

## 1 Corinthians 5:7

Once upon a time, a certain erstwhile professor at a certain erstwhile Christian school wrote an article based on 1 Corinthians 5:7, wherein Paul refers to Christ as “our Passover”.<sup>1</sup> Taking this as his starting point, the said prof opined that an aged apostle John, musing on Paul’s phrase, invented ‘the lamb of God’ as a synonym for the pascal lamb. He then argued that John had Jesus eating the Passover after He was crucified, and so on into the night.<sup>2</sup> He evidently did not believe the NT writings to be divinely inspired, and his purpose in writing was to attack the Bible, alleging errors and contradictions in its text—standard procedure for servants of Satan, before and since.

I will now analyze 1 Corinthians 5:7, based on the belief that the NT writings are in fact divinely inspired, that they are God’s Word. To begin, Paul did not invent the Passover, it is a Jewish feast in memory of the Exodus. (It has nothing to do with the Church.) The historical record of its beginning is in Exodus 12; here is verse 17: “So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance” (NKJV). Next, a pascal lamb was not about forgiving sin, it was about saving the firstborn from the angel of death, on that first night. Further, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)<sup>3</sup> refers to Jesus Christ, of which there is only one; but pascal lambs are killed by the hundreds, every year.

It follows that when Paul referred to Christ as “our Passover” (pascal lamb) he was not offering a synonym for ‘the Lamb of God’. So why did he make such a statement? The context is the king of interpretation, so we need to take a careful look at the context. Chapter five begins with the man who was living with his father’s wife, a type of fornication that even pagans didn’t talk about. Worse, far worse, the church hadn’t done anything about it! In verse 5 Paul affirms that the man had to be turned over to Satan. In verse 6 he denounces their attitude and mentions the effect that yeast has. He goes on to command them to “purge out the old leaven”. He commanded them to clean up their act.

So why did Paul refer to Christ as ‘our Passover’? The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a celebration of the Exodus, the deliverance of Israel from the slavery in Egypt. The Lord Jesus Christ has made possible our deliverance from the slavery to sin, to Satan and to the cultures that he controls. I take it that Paul was using that analogy, the deliverance from slavery. In the context, the church was not demonstrating that deliverance, and in verse 8 Paul urges them to start doing so. Christ is our Deliverer.

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<sup>1</sup> It is the only such reference in the NT.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, Jesus ate the Passover one day early. If He was the Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5), He was also the Lord of the Passover, and He could do as He saw fit.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, this was spoken by the Baptizer, not invented by the apostle John, who simply recorded what the Baptizer said.