



The Passover—What it Means to Us

By Gina and John Soliman
St. Mary and St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, Tallahassee, FL

As if our Coptic Orthodox Church doesn't have enough feasts to celebrate—why do we also celebrate the Passover — a Jewish feast? Before answering this question, let us revisit two very important Passover celebrations in the Holy Bible. The complete story of the first Passover is found in the Holy Book of Exodus 12: 1-51. Below is an excerpt from the chapter:

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put in on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night... and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on

all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord, The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood I will pass over you and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord: throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. (Exodus 12:1-14).

And so the Jews did as the Lord commanded them. At the same time, all the Israelites slaughtered an unblemished year old male lamb. Then, they placed its blood on their doors and ate the lamb that night. Those houses with the blood on their doorposts were

saved from death, whereas the Egyptians suffered the devastating loss of all firstborn humans and animals throughout their land.

But, what does this all mean to us? This was something that happened thousands of years ago to the Jewish people—what is the relevance of it all? Its relevance is evidenced hundreds of years later, when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover Feast with His disciples during the Last Supper.

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover was near. The chief priests



"This is My Body, which is given for you."



and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people.....Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.".....so they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. When the hour came, he took his place at the table and the apostles with him. 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 until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks as he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes. Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, "this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:1-21).

After reading this, the parallels between the two Passover feasts and its place in our lives becomes obvious. Just as the Jews sacrificed an unblemished lamb to save them from the plague of death, so our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was willingly sacrificed to spare us from death. Just as the Jews ate of the sacrificial lamb whose blood saved them from the plague of death, we too partake of the Holy Body and Blood of our sacrificial lamb, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, every time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

It is on account of our sins that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ offered Himself to be sacrificed in order to give us life. It is His Blood that we should place on the doorposts of our hearts, sparing us of death. It

is His Crucifixion and Resurrection that we should celebrate every day of our life. It is His immense love and mercy for us that we should never forget, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone of this great love that He allowed death to "pass over" us in order that we may live. So let us in turn "pass over" our lives into the Hand of our almighty and loving father so that we may live a life that is worthy of His calling.

Two Mites

"And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." (Luke 21:1-4)

Many times all that we can put in is "two mites" and this is not out of stinginess but out of poverty. Although these "two mites" are NOTHING but in the sight of God are MORE than all.