**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #14**

**How a Community Should Celebrate Passover**

**Part 2: Corinthians 5:7-13**

***Corinthians*** *5****:7*** *Clear out the old leaven so that you may become a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.* ***8*** *Let us, then, celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, or with the leaven of wickedness and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

***9*** *I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people,* ***10*** *not at all meaning the immoral people of this world, or the greedy and swindling, or idolaters, since then you would have to leave this world.* ***11*** *But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother, if he is sexually immoral or greedy or an idolater, slanderer, drunkard, or swindler; do not even eat with such a one.*

***12*** *For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those within, you are to judge?*

***13*** *God will judge those outside. “Drive out the evil one from among you.”*

**Christ our Passover**

**VERSE 7 –** *“Clear out the old leaven so that you may become a new batch.”*

The Feast of the Unleavened Bread and that of Passover under the old law demanded that the Jews “clear out” (or “clean out”) all old leavening, and in this context it means not only purification, but also the exclusion of what contaminates, so that the community may become ***neon phyrama***, “a new mixture,” i.e., a new batch of dough. The use of “leaven” (yeast; a rising agent) is symbolically used. The point is that the Christians of Roman Corinth are to clear out from their midst that which has made it impossible for them to be celebrating the New Passover. One corrupt member in their midst is enough to make the whole community contaminated.

The Passover was celebrated at sundown marking the beginning of the14th day of the month of Nisan, the first month in the Babylonian/Jewish year (round March to April, this year 2013 it will be the week of 25th March -2nd April). The Passover lamb, slain in the late afternoon hours of 13 Nisan, was roasted and eaten in a family circle at sundown (Lev 23:5-8). Everything leavened had to be “cleaned out” and removed from every dwelling (Exod 12:15; Deut 16:4. For further details, see, David Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*, Volume 2A, 2011, p115ff.)

The meal was not only eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Exod 12:8), but only that kind of bread that might still be eaten for seven days thereafter (Exod 12:17–20; 23:15; 34:18). This seven-day period was called technically “the feast of Unleavened Bread.” In time, however, “Passover” became the name for all eight days (Deut 16:1–4; Ezek 45:21–25; Josephus, Ant. 6.9.3 §423; 20.5.3 §106; see Luke 22:1, 7). The Passover and the Feast are treated as one. The two feasts are mentioned together in 2 Chronicles 35:17.

The Corinthian Christians must recognize that they themselves are really “unleavened,” i.e., already cleansed of the old leaven of their former life. Because Christ is our Passover and is the Paschal Lamb, Christians made their Exodus and have entered into a new Exodus through the death of a new Paschal Lamb. Therefore, they must now get rid of this corrupting element as well as of all arrogance.

**VERSE 7 (continued) –** *“For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.”*

1. We must not forget that the Passover was deliverance from death. Christ redeemed us from death (Col 2 and Eph 2).
2. There was no wrath of God over the Lamb or over Israel.
3. The judgment was not even for the whole of Egypt but on the “first-born.”

**The Side Effects of Rituals**

A Letter from Philemon

Brother George,

May the Lord Jesus who is our life that no one can take from us nor any one can add anything to him, open your eyes and illuminate your heart to see that all rituals must not take us away from the love of the Father in Christ or make us focus on our being only and forget the Lord. Paul the wise speaks to the Corinthians and says that they have to be the unleavened bread itself; the bread that Israel eat the old Passover. We too have to be the Eucharistic bread, the living gospel, the throne of God in this universe and as you said one day, “the Christ – Shekinah.” Rituals must not become some thing we do in order to be prisoners of our own ego and busy with the order of the services.

Be on your guard of a ritual that makes you reflect on yourself and can plant in you false self-awareness, which is formed by the ritual leaving out the presence of the Lord who is our true life.

Be of a good courage and lean on the Lord Jesus who is the only Mediator and is our only hope of being accepted by the Loving Father.

Philemon a sinner

(No date) 1969

**Christ Offered Himself**

To celebrate the Passover, that is Christ himself, the congregation has to be ready by being as ***azymoi***, “unleavened,” for Christ has been sacrificed which was used in (LXX) Exodus12:21 for the “slaughter of the Passover lamb” (cf. Deut 16:2, 6). Please notice the “Passive Voice” because it was Christ who offered himself. The NT used two ways for this self-offering:

1. John 10:18, *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own will. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father*.”
2. Romans 3:19ff, “*But now, without the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus*.”

**The Pascal Lamb**

Paul regards Jesus Christ, who died on the cross at Passover, as the Passover Lamb of a new dispensation.

This is not just one unique text in Paul. It is among other NT motifs that enhance for us the great work of our Lord, (see of Christ as Passover lamb in 1 Pet 1:19; John 19:36; Rev 5:6–12). According to Jewish custom, one had to clean the house of anything leavened in order to celebrate Passover; but Paul inverts the procedure, saying that Christ has already been sacrificed, and so unleavened Corinthian Christians must now clean out all corrupting material in their life, like old leaven, from their midst.

**Our Passover**

This name, “our Passover Lamb,” or simply, “our Passover,” comes from the Greek NT noun ***pascha*** and can denote either the feast or the animal. The etymology popularly means “passing over,” i.e., the sparing, of the Hebrew first-born during the night of deliverance of the Hebrews from bondage, when Yahweh slew all other firstborn in the land of Egypt (Exod 12:13, 29). This Pascal Lamb does not allow us to celebrate the Passover of the Jews. As we have just explained, Christ is a very different Passover.

**The New Leaven**

**VERSE 8** **–** *“Let us, then, celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, or with the leaven of wickedness and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”*

The words “unleavened” and all the “old leaven” are now explained by the synonymous pair of words, “*wickedness and evil,*” This is a phrase derived from the LXX Wisdom book of Sirach 25:17, 19, or Wisdom of Joshua ben Sira, commonly called the Wisdom of Sirach, or simply Sirach, and also known as the Book Ecclesiasticus. It is a work from the early 2nd century B.C. (approximately 200-175 B.C.) written by the [Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish) scribe [Joshua ben Sirach](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joshua_ben_Sirach&action=edit&redlink=1) of [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem). The book was not accepted into the [Hebrew Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible) and as a result the original Hebrew text was not preserved in the Jewish canon. However, various original Hebrew versions have since been recovered. There are numerous citations of Sirach in the [*Talmud*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud) and works of [rabbinic literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinic_literature).

In celebrating the new Passover, Christians must still consume “unleavened bread,” now similarly explained by the pair, “*sincerity and truth*,” i.e., sincerity of conduct and character (2 Cor 1:12; 2:17). These qualities must replace the boasting and arrogance which enabled them to tolerate the “wickedness and evil” among them, and so come to the knowledge of the truth.

**Sincerity of Christ and his Ttruth**

1. We have to come to terms with the central fact in Christian teaching, that there are no virtues outside Christ because “Jesus is all the virtues incarnate” says Isaac the Syrian that is nothing can be true and seen as true except in Christ.
2. Sincerity according to the [Oxford English Dictionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_English_Dictionary) and most scholars state that *sincerity* from *sincere* is derived from the Latin *sincerus* meaning *clean, pure, sound* (1525–35). *Sincerus* may have once meant "one growth" (not mixed), from *sin-* (one) and *crescere* means to grow.

**No Division in Christ**

“Christ does not hate deception and love sincerity; our Jesus is far from being a divided person between darkness and light.” – Philemon

**Corinthians and the Passover**

Did the Corinthians in the days of Paul celebrate the feast of Passover in a Christian way?

Our great German scholar Joachim Jeremias observed in an article edited by Gerhard Kittel (*Theological Dictionary of the Greek NT*, Volume 5:901), that very likely the Christians did celebrate Passover. If this is true then Paul may be using the image of a Christian Passover to make his point. Has Paul used this image because he was writing this letter near the time of Passover? Some commentators have raised the question, appealing to 1 Corinthians 16:8, where he speaks of staying in Ephesus until Pentecost. Perhaps, then, the image is derived from the time of the composition of the letter (C K Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp., 129–30)

**Appearances**

**VERSE 9 –** *“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.”* This earlier letter (prior to 1 Corinthians) to which he refers here is no longer extant. Paul and the church are not concerned about outsiders (verse 12), but specifically about Christians in Corinth who have been involved in social relations with people who are ***pornoi***, “sexually immoral.” Paul refers to “mix up together with, mingle,” and echoes similar OT expressions of association (LXX Hos 8:7; Ezek 20:18). Hence be careful what your associations look like.

**This World**

**VERSE 10 –** *“Not at all meaning the immoral people of this world, or the greedy and swindling, or idolaters.”*

The sexually immoral are only one class of wrongdoers in “this world,” and Paul adds three other classes of them: “the greedy,” governed by a vice that Paul will condemn in Romans 1:29, as they are already in Sir 14:9; “the rapacious, robbers, swindlers,” who were to be excluded from Israel (Deut 24:7); and “idolaters” (worshipers of pagan gods, criticized by Jews as well, Deut 17:5–7). The three classes of wrongdoers will reappear in verse 11, where others will be added, and in some are named in Ephesians 5:3, 5. If Christians were to boycott all sinners then you would have to leave the cosmos (i.e., “*this world”)* as the habitation of humanity, where Christians live together with such wrongdoers. Recognizing that Corinthian Christians share this world with such people, Paul nowhere advocates that Christians live in a ghetto, or flee to a desert retreat, as did Essenes who lived in the desert round the dead sea maybe at the same time when John the Baptist was active. Both of these men withdrew from the cities to the desert.

**Note: Mennonites and Amish**

In our history we have the Mennonites, which are the church communities of the [Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) [Anabaptist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anabaptist) denominations named after [Menno Simons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menno_Simons) (1496–1561), and the Hutterites ([German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language): *Hutterer*), a communal branch of [Anabaptists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anabaptist) who, like the [Amish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amish) and [Mennonites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mennonites), trace their roots to the [Radical Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical_Reformation) of the 16th century and the death of their namesake [Jakob Hutter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_Hutter) in 1536. Nearly extinct by the 18th and 19th centuries, the Hutterites found a new home in North America. Over 125 years their population grew from 400 to around 42,000. So also the Amish ([*ah-mish*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3APronunciation_respelling_key)*,* [Pennsylvania Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_German_language); *Amisch*, German) are a group of traditionalist Christian church fellowships that form a subgroup of the [Mennonite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mennonite) churches. The Amish are known for [simple living](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simple_living), [plain dress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plain_dress), and reluctance to adopt many [conveniences of modern technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_conveniences). The history of the Amish church began with a [schism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schism_%28religion%29) in Switzerland within a group of Swiss and [Alsatian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alsace) [Anabaptists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anabaptist) in 1693 led by [Jakob Ammann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_Ammann). Those who followed Ammann became known as Amish”

**Confession of a Hermit**

“Here after many years, I have discovered that my monastery is my heart and my cell is my love and its door is my will.” – Philemon

**Association**

**VERSE 11 –** “*But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother …*” (literally, “*if someone named a brother.*”)

Paul says “*now,”* hence the present tense in English translations, but it has the sense of permanence. Again, “brother,” means “Christian.” Paul’s advice is to avoid close association with any Christian who exhibits one of the six characteristics listed in the verse: “*sexually immoral or greedy or an idolater, slanderer, drunkard, or swindler.”*

Modern readers of Paul misunderstand this, for in the days of Paul social life was very close, much closer than it is now. People used to meet in public bathes, not just in the market, theaters, and in courts. Paul means not to share the social life that may lead to sexual immorality or other sins. This Pauline injunction may seem to conflict with the practice of Jesus recorded in Mark 2:15–17 – his eating with “toll-collectors and sinners” – that scandalized the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus’ reason is explained: “*I came not to summon the righteous, but sinners*,” i.e., those who could be converted to his cause. Paul’s attitude however, is concerned with the social status of the Christian community, tainted unfortunately by the moral failure of one who was already a convert. Cf. Paul’s reaction to Peter’s refusing to eat with Gentiles in Galatians 2:11–14.

**Judgment**

**VERSE 12 –** *“For what have I to do with judging outsiders?”*

Paul does not want Christians to withdraw from the world in which they live and in which they have become followers of Jesus Christ. The judgment of the world is a warning to Christians who might indulge in such vices. Paul was not judging non-Christians, not even the “wife” (see below) from 1 Corinthians 5:1, which we discussed last week. Paul follows the teaching of Jesus (Matt 7:1), “*Do not judge, lest you be judged*!” Those who are outside the church have to be judged by God, but the cleansing of the community is necessary for its witness.

So when Paul calls for judgment, he is not necessarily setting up a church court in Corinth, even though this passage is sometimes seen as the sociological beginning of church discipline; that can be admitted, but we are still far away from what came to be called canon law.

**The Outside Wife**

**VERSE 13 –** *God will judge those outside …”*

Or “God judges those outside,” because the verb ***krinei*** (judge) can be taken as present tense as in the RSV or future tense as in the NAB, depending how it is accented. Paul leaves the judgment of non-Christians to God, who is their Creator, for that is the divine prerogative. In 1 Corinthians 6:2, however, Paul says nothing in this passage about the “father’s wife,” who has been lingering with the Christian son; she was apparently an “outsider.” “*God will judge fornicators and adulterers*.” (Heb 13:4)

**VERSE 13 (continued) –** “*Drive out the evil one from among you.*”

Paul concludes this discussion of sexual immorality with a modified quotation of Deuteronomy 17:7. Such an injunction is found also in LXX Deuteronomy 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; and 24:7 (cf. 13:6). Thus, Paul uses the OT to strengthen his judgment previously expressed in verses (2, 5, 7, 11). The Christian community is obliged to preserve its sanctity by excluding the wrongdoer from its midst, which is the main point of chapter 5.

Paul’s final instruction is thus similar to the punishment of Roman law: the wrongdoer no longer belongs to the body of those who are being saved, but to those who are perishing.

**On the Passover**

Selections from Malito of Sardis (2nd century)

1. First of all, the Scripture about the Hebrew Exodus has been read and the words of the mystery have been explained as to how the sheep was sacrificed and the people were saved.

2. Therefore, understand this, O beloved: The mystery of the Passover is new and old, eternal and temporal, corruptible and incorruptible, mortal and immortal in this fashion:

3. It is old insofar as it concerns the law, but new insofar as it concerns the gospel; temporal insofar as it concerns the type, eternal because of grace; corruptible because of the sacrifice of the sheep, incorruptible because of the life of the Lord; mortal because of his burial in the earth, immortal because of his resurrection from the dead.

4. The law is old, but the gospel is new; the type was for a time, but grace is forever. The sheep was corruptible, but the Lord is incorruptible, who was crushed as a lamb, but who was resurrected as God. For although he was led to sacrifice as a sheep, yet he was not a sheep; and although he was as a lamb without voice, yet indeed he was not a lamb. The one was the model; the other was found to be the finished product.

5. For God replaced the lamb, and a man the sheep; but in the man was Christ, who contains all things.

6. Hence, the sacrifice of the sheep, and the sending of the lamb to slaughter, and the writing of the law – each led to and issued in Christ, for whose sake everything happened in the ancient law, and even moreso in the new gospel.

7. For indeed the law issued in the gospel–the old in the new, both coming forth together from Zion and Jerusalem; and the commandment issued in grace, and the type in the finished product, and the lamb in the Son, and the sheep in a man, and the man in God.

8. For the one who was born as Son, and led to slaughter as a lamb, and sacrificed as a sheep, and buried as a man, rose up from the dead as God, since he is by nature both God and man.

9. He is everything: in that he judges he is law, in that he teaches he is gospel, in that he saves he is grace, in that he begets he is Father, in that he is begotten he is Son, in that he suffers he is sheep, in that he is buried he is man, in that he comes to life again he is God.

10. Such is Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen.

66. When this one came from heaven to earth for the sake of the one who suffers, and had clothed himself with that very one through the womb of a virgin, and having come forth as man, he accepted the sufferings of the sufferer through his body which was capable of suffering. And he destroyed those human sufferings by his spirit, which was incapable of dying. He killed death, which had put man to death.

67. For this one, who was led away as a lamb, and who was sacrificed as a sheep, by himself delivered us from servitude to the world as from the land of Egypt, and released us from bondage to the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh, and sealed our souls by his own spirit and the members of our bodies by his own blood.

68. This is the one who covered death with shame and who plunged the devil into mourning as Moses did Pharaoh. This is the one who smote lawlessness and deprived injustice of its offspring, as Moses deprived Egypt. This is the one who delivered us from slavery into freedom, from darkness into light, from death into life, from tyranny into an eternal kingdom, and who made us a new priesthood, and a special people forever.

69. This one is the Passover of our salvation. This is the one who patiently endured many things in many people: This is the one who was murdered in Abel, and bound as a sacrifice in Isaac, and exiled in Jacob, and sold in Joseph, and exposed in Moses, and sacrificed in the lamb, and hunted down in David, and dishonored in the prophets.

70. This is the one who became human in a virgin, who was hanged on the tree, who was buried in the earth, who was resurrected from among the dead, and who raised mankind up out of the grave below to the heights of heaven.

71. This is the lamb that was slain. This is the lamb that was silent. This is the one who was born of Mary, that beautiful ewe-lamb. This is the one who was taken from the flock, and was dragged to sacrifice, and was killed in the evening, and was buried at night; the one who was not broken while on the tree, who did not see dissolution while in the earth, who rose up from the dead, and who raised up mankind from the grave below.

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