



# The G.E.M.

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The Grace Electronic Magazine

April 2011

## WALK IN SALVATION

The seasons are definitely in a state of change at the moment. The hot summer days seem to be fewer and far between, with more days of cooler, wet weather instead.

With life changing around us on such a rapid and regular basis, there is one thing that we can be sure of, that our salvation in Christ is secure. That the work that Christ did on the cross for us almost 2,000 years ago, has paid the price for all eternity. Our salvation is secure and all we need to do now is celebrate it.

Therefore this month we look at what Easter is all about. Our main article on page 3 looks at a few of the amazing parallels between Jesus' death on the cross and the yearly Passover sacrifices we read of in the Old Testament.

Also in this issue: *Bible Basics* on page 2 looks at the next book in the Old Testament, Obadiah.

*Bible Study 101* takes you deeper into studying the Bible in teaching you the fifth step.

*The Back Page* will test your knowledge on the events surrounding Jesus' death, as well as something to entertain the children.

Finally, you will notice a new feature on page 2 where we look at some of the lesser known heroes of the Bible.

Sunday School teachers, be sure to visit us during the month of April for some Easter gifts for your classes.

And small group leaders, why not take the opportunity to see what we have in store for your next term.

Until next time, happy Easter and enjoy this blessed time together with your families!

Blessings,  
Glyn and Linda. †

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* (2 Peter 3:18)

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## CELEBRATE THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB

*"Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed!"*

1 Cor. 5:7

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**Obadiah**

*The Book of Judgement on Edom*

The Book of Obadiah is not addressed to Israel or Judah. It deals with the ancient feud between Israel (descendants of Jacob) and Edom (descendants of Esau). When the Edomites should have been helping their relatives, they gloated over the Israelites' problems and raided their homes. A day was coming when all these wrongs would be righted.

**Author & Date:** The name Obadiah means "Servant of the Lord." It is not known whether this was his real name or whether he used it as a title in an effort to remain anonymous. This is thought due to the fact that nothing is traditionally known of Obadiah's life.

Some scholars date the book as early as the mid-ninth century BC, following the raids by the Arabain and Philistine tribes during the reign of King Jehoram of Judah (see 2 Chronicles 21:16-17). If this is the case, this would make the Book of Obadiah the earliest of the prophetic books. However, most scholars date the book immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem in by Babylon in 586BC.

**Structure:** Obadiah contains only one chapter which is divided into three main sections which are further divided into smaller sub-sections:

|                                    | Verses       |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Edom's Coming Judgement</b>     | <b>1-9</b>   |
| God's Summons to the Nations       | 1            |
| Edom's Pride and Disaster          | 2-9          |
| <b>Edom's Sin</b>                  | <b>10-14</b> |
| <b>Judgement &amp; Restoration</b> | <b>15-21</b> |
| The Day of the Lord                | 15-18        |
| God's Restoration of Judah         | 19-21        |

**Did you Know?** In about 500BC the Edomite kingdom was destroyed and they were forced to accept Judaism about 100 years before Christ.

In the New Testament the Edomites are called Idumeans.

The most famous Idumean is Herod the Great, founder of the line of Herods we read about in the New Testament.

**Value for Today:** "And the kingdom will be the LORD's" - These were Obadiah's last words against Edom's arrogance, pride, and rebellion. Edom had thought itself indestructible; but the Lord humbled the nation and restored the fallen Judah.

Many people are tempted to consider themselves beyond the reach of God. But God will bring them low, just as He will lift those who humble themselves before Him. And one great day, He will establish His just rule over all. †

**STEP 5: Ask the Right Questions**

Now that we have a good idea of the general structure and message of the book as a whole, we can now begin to probe deeper into our selected passage. This is done by asking the six basic questions: who? what? when? where? why? and how? To assist you in answering these questions, refer to a good cross-reference Bible, Bible dictionary, handbook or commentary.

Let us see how each of these questions opens up a passage to help us understand it better:

- **Who?** The who questions simply ask about the persona in the relevant passage. Eg. who is John the Baptist, or who are the Pharisees (cf. John 1:19-24)?
  - **What?** The list of what questions can become quite long, but begin with the obvious ones: what was happening, what happened before this event took place, what is the passage basically telling me, etc.? Some questions will be determined by your own personal beliefs and motivation for looking at the passage in the first place.
  - **When?** These questions place the events onto a time line. If it is narrative, like the book of Acts is, it places the events into an historical time frame by asking the question, when did it occur? It also gives you an estimated time frame that aids in understanding the historical context of the passage.
- If the passage is prophetic, by asking the question when will it occur, or when, at a later stage, did it occur, it places the prophesied event at a different place on the time line to when the passage was written.
- **Where?** By asking the where questions, such as where did the event take place, where was the person travelling to, where was the writer when he wrote the book, etc, helps you to further understand the setting and historical context of the passage.
  - **Why?** Questions to ask here could be: why did Paul write the letter, why did the Jews not like Jesus' comment, etc.? Sometimes why questions can be difficult to answer, and can at times lead to misleading interpretations of a passage if one tries to apply something that does not suit the context. To check the context, make sure that the answer to the why questions do not contradict the answers to any of the preceding questions.
  - **How?** Questions like: how was Jesus crucified, or how did the walls of Jericho collapse, help to uncover more of the factual information of the passage. But how questions can deal with more than just the factual information by probing a little deeper in order to uncover the emotions and processes within the passage.

Each passage has its own unique set of questions that you can ask to help you understand its meaning, so feel free to use your own questions and processes to ask these six basic questions. Next time we will look at how to go about recording the answers. †

**BARUCH**

Baruch [BAIR-uch; "blessed"] was the friend and secretary of Jeremiah the prophet. Baruch's father and his brother were officials in the royal court, and Baruch dreamed of becoming an influential person himself. The trouble was, Jeremiah was out of favor at court and an object of hostility for the entire nation. Because Baruch was associated with Jeremiah, he too was an outcast and in danger of arrest.

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Baruch felt torn. On the one hand he was loyal to the Lord and to Jeremiah; on the other hand he was both ambitious and driven. To Baruch's credit, he remained loyal to Jeremiah. The prophet was given a special word for Baruch from the Lord. "Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh.... But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go" (Jer. 45:5).

When we find ourselves torn between ambition and loyalty, we need to remember Baruch. Baruch chose loyalty, and the Lord rewarded him with the "prize" of life. When we get our priorities straight, we please God. And we learn the lesson that Baruch learned long ago: people are more important than success. In the end, serving others provides the far greater prize.

Next Month: Boaz

Quoted from Richards, L. (1999). *Every man in the Bible* (Page 145). Nashville: T. Nelson. †

**CUT OUT & COLLECT**

**SONG OF SONGS 22**

**Key Idea:** Godly Marital Love.

**Summary:** True love being expressed by Solomon to his Shulamite bride.

**Key People:** Solomon (the Lover), the Shulamite maiden (the Bride).

**Key Places:** Shunem.

**Strange but True:** Jewish boys are not allowed to read this book.

Comparing her lover to a gazelle or young stag (2:9)

Hair being compared to a flock of goats (4:1).

Teeth like sheep that have just been washed and shorn (4:2).

A belly-button like a wine goblet (7:2).

## PESACH OR EASTER?

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)*

As Easter approaches, we are to remind ourselves what the season is truly about. As we see from Paul's words above, the fact that Christ was crucified and buried, then rose again and appeared to others, is of first importance. Therefore, let us look a little deeper into the background of the season and come to grips with why Jesus died, and why it went the way it did.

### The First Passover (Pesach)

While in captivity in Egypt, God gave Moses and Aaron instructions about the first Passover feast (see Exodus 12:1-28). After God had sent the nine plagues upon the nation of Egypt, God was about to send the tenth and final “plague” - the death of every firstborn. Following this plague, the nation of Israel would be permitted to leave, and so begin what is known as the Exodus (see Exodus 12:29-51).

On 10 Nisan (approximately March/April), each household was to take a lamb without any defect, separate it from the rest of the flock until 14 Nisan when it was to be slaughtered, sacrificed, at twilight, around mid-afternoon. A hyssop branch was then to be dipped into the blood of the lamb and for the blood to be brushed onto the lintel and doorposts of every Hebrew house.

The lamb was then roasted over a fire and eaten by the family. This lamb had to be fully cooked, even the inner parts. It is understood from tradition that in order for this to be done, a wooden stake was inserted vertically through the lamb, while another was inserted horizontally to hold it in place (Note the shape – †).

Then at midnight, which would have been the next day, 15 Nisan, the angel of death passed over Egypt and the first born of every household in the land that did not have the blood applied to the doorway, died. This included Pharaoh's own firstborn son and all the firstborn animals of the Egyptians. However, not one of the Hebrew firstborns died. When Pharaoh discovered that his own son was dead, he finally told Moses to take the Israelites and their livestock and leave Egypt (see Exodus 11 & 12).

The sacrificing of the Passover lamb on 14 Nisan was a ceremony to be observed as a lasting ordinance for all future generations (Exodus 12:24,25 and others). It served as a reminder to the nation of God's special care and deliverance of His chosen people –

chosen not because they were special in any way, but so that they would be the agents through whom He later would bring about His great plan of salvation to the whole world through Jesus Christ.

### Parallels with Jesus

An understanding of the Jewish background to the Passover is key to understanding some of the details of this amazing event in Biblical history, and from it we learn some parallels that only an almighty God could ever orchestrate.

### The Triumphal Entry

The weekend before the Passover, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey (a fulfilment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9). The people lined the streets waving palm branches and laying them down in front of Jesus as He rode in. While doing this, they were singing “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (John 12:13). These words are from Psalm 118:26. However, a little further on in verse 27 we read, “Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar,” a clear reference to the sacrificial lamb. Also, earlier in Psalm 118 we read of the stone that the builders rejected becoming the chief cornerstone. All of these references are clear indicators as to the purpose of Christ's imminent death (Note: “Hosanna” means “Save us”).

### Clearing of the Temple

It is often forgotten that following Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is a week-long festival where no leaven is to be in the house at all. The tradition of ridding the home of leaven or yeast prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is still practiced today. Even to the extent of animals that have eaten leaven being sold to gentiles. Leaven is a symbol of “sin”.

Jesus, though He did not have a literal physical house in which He resided, did the same thing when He emptied His Father's house, the temple, of “leaven”. This is seen through His driving out the traders from the temple and overturning the tables of the money changers (Matthew 21:12,13).

### Examination

Between the day the chosen lamb was presented to the priests at the temple, until the day it was sacrificed, it was kept in public view at the temple for all to examine and make sure that it was without defect.

During that same time, Jesus was interrogated by the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Jesus proved to be without defect and they could not fault Him in anything (see Matthew 21 & 22). Later, after His arrest, neither Pontius Pilate nor Herod could find any evidence against Him (Matthew 27:22-23 and others). Jesus was perfect and without defect, just as the Passover lamb was expected to be.

### Sacrificed

The Passover lamb was sacrificed in the temple on 14 Nisan at “twilight” (Exodus 12:6). In Hebrew (*bain ha'arbayim*) means

“between the evenings.” The last half of the daylight hours (noon to 6pm) was divided into two parts: the minor evening sacrifice (noon to 3pm) and the major evening sacrifice (3pm-6pm). Therefore, “between the evenings” means between these two periods (about 3pm). Therefore the lamb was sacrificed at about 3pm on 14 Nisan, which was Preparation Day for the Passover feast.

The lamb was bound to the altar at 9am. Similarly, “It was the third hour when they crucified Him” (Mark 15:25), that is, the third hour of daylight, or 9am.

Darkness then came over the land from about the sixth to the ninth hour (noon-3pm); and it was about 3pm when Jesus died (Luke 23:44-46). As seen above, this was the same time that the Passover lamb in the temple was slaughtered.

### Not a Bone Being Broken

Finally, Exodus 12:46 tells us that it was forbidden for any of the lambs bones to be broken. As the Feast of Unleavened Bread was approaching and all bodies had to be removed before it began, they had to ensure that those crucified died before the Sabbath started. The legs of the two thieves on either side of Jesus were broken in order to ensure that they would die quickly, but when they came to Jesus, He was already dead. Therefore, His legs did not need to be broken (John 19:31-33).

### Jesus Laid Down His Own Life

It often took people days to die when crucified, but it only took six hours for Jesus to die. Besides the fact that He had been whipped and beaten beyond recognition (cf. Isaiah 52:14), there is something more important to bear in mind here.

Jesus said in John 10:18 that no-one can take His life from Him, but He lays it down of His own accord, and that only He has the authority to take it up again.

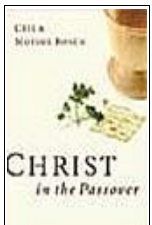
Moments before He died, Jesus called out, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46); then He voluntarily gave up His life (Matthew 27:50). He gave up His life at the same time the Passover lamb was being sacrificed in the temple.

Indeed, “Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7).†

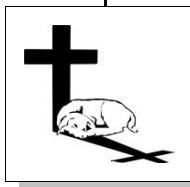
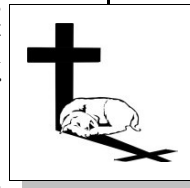
## LEARN MORE

### Christ in the Passover by Ceil & Moishe Rosen

*Christ in the Passover* gives you interesting information about the Passover so that you can relate to references to it, and will help you to see Christ as the Passover Lamb. Discover the connections between the Bread of Life and the bread of affliction, the blood of the New covenant and the cup of redemption. See the deep bond between the Passover Feast and our communion celebration today.



**R 100**



# THE BACK PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

### ACROSS

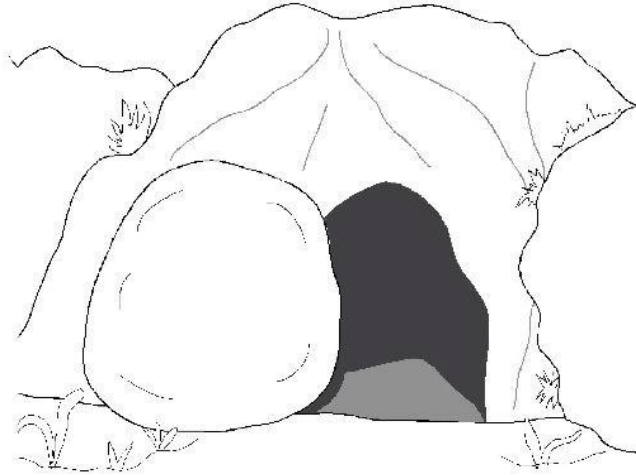
- 5 Judas betrayed Jesus with a what? (Matt 26:49)
- 7 Jesus described the wine as the blood of the new what? (Mk 14:24)
- 8 Who did the people want released in place of Jesus? (Matt 27:21)
- 10 For which prophet did the people think that Jesus was calling for on the cross? (Matt 27:47)
- 13 The sign above Jesus called Him the what of the Jews? (Lk 23:38)
- 16 What was the name of the man who helped carry Jesus' cross? (Matt 27:32)
- 17 To what place was Jesus taken after being handed over by Pilate? (Mk 15:16)
- 20 The name of this place means "the place of the skull." (Matt 27:33)
- 21 Simon the Leper's home was in which town? (Matt 26:6)
- 24 Who did Jesus appear before in the morning? (Matt 27:2)
- 25 Jesus said the disciples would sit on thrones and judge the tribes of which nation? (Lk 22:30)
- 26 What meal did Jesus eat with His disciples the night before His death? (Matt 26:17)
- 27 How many times did the disciple deny Jesus? (Matt 26:69-75)
- 30 Jesus and the disciples sang what before going to the Mount of Olives? (Matt 26:30)
- 32 The chief priest bought the Potter's Field as a graveyard for who? (Matt 27:7)
- 34 What crowed a second time as the disciple denied Jesus the last time? (Mk 14:72)
- 35 How many robbers were crucified with Jesus? (Matt 27:38)
- 36 What were cast for Jesus' garments? (Lk 23:34)
- 37 Judas referred to Jesus by what title when he betrayed Him? (Mk 14:45)
- 38 What was the name of the man who took Jesus' body to place it in his tomb? (Matt 27:57)

### DOWN

- 1 At what time of the day did Jesus join His disciples for the feast? (Mk 14:17)
- 2 What part of the slave's body did a disciple cut off with a sword? (Lk 22:51)
- 3 On which day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead? (Matt 28:1)
- 4 Peter and the sons of who went with Jesus to pray? (Matt 26:37)
- 6 What were the disciples doing when Jesus came back to them after praying? (Matt 26:36-46)
- 9 At which hour did darkness fall on the land? (Matt 27:45)
- 11 What did the women take with them to the tomb? (Lk 24:1)
- 12 A what appeared to Jesus in the Garden to strengthen Him? (Lk 22:43)
- 14 Jesus said He would go ahead of the disciples to where? (Mk 14:28)
- 15 Jesus told the disciples to follow a man carrying a pitcher of what? (Mk 14:13)
- 16 What colour was the robe that the soldiers put on Jesus? (Matt 27:28)
- 18 To Mary who did Jesus first appear after His resurrection? (Mk 16:9)
- 19 In what Garden did Jesus go to pray? (Matt 26:36)

## COLOUR ME IN

# HE IS RISEN



Answers in next edition

20. Fruit 25. Sword 27. Gilgal  
 3. Shake 5. Sandals 6. Silver 8. Holiness 11. Poor 13. Light 14. Justice 17. Uzziah 18. Gilead 19. Garments  
 23. Vineyards 24. Tekoa 25. Scales 26. Hazael 28. God 29. Bethel 30. Reaper  
**Down:** 1. Pride 2. Sackcloth  
**Across:** 4. Altar 7. David 9. Wine 10. Joseph 12. Ivory 13. Lion 15. Lotions 16. Four 21. Samaria 22. Boast

- 22 Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for how many pieces of silver? (Matt 26:15)
- 23 Who did Jesus first appear before after His arrest? (Matt 26:57)
- 26 Which disciple did Jesus say would deny Him? (Matt 26:31-35)
- 28 At which hour did Jesus cry out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"? (Mk 15:34)
- 29 The Pharisees and chief priests were worried that the disciples would \_\_\_ Jesus' body. (Matt 27:64)
- 31 The perfume used to anoint Jesus was made from pure what? (Mk 14:3)
- 33 What was the crown made out of that the soldiers put on Jesus' head? (Matt 27:29)

### CONTACT US

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