/2 years, but we know little of His life except for a few glimpses when He was born and when His parents went looking for Him when He was about 12 years of age. Even then, He told His parents that He was about His Father’s business (Luke 2:41-49). He knew at an early age why He was sent here to the earth, and He must have realized that He had a great purpose in His life. Jesus grew in wisdom and stature; and had favor with God and men (Luke 2:52).



We don’t know much more about Jesus until He was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17) and His ministry began about 30 years of age (Luke 3:21-23). He immediately was tempted (tried) by Satan, the devil, and endured 40 days of fasting (Matthew 4:1-10). From then on He preached to people to repent, and that the Kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 4:17), (Mark 1:15). He chose His 12 disciples beginning with Peter, Andrew, James and John (Matt. 5:18-22). Most of those 3 1/2 years of Christ’s ministry are contained in the rest of the Gospel accounts; he was preaching in synagogues, healing the sick and dis-

eased, blind, crippled, restored some back to life, and all the time teaching and training His disciples.

With all that Jesus Christ did during those years, the main focus of His life (the reason He came here in the flesh) would be the most important event and *it only took a few eventful hours; His last few hours.*

During those last hours He endured the worst agony that could happen to a man; beaten, bruised, His bones out of place, perhaps His eyes gouged out, humiliated and shamed before human kind, abandoned by most of His disciples and rejected, finally to be crucified on a stake with common criminals. He hung there for all to see, feeling in those last moments of life even abandoned by His Father, yet He prayed for His Father to “forgive” them for putting Him to death. By His death, He became our Savior.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, by being sacrificed in such a way, made it possible for us to be cleansed of our sins, and we no longer have to fear the second death. We have the free gift of eternal life if we walk in Jesus’ path, keeping the Commandments and being faithful till the end of our life, while we wait for our redemption.

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Personal Note

Hello Everyone,

By the time you read this, the Spring Holy Days will be upon us. These holy days are so meaningful for us. It's a time when we renew our commitment to continue walking in Christ's path and we're wiped clean all over again.

When you truly understand what these days represent you look forward eagerly to them. The whole Passover story in the Old Testament comes alive when you read how the first Passover was instituted, that Israel's cry was heard by God and a man was sent by the name of Moses to lead them out of Egypt, after 430 years of captivity. A young unblemished lamb or goat was to be chosen as the sacrifice. The blood of the animal was then to be spread over the upper doorpost and the two side doorpost. This single act spared Israel when the death angel went over the land of Egypt, killing every firstborn child and even the firstborn of the cattle.

Don't neglect teaching the children about these days. We had a special tradition we did with our church kids at this time. Our church group came together either at someone's home or we rented a hall for "The Night to be Remembered".

Of course, we had a potluck with unleavened food. After we ate, I would gather the children in a corner and explain to them it was time to tell our church group what this night was all about. I had written the story of Moses leading Israel out of Egypt, and all the plagues that came upon Egypt. Moses would go to the Pharaoh many times and say "Let my people go". I divided the story into parts, and would have the older children take turns reading the story. Every time when it was time to say "Let my people go", all the younger children would say that in unison. Then at the end of the story all the children would say "This is what this night remembers"!

Until next time,

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THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

By Santa Fe Parton

(Reprinted from TODAY, Spring Issue, 1998)

*Before the darkness gave way to the light,
Before the day's bustle took over the quiet,
The women were headed to an empty tomb,*

Because the Lord had risen - it was an empty "room".

Their hearts were heavy as with sadness they walked,

Their mood was somber as they quietly talked,

They didn't know He was gone — oh my,

*Can you imagine their faces and their look of
surprise?*

"Where is our Lord?" they were heard to say,

"Do you know where He is? Where does He lay?"

The good news was given by an angel in white,

"The Lord has been resurrected to eternal life!"

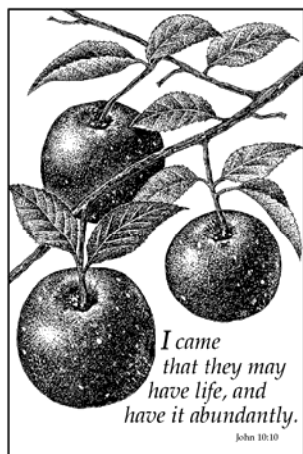
The stone had easily been rolled to the side,

The tomb was empty...

THE LORD WAS ALIVE!



“The Passions” - Continued from Page 1



Jesus' passion and death are represented in the Spring Holy Days by Passover (which in the Old Testament referred to the Israelites being passed over and spared by the angel of death as it passed over Egypt, killing all the firstborn of man and beast. Israel was spared because they had sacrificed a lamb and spread the blood over their doorposts and the sides (Exodus 12). Just as Israel had to sacrifice an animal and shed blood for their sins, Jesus be-

came that innocent lamb and His blood was shed for us, to wipe away our sins and the penalty of death forever. By doing so, He became our Passover. (I Corinthians 5:7)

(Just an aside at this juncture, Israel was commanded to spread the blood over the lintel and doorposts. ***Did you ever realize that the blood was not to be spread over the threshold?*** Just as Israel was not to trample the blood of the sacrifice under their feet, we are not to trample Christ's blood under our feet. We can, if we decide not to keep His commandments and laws, and just walk all over them without any regard. Think about it in that context, and you'll understand perhaps why the blood was not spread over the thresholds of the Israelites, as they crossed over those thresholds on their way out of Egypt. They kept the Passover just as they were instructed to, not adding to or taking away from what they were commanded to do.)

Jesus Christ is also represented in the Days of Unleavened Bread, as being unleavened, without sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin". (II Corinthians 5:21) Also in Hebrews 4:15, the Bible states, "For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." In Exodus 23:18 it states, "Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread." And of course, we are to be unleavened, put sin out of our lives, and lead a clean sanctified life before our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 5:7-8)

These Spring Holy Days mean so much more when you really do understand what they represent. Even though Passover is not considered a holy day, it certainly means so much to us. It's a time when we remember our conversion and baptism, and we re-commit ourselves once a year by accepting the unleavened bread (representing Christ's broken body) and the wine (representing His shed blood). It's a

time when we should be thinking about what our Savior had to endure on our behalf. It's our sins that put Him to death. We could only be saved and given eternal life by His supreme sacrifice. ***It's a memorial of His death! Do you still get a lump in your throat, a mist in your eyes as you reach out for that broken piece of unleavened bread and sip of wine being passed around during the Passover Service.***



We should when we recognize what this service means and how important it is that we take part in this memorial service. We have a chance to once more commit ourselves to God's way of life, and to once again know that our sins are wiped clean and forgotten by the simple act of eating a small piece of unleavened wafer and drinking a small sip of wine.

These are days that should not go by without explaining to our children why they are so important. God gives us a chance in the keeping of the Night to be Remembered. We should tell our children what happened originally to Israel, how the lamb was slain and the blood spread over the doorposts, and the people of Israel were delivered. Explain how Israel left Egypt with great joy, after being delivered from slavery. Then taking them to the scriptures in the New Testament which shows that Christ became the Passover lamb, and that He died for us. We have also been delivered from our sins and the slavery that captured us before we were converted. Now we are free from all that. God has given us the opportunity to be a part of His Family, not only us but our children, and their children, and so on and so on.



Back to the movie "The Passion of the Christ". Mel Gibson directed this movie and has taken a lot of heat from critics who have previewed it. Many think he is saying that the "Jews" are responsible for the death of Christ. These critics are saying that the movie is anti-semantic. Others who have seen the movie say that it is a literal interpretation of biblical facts about Christ's death and puts the responsibility on all of us for causing His death. We in the Churches of God know that Christ had to die to pay the penalty for our sins regardless of what group of people were used to accomplish that end. This Passover Season we can all be thankful for our Savior's sacrifice which will enable us to be a part of God's family.

(I do plan on seeing the movie. The flack will all be over with by the time you are reading this, but hopefully we will all understand how great a price Christ paid for our sins in order for us to be in the Kingdom.)

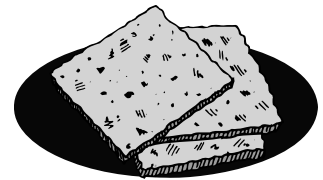
THE LAST SUPPER

Fill in the blanks in the sentences using words from the list below.
(Read Matthew 26: 18-30)

My time is at hand; I will _____ the Passover at thy house
with my _____.

Now when even was come, He sat down with the _____.

And as they were eating, Jesus took _____
and _____ it.



Take, eat; this is my _____.

And He took the cup and gave _____, and gave it to them saying, _____
ye all of it.

For this is my _____ of the new testament, which is
_____ for many for the remission of sins.



And when they had sung an _____, they went out into the
_____ of Olives.

THANKS

BREAD

HYMN

MOUNT

KEEP

TWELVE

DISCIPLES

BODY

DRINK

BLESSED

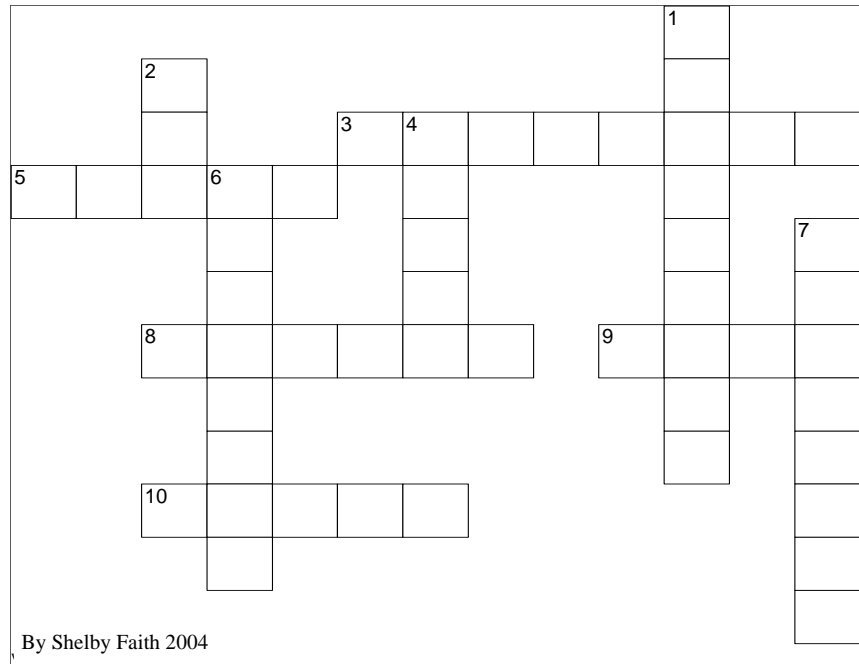
BLOOD

SHED

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OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER

Find the Hidden Words



Across

3. Young kids in family
5. The country where the Pharaoh lived
8. The country God chose as His
9. Another name for Jesus
10. Opposite of life

Down

1. What the first child born in the family is called
2. A sound a baby makes when it needs something
4. Another name for home
6. Night when the death angel passed over Egypt
7. In the middle of the night

Word Pool

House
 Death
 Passover
 Midnight
 Cry
 Israel
 Children
 Lord
 Egypt
 Firstborn

“SELF-PITY”

By Flavious Adkins

Over a hundred years ago now, Victor Hugo, a famous writer, was in exile in England from his beloved France. Every evening he would come to a cliff overlooking the sea and gaze at the setting sun. After awhile he would select a pebble, sometimes small - sometimes large, and with a good deal of satisfaction, throw it into the sea.

One evening a small girl playing nearby asked, “Sir, why do you throw the stones?” After thinking a moment, he replied, “They are not stones, my child, I am throwing self-pity into the sea.”

In this symbolic act lies a powerful lesson for the whole world today. So many of us, despite what we have in abundance and advantages, have developed a great capacity for being sorry for ourselves. We are ever alert to find cause for personal grievances in the



working of our social, economic, political or religious systems.

We like to dwell on the difficulties and dangers, the tensions and complexity of our lives. When our thoughts turn to pity for ourselves, we will find no advantage, but will incline ourselves toward deterioration. And with this will come a growing indifference to our fellow men.

In essence the basis of self-pity is selfishness. People who feel sorry for themselves can never truly be sorry for others.

Our thoughts have the power to make or unmake us. Should we not then resolve to think less of ourselves and more of others, to count our blessings, to discipline our minds against self-pity, and to appreciate what God has given us.

If we find ourselves beginning to be overtaken by an attack of private misery, perhaps we should remember old Hugo and visualize our self-pity as a stone and throw it as far from us as we possibly can.

HOW TO LIVE

Do more than exist—live.

Do more than touch—feel.

Do more than look—observe.

Do more than read—absorb.

Do more than hear—listen.

Do more than listen—understand.

By John A. Rhodes

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are looking for teachers, parents and anyone interested in sharing your ideas with others. Do you have any special teaching techniques, crafts, lessons, articles, that you would share with us? We need your help. Please write or email me at the address on Page 2. THANKS! THANKS! THANKS!

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Santa Fe Parton And YOU!!*

“Children’s children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers” Proverbs 17:6