THE DRAMA OF THE AGES
A CASE OF PREMEDITATED MURDER

As Springtime draws near, Jews prepare to celebrate the Passover commemorating their Exodus from slavery in Egypt, while Christians prepare to celebrate their Exodus from slavery to sin in the observance of Resurrection Day. As part of the 'Passion Week' rituals, in fact, many churches hold 'Christian Passovers' that clearly demonstrate the parallels between both 'departures'. Out of politeness or ignorance, though, few church leaders ever talk about one very important issue: who was to blame for the death of Yeshua (Jesus) and why? Passover [the slaughter of the lamb] and The Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows is a well-conceived drama authored by G-d Himself before the foundation of the world.

The Stage is Set

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had eternal life. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were cast out of the Garden 'of eternal life' to live an existence separated from G-d. Before being expelled, however, G-d established the Sacrificial System to protect Adam and Eve from eternal separation from Him. He allowed the death of two [sinless] animals to substitute for the death that Adam and Eve deserved for their disobedience. Instead of being clothed with the Glory of G-d as they were in the Garden of Eden, they were clothed with animal skins. When G-d looked at them, He saw the animal skins 'covering' them and remembered the death that those animals suffered in exchange for the lives of Adam and Eve.

It was clear that animal sacrifices were only a temporary solution to sin since they only 'covered' sin rather than permanently removing it. The Sacrificial System allowed man to maintain fellowship with G-d and gave mankind the hope of the eternal life to be enjoyed after G-d would send a Redeemer to die for Adam's sin.

The Players

G-d cultivated a race of people for 2000 years in preparation for the final once-for-all sacrifice that would release mankind from the grip of eternal death. The Israelites were the only peoples in the world that understood G-d's Sacrificial System, the system He would use to bring about the spiritual redemption of all mankind. They also knew many details about the Redeemer-Messiah who would come.

The Israelites were taught to sacrifice only animals. They understood that human life was sacred, to be taken by G-d and G-d alone. The punishment of death carried out by man was reserved only for those who willfully and deliberately broke G-d's rules. Yet, eternal life would be unavailable to mankind if they did not allow the Redeemer-Messiah to be sacrificed. It was clear, though, that if the Jews recognized the Messiah, they would not sacrifice Him. G-d, therefore, had to lure them into carrying out His plan:

"But we speak the wisdom of G-d *in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which* G-d *ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the*
L-rd
of glory." (1 Corinthians 2:7 8)

Act I

G-d's ultimate purposes were revealed to the prophets of old:

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Isaiah 49:6)

"Yet it pleased the L-rd *to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin..." (Isaiah 53:10a)*

He had to blind their spiritual leaders to keep the Israelites from recognizing the Messiah:

"For the L-rd *has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers." (Isaiah 29:10 & Romans 11:8)*

"He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me." (Isaiah 49:2)

Yeshua (Jesus) is the Word of G-d. He was originally given by G-d to Moses and the Israelites as The Old Covenant Law to restore man's broken relationship with the Almighty. Only the Israelites, however, enjoyed this restoration. The Scriptures foretold, though, that at a future time, G-d would give His Messiah as a New Covenant to restore all the people of the earth to Himself:

"...I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages." (Isaiah 49:8)

Act II

This New Covenant was established on the evening before G-d's Redeemer, Yeshua (Jesus), was crucified.

In the 'cutting' of a blood covenant, a sacrificial animal was killed and divided in two and the pieces laid out on the ground. The parties to the covenant would walk between the halves reciting an oath that if either party broke the covenant they would suffer the same fate as the animal. Then they would cook and eat the animal completely—nothing could be left over. This would symbolize that the covenant became a part of their very bodies. Finally, they would 'seal' the covenant by drinking a glass of wine together. The wine represented the animal's blood or life (Leviticus 17:11). G-d forbade the Israelites from drinking blood, so they substituted the 'blood' of the grape for this ritual.

Yeshua (Jesus) broke the unleavened bread, it being a visual depiction of His own body about to be broken in a blood covenant. He gave it to His disciples to eat saying, "This is My body which is given for you..." After supper, He gave them the fruit of the vine, (the blood of grapes) saying, "This is the New Covenant in My blood..." (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)

Act III

After cutting the New Covenant with His disciples, Yeshua (Jesus) was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. When Peter tried to protect Him, the apostle John records that Yeshua (Jesus) rebuked him saying:

“Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

Matthew records Yeshua (Jesus)’ words also:

“...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” (Matthew 26:53-54)

Long before His arrest, Yeshua (Jesus) told His disciples what He purposed:

“...I lay down My life for the sheep....No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:15b, 18)

Yeshua (Jesus) made it clear that His death was prearranged by His Father when He spoke to Pilate at His ‘trial’:

“...You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.” (John 19:11a)

G-d’s premeditation is repeatedly unveiled by the apostles:

*“Him (*Yeshua/Jesus*), being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of* G-d*...” (Acts 2:23a)*

“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which G-d *foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” (Acts 3:17, 18)*

One final Scripture, a prayer uttered by Peter and John, is recorded in the Book of Acts revealing that the liability for Yeshua (Jesus)' death goes beyond those that performed the deed:

*"For truly against Your [*G-d*'s] holy Servant* Yeshua (Jesus)*, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28)*

The Climax

G-d the Father planned and carried out the murder of His sinless Son Yeshua (Jesus) using the Jews to hand Him over to be crucified according to His Sacrificial System; but it was the sin of Adam that made it necessary.

"For Indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast [of Unleavened Bread], not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:7b, 8)."