

## American Minute with Bill Federer

Lamb of God sacrificed on Passover, Resurrected on Feast of First Fruits "I know that my Redeemer liveth"

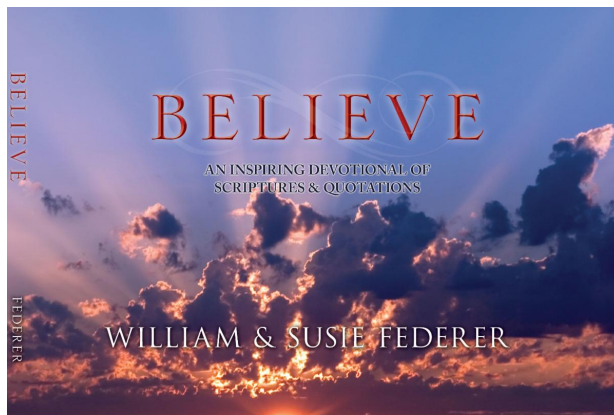
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Christianity is the largest religion in the world, around a third of the Earth's population, and since Easter is the most important day to Christians, this day could possibly be considered the most important day in the world! ...

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The word "Easter" appears only once in the King James Bible, Acts 12:4. In every other place, and in every other Bible translation, the word used is "Passover."

President Ronald Reagan stated April 2, 1983:

"This week **Jewish families** ... have been celebrating **Passover** ... Its observance reminds all

of ... the **battle against oppression** waged by the **Jews** since **ancient times** ...

And **Christians** have been commemorating the last momentous days leading to the **crucifixion** of **Jesus** 1,950 years ago. Tomorrow, as morning spreads around the planet, we'll celebrate the **triumph of life over death, the Resurrection of Jesus.**"

**Passover** is the first of the seven major Jewish Feasts, as listed in Leviticus 25. The feasts are in three groups:

In the Spring are the **Feast of Passover**; the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**; and the **Feast of First Fruits**.

Fifty days later is the **Feast of Pentecost** at the beginning of the harvest. "Pente" means 50.

At the end of the summer harvest are celebrated the **Feast of Trumpets**, the **Day of Atonement**, and the **Feast of Tabernacles**.

Let's look at these:

**Passover** was first observed around 1,400 BC, the night before the exodus from Egypt.

Egyptians had enslaved the Israelites. The Pharaoh ordered their infant boys thrown into the Nile River. In response, God sent plagues upon Egypt as judgments, the final one being similar to Pharaoh's order, the angel of death sent to kill the firstborn of the Egyptians.

On the 15th day of the Hebrew month Nisan, each Israelite family was to kill a lamb and put its blood over the doorposts of their house so that the judgment of the angel of death would "**pass over**" their home, indicating their faith, that the lamb had taken the judgment in their place.

Exodus 12:8 gave instructions regarding the **Passover lamb**: "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.*"

A Jewish day began at sunset and lasted until the next sunset. In 33 AD, Jesus celebrated the **Passover meal** with his disciples in the evening and then in the morning he was **crucified -- on the day of Passover.**

The Apostle Paul wrote in First Corinthians 5:7: "For even **Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.**"

The lamb is considered the most innocent of animals. John the Baptist saw Jesus and exclaimed: "Behold, the **Lamb of God**, who taketh away the sin of the world!"

Justin Martyr, who live c.100 to 165 AD, described:

"That **lamb** ... was commanded to be wholly roasted ... **a symbol of the suffering of the cross which Christ would undergo.** For the **lamb** ... is roasted and dressed up in the form of the cross. For one spit is transfixed right through from the lower parts up to the head, and one across the back, to which are attached the legs of the **lamb.**"

**Crucifixion** was the most painful Roman torture, reserved for slaves and rebels.

Dr. Alexander Metherell, M.D., Ph.D. wrote:

**“The pain was absolutely unbearable ... In fact, it was literally beyond words to describe; they had to invent a new word: 'excruciating.'**

Literally, **excruciating** means **‘out of the cross.’”**

Cicero called **crucifixion**, “the most cruel and hideous of tortures.” Historian Will Durant wrote that “even the Romans ... pitied the victims.”

**Isaiah chapter 53** prophetically foretold the Messiah’s suffering:

**"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed ...**

**The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent ...**

He was cut off from the land of the living; **for the transgression of my people he was punished ...** Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer ... **The Lord makes his life an offering for sin ...**

**My righteous servant will justify many, and he**

**will bear their iniquities ... For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."**

The next Jewish Feast after Passover was the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. "Leaven" is another name for "yeast" and is symbolic of sin. On this feast, Jews would get all the leaven or yeast out of their homes.

On the exact **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, Jesus was in the tomb - He "who **taketh away the sins of the world.**"

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 5:6–8: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the **old leaven** ... Let us keep the Feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the **unleavened bread** of sincerity and truth."

Theologians have debated what **Jesus** may have experienced when He suffered. In Matthew 12, Jesus replied to those demanding a sign:

"None will be given it except the **sign of the prophet Jonah**. For as Jonah was **three days and three nights** in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth."

**The Book of Jonah** recorded:

"**Jonah** prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly ... **out of the belly of hell cried I**, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into

the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight ... the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; **the earth with her bars was about me forever.**”

Next is the **Feast of First Fruits** marking the **earliest harvest of the spring**, the winter barley, which is the first grain to ripen in Israel's growing season.

As soon as it appeared above ground it was harvested and brought to the temple.

Leviticus 23:9-14: "When you enter the land ... and **reap its harvest**, then you shall **bring in the sheaf** of the **first fruits** of your **harvest** ... The priest ... shall wave the sheaf before the Lord.”

Jesus rose from the dead on exact day of the **Feast of First Fruits**.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:20–23: "But now is **Christ risen from the dead** and become the **first fruits** of them that slept ... But every man in his own order: **Christ the first fruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

**Jonah** declared: “Thou hast brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple ... Salvation is of the Lord.’ So **the Lord spoke to the fish, and it**

**vomited Jonah onto dry land."**

The fact that the Gospels have **women** being the **first to testify of Christ's resurrection** is evidence that the disciples did not make up the story, as women were not accepted as witnesses at that time. **Josephus** included in the **Antiquities of the Jews** this first century legal policy: "Let not the testimony of women be admitted."

Anyone wanting to fabricate a story would certainly have had made it up with the most reputable men being the first witnesses, not uneducated fishermen and women.

**Sir Lionel Luckhoo** (1914-1997) was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as world's most successful criminal attorney. He wrote:

"The bones of Muhammad are in Medina, the bones of Confucius are in Shantung, the cremated bones of Buddha are in Nepal. Thousands pay pilgrimages to worship at their tombs which contain their bones.

...

But in **Jerusalem** there is a **cave cut into the rock**. This is the **tomb of Jesus**. **IT IS EMPTY!**  
**YES, EMPTY! BECAUSE HE IS RISEN!**

He died, physically and historically. **He arose from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of God."**

Fifty days after First Fruits was the **Feast of Pentecost**, or **Feast of Weeks** (seven weeks of seven days), officially marking **the beginning of the main harvest season** (the end of barley harvest and the beginning of wheat harvest.)

Fifty days after Jesus rose from the grave was the **Feast of Pentecost**, when the **Holy Spirit was poured out** on the Apostles and the Church was born. The harvest of souls began.

Three thousand were saved the first day, and eight thousand by the end of the week. Then the new believers in Christ **spread the harvest around the world**.

If one zooms out and looks at all of recorded human history, it becomes clear that **the world had been divinely set up for this moment**.

**c.1400 BC** -- Moses and the Children of Israel celebrated the first Passover, came out of Egypt and entered the Promised Land. The tradition of observing the Seven Feasts was instituted.

**732 BC** -- The Ten Northern Tribes of Israel were taken captive by Assyria and scattered far and wide, resulting in pockets of Jewish communities being established around the known world.

**509 BC** – The Roman Republic was founded and began to expand with a road system connecting the known world.

**335 BC** -- Alexander the Great conquered and spread the Greek language, which became the world-wide trade language.

**285 BC** – The Old Testament was translated into Greek, called the Septuagint.

**27 BC** -- The Pax Romana began - a century of



world peace.

**33 AD** -- Jesus was crucified and resurrected. At the first Pentecost, Jewish believers were filled with the Holy Spirit.

At the end of that week, they traveled from Jerusalem during the Pax Romana peace, on Roman roads, to Jewish communities scattered around the world, proclaiming that the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah, which were internationally read in the Greek Septuagint, were fulfilled in the risen Christ. Romans 10:17, "Their voice has gone out into all the earth."

**While the great harvest of souls is continuing, the fulfillment of the last three Jewish feasts is still in the future.**

**In the Jewish year, the long months of harvesting** continued as the Israelites worked in the fields, threshing, winnowing, sifting of the grain, as well as harvesting grapes, figs, almonds, and pomegranates, before the latter rain started.

At the end of the summer harvest, the **Feast of Trumpets** called the people to gather in from the fields to the Temple. The harvest was now complete.

Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:40 "Two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left."

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 "For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

I Corinthians 15:52 "At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The next two feasts are the **Day of Atonement**, the most solemn of all feasts, which students of prophecy speculate may be fulfilled in the Great Tribulation or the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Finally, there is the **Feast of Tabernacles**, where the Israelites dwelt in booths or tents to remind them of their pilgrimage 40 years following the presence of the Lord in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. This could foreshadow the saints dwelling with the Lord forever.

John 14:2-3 (Amplified Bible) “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and I will take you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also.”

One third of the Bible is prophecies, with over 300 prophecies specifically about the Messiah, 27 of which were fulfilled in one day.

Messianic prophecies include:

-He would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2.

-He would be born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14.

-He would be a descendant of David. Isaiah 9:7.

-He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.  
Zechariah 11:12.

-He would be mocked. Psalm 22:7,8.

-He would be crucified. John 3:14.

-He would be pierced. Psalms 22:16.

-He would die with the wicked yet be buried with the rich. Isaiah 53:9.

That one person could fulfill just eight prophecies is considered a statistical impossibility.

Josh and Sean McDowell's book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (2017), quotes Professor Peter W. Stoner, Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College, who stated:

"We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That is one with 17 zeros behind it."

The first prophecy was God telling the serpent that the seed of woman will crush his head.

Prophecies had to be not clear enough so Satan could not figure them out and try to stop them, like Herod tried when he was told the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, he killed all the baby boys; yet at the same time the prophecies had to be clear enough so that after Jesus rose from the dead they

could prove He was indeed the promised Messiah.

In Luke 24, after His resurrection, Jesus walked with disciples along the road to Emmaus, and said:

“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

Robert Morris Page (1903-1992) was a physicist known as the "father of U.S. Radar for inventing pulsation radar used for the detection of aircraft. He served with the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., held 37 patents, and received the U.S. Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Award, and the Presidential Certificate of Merit.

The son of a Methodist minister, Robert Morris Page wrote concerning the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies Jesus fulfilled:

"The authenticity of the writings of the prophets, though the men themselves are human, is established by such things as the prediction of highly significant events far in the future that could be accomplished only through a knowledge obtained from a realm which is not subject to the laws of time as we know them.

One of the great evidences is the long series of prophecies concerning Jesus the Messiah. These prophecies extend hundreds of years prior to the birth of Christ.

They include a vast amount of detail concerning

Christ himself, His nature and the things He would do when He came--things which to the natural world, or the scientific world, remain to this day completely inexplicable."

In addition to this, many non-Christian ancient sources confirmed details of Christ.

Dr. Gary Habermas catalogued over 3,400 sources, many of which are skeptical or even critical of Christians, adding to their veracity, including:

- Josephus 37-100 AD,
- Suetonius 70-160 AD
- Pliny the Younger 61-113 AD
- Tacitus 56-120 AD
- Mara Bar-Serapion 72 AD
- Lucian 125-180 AD
- Babylonian Talmud.

Piecing together these non-biblical sources, they confirm the key points of the gospel, such as:

Jesus died by crucifixion; He was buried; His death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope, believing that His life was ended; The tomb was empty a few days later; The disciples had experiences which they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus.

**The twelve apostles** went to their **deaths** holding their **faith in the risen Christ**.

**The date of Easter even changed our calendar.**

How?

In 45 BC, **Julius Caesar** wanted a **common calendar** used in **all the countries conquered by Romans**. He switched their various **lunar calendars**, based on the monthly cycles of the moon, to a **solar calendar** of 365 days with a leap day every four years.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, **Emperor Constantine** stopped the **persecution of the Christians** and made **Christianity the defacto state religion**. He wanted a **common date to celebrate Easter throughout the Roman Empire** and he wanted it **on a Sunday**.

This would settle the “Quarto-deciman Controversy.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11<sup>th</sup> edition) explained how the “Quarto-deciman Controversy” ended with the switching of Easter from the traditional Jewish Passover to a particular Sunday determined by a new formula:

“Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject; and urged **the tradition, which he had received from the apostle, of observing the fourteenth day** (of the Jewish month of **Nisan**) ...

A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led **Constantine to summon the Council of Nicaea in 325** ...

The decision of the council was unanimous that **Easter** was to be kept **on Sunday**, and on **the same Sunday throughout the world**, and ‘that

**none should hereafter follow the blindness of the Jews’.**”

This ended the tradition of asking Jewish rabbis when **Passover** would be. **Constantine** then adopted a **new formula** for determining the **date of Easter**, namely, the **first Sunday after first full moon after Spring Equinox**.

Peter Schaff wrote in *History of the Christian Church*:

“At **Nicaea** ... the Roman and Alexandrian usage with respect to **Easter** triumphed, and the **Judaizing practice of the Quarto-decimanians**, who always celebrated **Easter** on the **fourteenth of Nisan [Passover]** became **thenceforth a heresy.**”

This was a defining **split between the Jewish Christian Church** -- as Jesus and his disciples were Jewish -- and **the emerging Gentile Christian Church**.

Church scholars compiled **precise tables** of when **future dates of Easter would be**.

Not everyone was quick to use the **new church tables**, particularly the Irish. This was because in 433 AD, the night before Easter, according to the old calendar, **Saint Patrick** confronted the Druid chieftain King Leary, resulting in thousands of Irish converting.

In 567 AD, the **Council of Tours** moved the **beginning of the year back to March 25**, as **Julius Caesar’s January 1<sup>st</sup>** was

considered pagan.

During the Middle Ages, **France celebrated New Year Day on Easter.**

The Church's **table of dates** based on the Julian Calendar had a slight discrepancy of **11 minutes per year.**

After a thousand years, in 1582, the **church tables** made **Easter ten days ahead of Constantine's formula** -- the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox -- and even further from its origins in the Jewish Passover.

Pope Gregory XIII decided to fix the problem by **eliminating ten days from the calendar** and **skipping a leap day** in years divisible by 100 and also divisible by 400.

It sounds complicated, but it is so accurate that the **Gregorian Calendar** is still the calendar used **internationally today.**

The **Gregorian Calendar** also returned the **beginning of the new year** from March 25 back to **January 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Thus, **setting the date of Easter** is the reason the **world is using the Gregorian Calendar!**

In closing, one last question needs to be answered. **Why did the Lamb have to die?**

To answer that, we must ask:



## Why did God make us?

First, we are creatures made in His image with a **free will ability to love God.**

Secondly, **God has to hide himself behind His creation** for us to have a **free will**, because if He ever revealed Himself in all of overwhelming, omnipotent, universe creating power, **your response would be involuntary.** And for love to be love it must be voluntary!

Thirdly, **God is just and therefore must judge every sin.** If He does not judge a sin, His silence would be giving consent to sin.

Numbers 30 explains **silence equals consent.** This is seen in a **wedding ceremony**, where the minister asks if anyone objects they should **speak now or forever hold their peace.** By staying silent, those in attendance are giving their consent. In law, this is called "the rule of tacit admission."

If God is **silent** and does not judge a sin, even the smallest, His **silence** would effectively be giving consent to the sin, denying His just nature, denying Himself. And 2 Timothy 2:13 declares "**God cannot deny Himself.**" **So He must judge every sin.**

In **mathematical equations**, there are **constants** and **variables.**

In the **equation of redemption**, the **constant** is **God** is just, forever was, is, and forever will be **just.** The **variable** is **who takes the**

**judgment – you or a substitute.**

**The Lamb is our substitute. The Lamb is God's way to love you without having to judge you. God is just in that He judges every sin, but God is love in that He provided the Lamb to take the judgment for our sins.**

The **sacrifice of the Lamb** was foreshadowed by the **coats of skins** God made for **Adam and Eve**.

It was foreshadowed by the **sacrifices made by Abel, Noah, and Abraham**.

In Genesis 22:7-8:

"Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied. 'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but **where is the lamb for the burnt offering?**' And Abraham said, 'My son, **God will provide himself a lamb** for burnt offering.'"

It was foreshadowed in the Law of Moses with the **Passover lamb**, and on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest brought the **blood of lamb** into Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat. **The blood changed it from a "judgment" seat into a "mercy seat."**

It was foreshadowed by the sacrifices of **David, Solomon, and Elijah**.

Finally, John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and declared: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

Believers in the Old Testament had faith in the Lamb to come; believers in the New Testament have faith in the Lamb that came, but salvation is through the Lamb.

The **Lamb of God** took the **judgment for all of your sins**.

"For **God so loved the world** that **He gave his only begotten Son**."

**Another question is, how was Jesus' sacrifice enough to pay for the sins of all mankind?**

Jesus is divine and experienced judgment in a dimension we will never understand.

2 Peter 3:8 says "**A day with the Lord** is as a **thousand years** and a thousand years as a day." **Jesus** experienced the **day on the cross** as if it were a **thousand years**.

In God's perfect justice:

**the eternal Being, Jesus, who is innocent** suffering for a **finite--limited period of time** is equal to **all of us finite--limited beings** who are **guilty** suffering for an **eternal period of time**.

**Infinity times finite equals finite times infinity.**

An **unlimited Being** suffering for a **limited period of time** equals **all of us limited beings** suffering for an **unlimited period of time**.

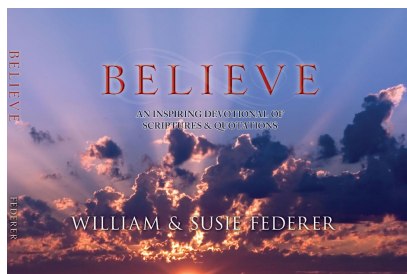
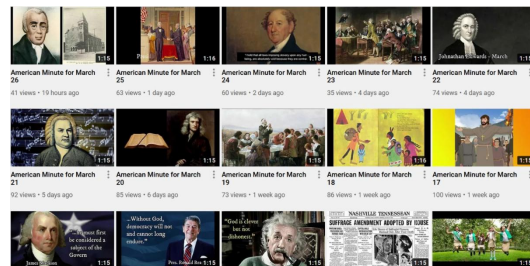
**Jesus** suffered the equivalent of eternal judgement in all or our places, and **He is THE ONLY ONE** who could have done it!

When someone believes the Gospel – that **Jesus suffered in their place**, that **their sins have been taken away**, and that they are **accepted by God** – they are filled with joy and gratefulness.

Experiencing the **unconditional love of God** brings a **behavioral change** from the **inside–out**, a polarity change in the heart -- **instead of avoiding God, you are drawn to God** -- a personal relationship with **God the Father** through **Jesus the Son**, then, **filled with Holy Spirit**, a desire to share the unconditional love of God with a lost and hurting world.

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