

# The Assembly of Eloah

This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ. John 17:3 (HCSB)

## Passover Offering

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Passover/Unleavened Bread Series

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Three times a year we must bring our free-will offerings when we appear before the Lord. This paper is an offertory message for Passover.



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**W**e gather together in different places around the world, where God has chosen to place His name to partake in the Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread. It is one of the three feasts God commands His people to keep; the other two being Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. We are to leave our homes and go to the place He chooses. The third year in the seven-year cycle of God's Calendar is also known as the year of tithing from Deuteronomy 26:12-15.

Deut 26:12-15 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; 13) Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 14) I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15) Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey. (RSV used throughout unless otherwise noted)

The tithe of the third year is actually the second tithe we would normally keep to pay for Feast expenses. The funds are sent in to the Church to help provide for those who cannot provide for themselves, as we see in Deuteronomy 26:12. We can then go before God and say we have not forgotten the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless or the widows. The Church has a responsibility to ensure all of its

members are cared for. This does not abrogate members from the responsibility of caring for themselves if possible. Paul was very clear in his first letter to Timothy that a person is to take care of his own if possible.

1Tim 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

We, as the Church, must provide for those in the household of God and He provided the mechanism for doing just that. The Church fulfils that command every third tithe year.

The last third tithe year was in 2001, the next one is in 2008, then in 2015 and 2022.

As anyone in the Church of God knows, there always seems to be a build up of trials in the period before Passover. We are tested through our trials, but God promises to see us through.

1Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

We can take comfort in these words. Though we are tested, we can trust that we are not alone in our trials. The brethren are to pray for one another in trials. In this way, we empathize with our brothers who may be suffering through great trials.

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3) Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4) But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

We also see in Hebrews that by trials we are made righteous.

Heb 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable

fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

It's not a stretch of the imagination to say that God tests us prior to Passover so that we might come before Him prepared to take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner.

All of us should give thanks to our Father in heaven who brings us through these trials so we have the privilege of being with our brethren to keep the Passover.

Hopefully we all prepare ourselves to take the Passover and give some consideration to the blessings that God our Father has bestowed upon us. Our gathering together in the various sites around the world is in obedience to the command given in Deuteronomy 16.

Deut 16:16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks, and at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.

There are two points in this verse that need to be expounded upon. The first is that we are to appear before the LORD God at the place which He shall choose. We cannot keep this feast, or any other feast, within our own gates. We must gather outside our gates at a place which God has chosen, to keep the feasts of God.

Deut 16:5-6 You may not offer the passover sacrifice within any of your towns which the LORD your God gives you; 6) but at the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the passover sacrifice, in the evening at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.

The only exception is in the third year of the seven-year cycle in which the second tithe is given to the Church, as mentioned earlier. Then, and only then, can we keep the feasts of God within our gates.

The second point is that we are not to appear at the feasts empty handed. We must bring our freewill offering when we appear before the Lord.

Deut 16:16-17 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks, and at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed; 17) every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he has given you.

We are to appear with an offering that is in accordance with the blessings He has given us. In order for us to give an appropriate offering we must put forth the effort to consider our blessings. Part of the preparation for the Passover is to consider the blessings which God our Father has bestowed upon us. We cannot just show up at Passover and write out the offering check on the spur of the moment and think we have done our duty as Christians. In keeping with the nature of Passover, we must consider deeply what God has done for us and give an offering that is appropriate. We are not to keep the Passover in an irreverent manner. Not giving proper consideration to the offering we must give would be considered irreverent.

What kind of mindset or attitude should a Christian have towards the giving of offerings? Should we appear before Him with an attitude of obligation? God does not respect an offering that is given purely out of obligation or which is given begrudgingly.

2Cor 9:7 Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

We are not to present our offerings to God reluctantly or under feelings of compulsion, but we must give because we purpose in our own hearts to do it. God loves a cheerful giver. What does it mean to be a cheerful giver? It means simply that we must be glad in our

hearts that we have the opportunity to come before the LORD our God and give Him back a portion of what He has given us. We should be thankful that we are able to participate in the work that God is doing through His Church.

Another aspect of the giving of the offering is our relationship with others. Hopefully, we all examine ourselves in the days building up to the Passover. Part of that examination process is to examine our relationship with others. We must ensure our relationships are proper before we come to this Feast.

Mat 5:22-24 But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. 23) So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24) leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

We can't give a proper offering to the LORD our God if we have relationships that are in a state of disrepair. We must first go and repair the damage. Then we can come before God and present our offerings. In verse 23 we see that if we are giving our offering and we remember that a brother has something against us, we are to leave our offering and go and be reconciled to our brother. Then we can return and give our offering. We must not only consider our feelings toward others, but we must also consider the things that people have against us. We must make amends prior to giving our offering.

How important is our mental and emotional condition to God?

Psalm 50:23 He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; to him who orders his way aright I will show the salvation of God!"

Psalm 51:16 For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

The theme is continued in Proverbs 21:3 which says:

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 follows suit with:

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know that they are doing evil.

Our mental and emotional condition is very important and is a determining factor in whether or not our offerings will be acceptable to God. We cannot take the giving of our offerings lightheartedly. We must sincerely consider our spiritual condition.

Most people in the Church of God are not considered "wealthy" by any stretch of the imagination. Many cannot afford to give huge sums of money as an offering. The fact is, many have trouble even paying the expenses to get to the Passover. Does this mean they are looked down upon by God? Absolutely not! Let us look at the example given to us in Mark 12:41-44.

Mark 12:41-44 And he sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42) And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. 43) And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44) For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living."

We have all read these scriptures many times in the past, but have we really stopped to think of their significance? Again, we see that it is the heart, the intent, that is most important.

The rich put in large sums of money but the widow's one penny was considered greater by Messiah. If we have very little and we give what we have, then we have made a far greater sacrifice than if we are rich and give a great sum, but it is still a small portion of what we have. We see, the widow's heart was in the right place. Her love for God was so great she was willing to give all she had. We must be willing to sacrifice all for the love of God.

When we give an offering, what are we accomplishing? What does the offering do? Well, unlike most Churches of God, The Assembly of Eloah have no paid ministry, so it does not go toward paying large salaries to ministers. It does, however, go toward doing the work God has commissioned His Church to do.

Mark 16:15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

The Church of God has an obligation to preach the Gospel to the whole creation. Many of the brethren who are involved in fulfilling this commission do so free of charge. For the most part they do not receive any payment for the work that they do. Some draw a small payment to compensate for expenses involved in the work they do. None of the ministers are paid for being ministers. However, preaching the Gospel in this day and age is not free. In order to preach the Gospel to the whole creation it must be translated into all languages. There is a cost associated with translating all of the material that the Church produces into the various languages of the world. Much of the translation has to be contracted out. We have reached vast areas of the world that have not been reached to this magnitude in the history of the Churches of God.

When we give our offerings we are financing a vital portion of the work the Church has been commissioned to do. We cannot take this lightly.

Mat 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole

world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.

Our reward awaits us at the end of this age. This is when we receive our crown and become kings and priests of the Living God. Scripture tells us the Gospel will be preached to the whole world and then the end will come. So the Gospel must be preached to the world first. We must all be working toward that goal. Part of doing the work is to finance the portions of the work we cannot do ourselves. Is it possible to delay the coming of our Lord because we have not completed the task of preaching the Gospel to the whole world? No one can say for sure, but it's an interesting concept to think about.

2Cor 9:6-14 The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7) Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8) And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. 9) As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." 10) He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11) You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; 12) for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. 13) Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others; 14) while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

We will reap according to what we sow. If we work little we will be rewarded with little. If we work much we will be rewarded with much. We must not allow ourselves to get caught up

in the cares of this world to the point where doing the work of God becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> priority for us. As Christians we must dedicate ourselves to God above all else. We must store up for ourselves treasure in Heaven, not on this Earth. We must give as we are able and God will know if it is little or much by looking at our hearts. Let us give our offerings with gladness and thanksgiving, knowing we are an integral part of fulfilling the commission God gave His Church

Let us give our offerings knowing they will be used to preach the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God and to restore the doctrines taught by Messiah and the Apostles. Let us sow much by the work we do and the offerings we give, and God will reward us till our cup overflows.

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