

# PASSOVER 2.0

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Today, we celebrated the Lord's Supper, or what we might call Passover 2.0.

Passover, version 1, as described by Moses in Exodus 12, was God's act of mercy toward the Israelite people, sparing their lives while the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed in one night. And how did this happen?

The king of Egypt resisted the will of God, refusing to release the Israelite slaves, and every household in the nation suffered as a result.

But God warned the Israelites to prepare themselves by sprinkling the blood of a lamb on the doorposts and the lintel as a covering for all who were within the house. Everyone under that covering was spared and released.

Thereafter, the Jews celebrated annually their deliverance by offering a lamb to God and sharing a ceremonial meal of unleavened bread and wine.

Jesus transformed the meaning of that meal by applying it to Himself. "This is *my body*, broken for you. This is the cup of the new covenant in *my blood*, given for you." He made it the perpetual memorial ceremony of our deliverance from sin. The judgment of death has "passed over" us.

This celebration is intended to bring us comfort and hope by reminding us of God's merciful character and saving power.

Yet, many do not gain stronger faith. Knocked off balance by the circumstances of life they become distraught. They lose hope. They fear for their future. They panic. They struggle to save themselves. As if there were no God. They grow disheartened, discouraged. Their attempt to put things back together only stresses them out further. Struggling as if to escape quicksand, things often grow worse, and their effort leaves them exhausted.

This is an old pattern, common to every generation. If this has ever been you — or if this is you today — God offers a message of consolation. This is what holy Communion is about.

Yet it is not a new idea. It was announced by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 40. Let's examine the entire chapter.

The first two verses issue the announcement: "Comfort! Comfort my people." That is God's intent. That is His heart.

Then comes the command, "Listen!" The Word of the Lord comes, even in the wilderness of spiritual confusion. Make a highway for His arrival. The glory of the Lord is on the way, and we must prepare to receive Him.

But make note of this: You cannot bring to pass the Word of the Lord by your own efforts! People are like the wild grass on the hills of Marin that shines so green this month, but in a matter of weeks will

be dry and brown and ready to blow away. People do not have staying power on their own. But God lasts! His word, His purpose, stands forever.

God's people are to announce with all their might, "God is coming! All that He promised, He will do! Like a Shepherd, He will lead us and care for us."

Who is this God? How capable is He of fulfilling His word? Isaiah reflects that it is He alone who created the heavens and the earth. No one is wise enough to give Him advice. All the nations of the world, put together, offer Him no contest. They are as nothing. And all the sacrifices they could offer would be insufficient to commend His glory.

To whom would you compare God? Our plethora of idols, material and virtual, are the works of men's frail hands, powerless and worthless.

Haven't you heard His words? Isaiah asked. Haven't you seen His capabilities? God is God! He was not made by men's hands. He made men, and their hands! The heavens are His handiwork. When He judges, His judgment is perfect, and no one can resist it. His power is supreme.

Then, God Himself asks, "To whom will you compare me?" He points to the stars in the sky, their perfect and perpetual order, and reminds us that "not a single one is missing." He created everything, sustains everything; He overlooks nothing, loses nothing. He can care for you!

Yet it is common for people to doubt that God cares or is interested. They complain that He does not see their problems, and He overlooks their rights. How can you say that God has "passed over" your needs? It is your sins He has overlooked, not your needs. And He never grows weary of showing you His mercy and kindness. Not only does He look beyond your faults, but He sees your needs!

He gives power to those who are weak and strength to those who are helpless. He is our spiritual, psychological, and emotional energy source! Natural energy and strength will be exhausted and fade, but God is the Great Renewer. Wait for him. That's the key.

If we do not wait, we will exhaust our supply of mental and physical energy before we see the finish line. But those who wait tell a different story: renewal, revival, restoration!

Isaiah exclaims elsewhere, "For since the world began, no ear has heard, and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him!" (Isaiah 64:4)

If we wait we can soar. If we wait we can run. If we wait we can walk. In nature, we walk first, then run, then, if possible, soar. But in the Spirit, it is just the reverse!

As we begin to wait on God, He takes us soaring. Some get stuck for years right here, seeking from one meeting to another for the soaring experience. But they lack endurance; they cannot run. They just flit from one branch to another.

But God made us to run also. Running this marathon requires endurance. And endurance must be built by running more and more. By pressing through reluctance and pain and hindrances. God gives us strength to run, if we wait on Him.

Finally, we may learn to walk. Abiding in the peace and rest of the Savior, we may "live a quiet and peaceful life" of righteousness. This, too, is the result of waiting for the Lord.

Wait on the Lord.

Do not retreat to the “solutions” offered by men. Do not spend your strength on fruitless self-effort.

This is what Holy Communion is about. Remembering who the Lord is. Remembering what He has done for us. Remembering what He is capable of. And receiving His grace to wait and “see the salvation of the Lord.” Recommitting ourselves to His plan.

Rest in that confidence, instead of being driven by fear and worry. He alone can save us! Wait on Him.

Learn to soar. Learn to run. Learn to walk. Not *ahead* of God. Not even *for* God. But *with* God.