

# LET GOD ARISE!

*The Wondrous Cross #8*

*Prayer Guide for Kingdomtide • Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis*



## Keeping the Feasts of Christ

1 Cor. 5.6-8

### Hallelujah! Our Passover Lamb

*Lynn DeShazo*

The Lamb has been slain, his blood has been shed  
The first-born of God in suffering and death  
Has paid for our sins and broken the chains of fear  
The angel of death has passed over us  
We're safe in God's house, we're under His blood  
Oh, the cup of redemption was emptied for us!

Hallelujah! Our Passover Lamb has been slain  
Hallelujah! We're delivered from bondage and shame  
By the blood of Yeshua and God's mighty hand  
We're out of our slavery and into the land  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Oh sing to the Lord, and tell of His might  
He led us to freedom, from darkness to light  
And the horse and the rider  
He's thrown down into the sea!  
A table's prepared, he calls us to dine  
To eat of the bread, and drink of the wine  
Oh, the gift of salvation is yours and it's mine!

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**Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis,**  
*(Ph.D., U of Iowa) is the  
Director of World  
Impact's Urban Ministry  
Institute. He also serves  
as World Impact's Vice  
President of Leadership  
Development.*

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### **Christ, the Perfect Antitype of Hebrew Sacrifice**

AS AN opportunity to deepen our meditation and dialogue together on this year's theme of *The Wondrous Cross* we decided that we would focus upon Christ in the OT offerings, feasts, and festivals. By concentrating on these great foreshadowings of our Lord's person and work we hope to more fully appreciate the ways in which Christ's incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection can and must shape our lives and ministries. We want to know him more intimately to serve him more faithfully.

We continue to learn that as we serve the living Christ in the cities of America and beyond, we must stay in tune with the song of Scripture: Jesus of Nazareth is the subject and master theme of the Bible, the Firstborn from the dead, and Head of the Church, the key to the message of God's Kingdom. In the Old Testament, numerous foreshadowings were provided of his glory and majesty. In the messianic prophecies, the salvation promises, the historical figures, objects, types and analogies, the theophanies (i.e., appearances of the angel of the Lord), and the moral precepts of the Law we see our Lord. In the priestly office and sacrifices, in the feasts and festivals of God's people, in the major characters of the OT, and in the precious promises of the prophets, Jesus is seen and to him they all bear witness. He is the central message and heart of the Gospel and his saving redemption is the truth the Spirit wants to communicate to all peoples, to the very end of the earth. Yes, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 4.11)!

Perhaps more than any other writer in the New Testament, the author of Hebrews makes plain how our Lord Jesus is the all-sufficient revelation given to us from the Father, whose person and work were clearly foreshadowed in the Levitical system of offerings and the priesthood:

*Heb. 9.9-15 – (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, [10] but deal only with food and drink and*



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*various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. [11] But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) [12] he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. [13] For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, [14] how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. [15] Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.*

Indeed, Christ has appeared as a high priest for us, offering his own blood before the Father as our perfect substitutionary sacrifice for sin, establishing himself as both Lord and Christ. In all the offerings Christ is seen: his absolute sanctification and atoning sacrifice in the burnt offering, his glorious majesty in the grain offering, his matchless peace for us in the peace offering, his substitutionary sacrifice in the sin offering, and his restoration of relationship in the trespass offering. Christ is our Passover (1 Cor. 5.6-8), our Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5-7), the one who “tabernacled” among us as the Word made flesh (John 1.14-18). He is the true King of Israel, David’s great Son and governor of the Lord (Mic. 5.2), our conquering Victor who has overcome the powers of sin and death, defeated Satan and his minions, rescinded the curse, and secured for all who believe in him eternal redemption by means of his shed blood on the Cross (cf. Heb. 8.10-12). In all these and countless other wonderful types and figures in the OT we see our Lord Jesus’ glory: Christ’s holiness and incarnation, his perfect sinless life, underwrite his sacrifice of infinite value,



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“who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9.14).

Truly, Christ is declared by Paul to be our Passover, the substance of that ancient memorial sacrifice revealed clearly to all the world to see. He is the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1.29), and, as a sacrifice to God, Jesus of Nazareth offered an “unblemished” atoning substitutionary death in our place. The majesty of our Lord’s glory cannot truly be fully understood; his perfect life and sacrifice are precisely why the Gospel is so potent to be the power of God for salvation to any and all who believe, to the Jew and to the Gentile (cf. Rom. 1.16-17).

We ought to stand in awe as we behold the perfections of our Lord displayed so clearly in the Scriptures. We have a high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses because he has in every respect been tempted as we are, yet he is without sin (Heb. 4.15). Yes, he is our high priest—holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens (Heb. 7.26). At his announcement of his birth, the angel declared to Mary that “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy— the Son of God” (Luke 1.35). As he grew and matured, he was never left alone but was in unbroken fellowship with his Father, “for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8.29). The devil had no claim on him (John 14.30), for this gentle Nazarene fulfilled all the glorious promises and filled out all the wonderful pictures of Messiah: is the holy servant of the Most High God (Acts 4.27). He who gave himself for us knew no sin (2 Cor. 5.21) but redeemed us by his precious blood like a lamb without blemish or spot (1 Pet. 1.19). The offering Jesus of Nazareth made for us, unlike the priests being themselves so finite and prone to sin, along with the sacrifices impossible to take away guilt, was effective. Our Lord committed no sin, neither was deceit ever found in his mouth (1 Pet. 2.22;



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1 John 3.5); he is the perfect sacrifice for humankind, once for all, forevermore.

### **The Tabernacle Offerings as a Living Visual Aid of the “Really real”: A Copy of the Heavenly Things**

The offerings, feasts, and festivals of the OT enable us to see our Lord in concrete and vivid ritual action; as the fourth and fifth stanzas of Charles Wesley’s wonderful hymn *O Thou Whose Offering on the Tree* suggests, these sacrifices pointed to Christ who fulfilled their promise and completed their foreshadowing:

*Forward they cast a faithful look  
On Thy approaching sacrifice;  
And thence their pleasing savor took,  
And rose accepted in the skies.*

*These feeble types and shadows old,  
Are all in Thee, the Truth, fulfilled;  
We in Thy sacrifice behold  
The substance of those rites revealed.*

These sacrifices, priestly offices, feasts, and observances all point to something beyond themselves, to the true substance and reality in Christ for which they serve as a signal and copy:

*Heb. 8.3-5 – For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. [4] Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. [5] They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”*



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The heart of the Gospel we display and proclaim among the urban poor in the cities of the world is that because of the sovereign love of God, Christ Jesus our Lord offered himself without blemish to God as the fulfillment of the sacrifices of God, as our redemption and atoning payment, as our Passover, as Paul testifies in 1 Corinthians 5.6-8:

*Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? [7] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. [8] Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Here the Apostle Paul makes an explicit connection between the Jewish feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and our Christian spiritual formation. What is the link? *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

The Passover was perhaps the most important of Israel's three great Festivals: Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Deut. 16 and Lev. 23). The feast occurred on 14th Nisan (our April) in the evening, and the next seven days were called the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23.5-6). The term "Passover" comes from the Hebrew word *pesah* (from *pasah* which means to "leap over," "an overstepping," or figuratively, to "spare, show mercy"). The paschal sacrifice literally resulted in the Lord's stepping over his people for judgment once the blood of the lamb was placed on the jambs and door posts (cf. Exod. 12.21, 27, 48; 2 Chron. 30.15).

This powerful re-enactment was packed with spiritual significance for the devout Jewish worshiper. God's protection from the judgment on the firstborn, the nation's deliverance from Egypt, their preparation for the journey to the Promised Land, and their adoption as God's kingdom people



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are all depicted in the Passover meal and celebration! Paul suggests that Christ, the Savior of the world, has become the “Passover” for us today, in the Church of Christ!

Paul exhorts the believers in Corinth, therefore, to “celebrate the festival” now in a new way, not with ritual sacrifice and annual observance, but transformation of our lives through the Spirit. He warns them to beware of the power of leaven (sin, hypocrisy), reminding them that a little leaven (of compromise, of arrogance, of toleration of immorality) leavens the whole lump. He affirms boldly Christ as our Passover sacrifice, one which calls for a proper response of repentance and renewal: “we really are unleavened; let’s act that way!” He then exhorts the Corinthians to celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. What matters now that Christ has come is not ritual sacrifice or liturgical rightness, but genuine transformation, repenting from malice and evil, and living in truth, godliness, and sincerity. Never, never, never are we to tolerate the old leaven again: “the leaven of malice and evil,” for in Christ we have been transformed:

*1 Cor. 6.9-11 – Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Urban ministry is not just activity, even positive acts of love and justice done woodenly to those who don’t even recognize what we’re doing. We go forth for we are the people of God: Christ our Passover has been sacrificed, and we celebrate the festival, banishing all worldliness and ungodliness because we belong to the risen Lord, and are members of his community of faith.



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Who we are in the city is far more important than what we do. Actually, we do what we do precisely because we have been washed, justified, and redeemed by our Lord, and belong to the Father. We are strangers and exiles in the earth (Heb. 11.13), and (like the Petra song says) “we are not of this world” (John 17.16).

Now through faith in Christ we know that our sins are forgiven, we are instruments of peace, vessels of compassion and service, set free to represent Christ’s interests as his ambassadors in the world (2 Cor. 5.20). We can, as Paul suggests, minister with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, for we belong to Christ (2 Cor. 1.12). Redeemed from the curse, we can care for those who are victims of it still (Gal. 3.13-14), and feeding on the paschal Lamb of Christ, we have strength for the journey and power to live as servants of Christ for others.

As the Passover lamb’s blood that was sprinkled on the door posts and lintel provided protection from God’s judgment, so Christ as our Passover Lamb saves his people from their sins. And too, as the Passover lamb’s roasted body was eaten in haste with unleavened bread and bitter herbs to provide Israelites strength to commence their journey to the Promised Land, so Christ is the strength for our lives! Christ is literally our very life: apart from him we can do and are nothing at all (John 15.4-5; Col. 3.11). By faith, we can keep the feasts—and be transformed to serve the world.

This series for us here at TUMI means more than filling time during the extended Season after Pentecost period. Rather, we are more and more coming to see that Christ Jesus is the key not just for salvation but for sanctification, not just for worship but for spiritual formation, not just for growth but for witness and life. All that we as servants of God require to survive and to be sustained on our pilgrim journeys we can now receive from the daily supply of Christ himself, whose strength is perfected in our weakness:



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*2 Cor. 12.9-10 – But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

The Christianization of the OT shadows of Christ means that we acknowledge Christ as our all-sufficient Passover for salvation and for strength, and that we celebrate the festival not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Remember who you are—and be transformed forever. ■

**The Season after Pentecost (Kingdomtide):  
A Season of Christ’s Hope: Keeping the Feasts of Christ**

*1 Cor. 5.6-8 – Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? [7] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. [8] Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

**Biblical Principle of the Season**

Let us boldly re-affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is the subject and master theme of the Bible, the Firstborn from the dead, and Head of the Church, the key to the message of God’s Kingdom. His matchless incarnation and perfect work of redemption were foreshadowed in the Old Testament’s messianic prophecies, salvation promises, historical figures, objects, types and analogies, and moral precepts. In the priestly office and sacrifices, in the feasts and festivals of God’s people, in the major characters of the OT, and in the precious promises



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of the prophets, Jesus was prefigured—to him they all bear witness. He is the central message and heart of the Gospel and his saving redemption is the truth the Spirit wants to communicate to all peoples, to the very end of the earth.

Let us keep the feasts, i.e., to affirm Christ as our Passover and “celebrate the festival” not with ritual sacrifice and annual observance, but in living transformed lives through the Spirit. We must beware of the power of leaven (sin, hypocrisy), knowing that a little leaven (of compromise, of arrogance, of toleration of immorality) leavens the whole lump. Furthermore, let’s celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

*1 Pet. 1.18-19 – knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

#### **An Example of This Principle: Paul’s Exhortation to the Corinthians**

*1 Cor. 5.6-8 – Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? [7] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. [8] Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*



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