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Reuven and Mary Lou Doron:

"Passover--Genuine Deliverance or Meager Relief?"

**"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."
(I Corinthians 5:7, 8)**

Passover is all about Jesus' sacrifice and our deliverance. Consequently, the Word of God admonishes us to celebrate this reality with a genuine and a sincere heart of reverence and worship, taking in the full measure of grace and truth that the Feast points to.

God believes in refreshing our salvation experience. He knows that the world, the flesh, and the devil continuously war against the new creation in us and will wear us down unless we actively remember and practice the truth. The Biblical Feasts are our reminders.

In just a few weeks, on April 12th, the entire Jewish world, as well as many Christians who worship the Lord with the Biblical Feasts, will be immersed in the celebration of Passover. On this special evening, millions of souls from the four corners of the earth will engage in elaborate ceremonies, proclaiming Scriptures, singing, dining, and teaching God's Word, all focused on the saga of Israel's great exodus from Egypt.

Remembering Our Journey

God commanded Israel, saying, **"Observe the month of Abib (Aviv – spring) and celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God.... You shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God from the flock and the herd...seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction...so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt...you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite...and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst...You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt...."** (Deuteronomy 16)

The Passover Feast is intended to inspire Israel to remember where they came from and who their deliverer is. Against the dark background of the oppression, hardships, futility and the desperation of slavery, God's work of deliverance shines brightly and dispenses fresh hope and assurance from one generation to the next. Passover tells us that God knows our fallen state, that He hears our cries, and that He will come to deliver us.

When things go from bad to worse and when all hope is gone, Passover points to our Savior, our beacon of hope and anchor of faith. It is the testimony of His rescue mission; leading a people who are storm-tossed, helpless and lost to safe harbor. Don't you need a Passover reminder every so often? God knows we all do.

Feast of Freedom--Freedom for What?

The key message of Passover was, and still is, **"Let My people go, that they may serve Me." (Exodus 8:1)** In other words, it was for the purpose of service and worship that Israel had to be set free from Egypt's oppression. Freedom, in this respect, is not an end unto itself, but a means to a Godly life of service and fruitfulness.

In fact, a careful study of the unfolding of the pre-exodus events in Egypt reveals that the Passover miracle was offered to a people who barely wanted it. Oh yes, the children of Israel cried to the Lord for help in their affliction, but their concept of help was not what God had in mind. All they wanted was RELIEF, but God was offering them DELIVERANCE.

Many of God's children are in the same boat today. We beg God for help in our CIRCUMSTANCES, but resist His deep work of deliverance in our HEARTS. The message of freedom may be popular and politically correct in western culture, but very seldom do the advocates of "freedom" ever lead the "freed" into a life of substance and meaning. Often the newly acquired freedom, be it political, economic, or spiritual, merely opens the door for those freshly liberated to walk into the next trap.

The fact is that freedom for the sake of freedom is useless. Freedom is but a license to become; the rest is choice! Whatever a person or a nation may become, once freed from oppression or deception, is entirely subject to their choices. The nations that the U.S. has liberated in recent years are in that balance today. As is obvious to any honest observer, freedom alone, without taking on the yoke of God, does not solve ones' problems. In fact, the Lord warned us sternly that a freed soul which is not filled with God's substance will eventually end up seven times worse than in its original state. **(Matthew 12:43-45)**

What Is True Deliverance?

As was Israel in Egypt, so are many of us today. We wallow in oppression in the enemy's grip. We cry out for relief. God sends deliverance to not only break our yoke, but also our propensities to become enslaved again--we fuss and complain for fear of change and loss of the familiar--God "turns up the heat" to help us make up our minds--and finally, we are delivered almost in spite of ourselves! Some of you are in this very fix right now, "negotiating" with God over how delivered you really want to be. Pray that when you entreat God for RELIEF, you will also be made willing to ACCEPT His DELIVERANCE. That is what the Passover lesson is all about.

True deliverance, as the Feast of Passover teaches, does not come without conflict and drastic changes. The newly acquired liberty always calls for responsibility, faith, and accountability to a holy God. In Israel's case, deliverance from slavery involved an initial deterioration of their conditions and extreme changes in lifestyle, location, and priorities. The nation was evacuated overnight from its

400-year roots in the fertile land of Goshen and was thrust into an extended wilderness trek. Even more, true deliverance will ultimately lead the liberated soul into purposeful and intense warfare in order to clear the Promised Land and take possession of God's promises, as was the case with Israel in Canaan.

Applying these principles to our lives, one can better understand why the Apostle charged us to, "...celebrate the feast...with...sincerity and truth." He said so, knowing that our instinctive carnal tendency will always follow the "path of least resistance" and keep us content with temporary relief rather than experiencing genuine deliverance and transformation. Is your Passover experience one of lasting deliverance or merely temporary relief?

Jesus--The Lamb of God

The historic Passover, though nearly 3,500 years old, is rich with relevant substance for us who live today in the reality of Christ's work of salvation. The ten plagues, which brought down Egypt's gods, speak of the spiritual warfare that is constantly raging in the Heavens on our behalf. Pharaoh's calculated hardness of heart still served God's purposes in magnifying the power of the Lord and drawing His often-reluctant people to His "exit strategy." The bitter herbs; the roasted meat; the blood of a perfect lamb; the unleavened bread; the terrible night of watching the angel of death passing over the Hebrew homes; the morning exodus carrying Egypt's treasures; and the enemy's last ambush by the Red Sea, all tell of God's great work of salvation and the enemy's fierce obsession to keep us captive, and all of these things point to Jesus.

Not only is the Passover a defining feature in Israel's faith and identity, it was also at the core of the Lord's own calling and mission when He came to earth to save us. Of all of the Lord's majestic names and titles, He was prophetically recognized and celebrated as the Lamb of God when He first emerged from his hidden Galilean life and stepped onto center stage in Judea. Baptizing Israel at the Jordan while preparing the way of the Lord, John saw Jesus descending to the riverbank and proclaimed, **"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ...I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."** (John 1:29-34) Though slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), the Son of God had to step through the portal of space and time to shed God's blood on our behalf at Jerusalem. His sacrificial death was determined from all eternity and had to take place on the Feast of Passover in order to fulfill all prophecy and righteousness.

Jesus identified Himself as the Lamb of God not only at His initial public appearing at the Jordan, but also at the closing of His earthly mission. It was during the Passover meal at the upper room in Jerusalem that He lifted up the cup, broke the bread, and declared the New Covenant that was soon to be confirmed between Heaven and earth in His own person, and at His own expense (see Luke 22:15-16). It is the blood of God's own Passover Lamb that delivers His people from the ultimate Egypt; our slavery to sin and to the curse of death.

That Lamb has not disappeared following His death and resurrection. He is in Heaven, and His blood is still fresh upon the altar which is made without hands. Caught up in the Spirit, John described what he saw, saying, **"... every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea... I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, {be} blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.'"** (Revelation 5:13) Not only was the Lamb of God in the heart of Heaven's worship at the time of that vision, but John prophesies that He will be there forever.

Seeing the holy city in eternity, John said, **"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband...Her brilliance was like a very costly stone...I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb..."** (Revelation 21)

For all eternity, the Lamb of God shall live to make intercession and shall remain Heaven's centerpiece. For all eternity, His sacrificial work will continue to uphold and secure God's new creation. Passover, the Feast of sacrifice, deliverance, and freedom is our everlasting celebration.

Worship the Lamb

This is the season to celebrate Jesus our Savior and worship Him, God's perfect Lamb. He, who brought Israel out of Egypt and sustained her during 4,000 turbulent years, is well able to save and deliver you as well, according to His word of promise.

Passover is meant to help you remember! Remember God; remember His love and faithfulness; remember the Lord's sacrificial death at Calvary; remember His power and intervention in your life yesterday; and remember to trust Him for tomorrow. Whether you celebrate the Feast or not, be sure to trust and worship the Lord as your own Passover Lamb. He, who was slain on that critical evening, paid the price for our sin, brought us out of bondage--is leading us now to the Promised Land. Egypt is behind you, and the Kingdom is within sight. This is not the time to give up!

Blessed Passover season to you,

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