

The New Covenant Emblems and the Jewish Passover: Analysis and Theological Implications

A question often arises among Christians regarding the observance of the New Covenant emblems—often referred to as Communion or the Lord's Supper—and the Jewish Passover meal. Are followers of the New Covenant also required to observe the Passover? Are these two events historically and theologically linked?

Firstly, let us consider the historical context provided by the Scriptures. The Lord's Supper, instituted by Jeshua on the night before His crucifixion, is recorded in Matthew 26:26-28, where He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'This is My body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Similarly, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.' This event occurred during what is commonly understood to be a Passover meal, reflecting the timing of the Passover observance.

However, it is crucial to understand that while Jeshua's Last Supper took place in the context of the Passover, the New Covenant He instituted with the emblems of bread and wine fundamentally transformed the meaning and purpose of the observance. The Passover meal commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt, a pivotal event in Jewish history. In contrast, the emblems of the New Covenant—bread and wine—signify Christ's sacrifice, which brought about spiritual deliverance from sin and death for all who believe, not just for the people of Israel.

The Apostle Paul provides further insight into this transformation in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, 'Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' Paul emphasizes that Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed, suggesting that the observance of the Jewish Passover meal itself is not a requirement for Christians under the New Covenant. Instead, Christians are called to celebrate not the historical Passover but the fulfilled spiritual reality in Christ.

In conclusion, while the New Covenant emblems and the Jewish Passover are historically linked through the timing of their institution, they are theologically distinct. The New Covenant in Christ is not a continuation of the Passover but its fulfillment and transformation. It shifts the focus from a physical deliverance commemorated annually through a meal to a spiritual deliverance available to all through faith in Christ, commemorated through the Lord's Supper.

As followers of Christ, we are called to observe the Lord's Supper as a distinct and vital expression of our faith, celebrating our redemption through His blood and proclaiming His death until He comes again.

Scriptural References

Matthew 26:26-28 - 'While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 - 'Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'

To God, who through Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, and has given us a new and living way through His body and blood, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and forever. Amen.