developing a flying taxi service, one that will allow people to soar over highway traffic. Flying cars are projected to be a $1 trillion market by 2040.

As potentially world-changing as these flights are, they are nothing compared tothe world-changing flights described in Exodus when God passed over the land to “strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals” (Exodus 12:12). This was God’s judgment on the people and the gods of Egypt who oppressed the people of Israel. God spared the Israelites because they followed God’s instructions, smearing lamb’s blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. “The blood shall be a sign for you,” God said to the people, through their leaders Moses and Aaron; “when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt” (v. 13).

This innovative flight took place as predicted, when God passed over and “struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon” (v. 29). This action resulted in a second flight, one which took place after Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night. “Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites,” Pharaoh said to them. “Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone” (vv. 31-32).

God’s flight over Egypt led to the flight of the people through the Red Sea. Together, these flights led to the liberation of the people from captivity. The people were ready for this trip, because God gave them instructions for how to eat the first Passover meal. “This is how you shall eat it,” said God: “your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the LORD” (v. 11). The Passover meal was eaten in faith, trusting that the deliverance promised to Israel was present, and that they would walk in that deliverance immediately.

The Archer flying car will be very cool, no doubt about it. But in terms of world-changing flights, it cannot compare to Passover. Only Passover has the power to change the world for all time. This mighty act of God launched the exodus from Egypt, in which God delivered his people from slavery and led them to “a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8). In Jewish and Christian traditions this event is considered crucial to the life of faith for it demonstrates God’s solidarity with the oppressed, God’s desire to liberate people from physical and spiritual bondage, and God’s ability to deliver on that promise.

The Passover is the Lord’s in the sense that God provided it as a *rescue*, to deliver Israel from the plague of the firstborn. It is the Lord’s Passover, provided as an *institution*, to remember God’s rescue and deliverance for Israel through every generation. It is the Lord’s Passover, provided as a powerful *drama*, acting out the perfect sacrifice and rescue Jesus would later provide.

This liberating work is remembered whenever Jews celebrate the Passover meal, and whenever Christians gather for the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. As Christians, we do not follow the biblical instructions to “take a lamb for each family” and “slaughter it at twilight.” We do not put its blood on our doorways and then “eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs” (Exodus 12:3, 6, 7, 8). But we do eat the bread of Christ’s body, broken for us, and we also drink the cup of Christ, representing his blood shed for us for the forgiveness of sin. We follow the practice of the apostle Paul, who said that “Christ, our Passover lamb, is sacrificed” for us. Therefore, says Paul, we can celebrate the festival “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8, ESV).

Because Christ is our Passover lamb, we can experience a world-changing flight into freedom. We do this as a church community when we take stands on public issues of moral concern. In the 1950s, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church decided that it had a responsibility “to speak on social and moral issues for the encouragement and instruction of the Church and its members.” Over the years, the church supported public school desegregation, equal rights for women, divestment in South Africa to help end apartheid, and a ban on landmines. These positions initially stirred up controversy, but they are now accepted by many Christians in America.

One Presbyterian pastor, Henry Baumann, decided to travel with a church member to Montgomery, AL, in March 1965. He wanted to hear the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech at the end of his historic march from Selma. “We wanted to be there,” he said, “and be part of the movement.” So, they put on their traveling clothes and made a flight to Alabama. At the time, supporting King and other civil rights leaders seemed to be in line with God’s focus on liberation, as well as a faithful response to the call of the biblical prophets to work for social justice and travel closer to the promised land. Almost 60 years later, the challenge remains the same: To work as a church to free people from physical-spiritual-emotional bondage, in line with the message of the original Passover.

God’s world-changing flight can also include liberation from personal bondage. Just as the Archer is a personal flying vehicle, the Passover can be understood as vehicle for personal liberation. When Jesus sat down with his disciples for the Passover meal in Jerusalem, he gave them a cup and said, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28). His blood, like the blood of the Passover lamb, is poured out to free people from anything that oppresses them. In this case, it brings forgiveness of sin.

The Bible understands sin to be slavery. It is a bondage that separates us from God and from each other. Sin “is not the breaking of a rule,” says seminarian Jacob Sparks, “but rather slavery to oneself and separation from God and neighbor.” When you run down the list of the Ten Commandments, from “no other gods” to not coveting “anything that belongs to your neighbor,” you quickly see that commandment-breaking is grounded in selfishness, a slavery to oneself, which separates us from God and neighbor.

Fortunately, Christ is our Passover lamb, and he shed his blood to bring us God’s forgiveness. The “good news,” says Sparks, “is that regardless of the sins we do or do not commit, Jesus Christ has destroyed sin and death, and we are no longer under the bondage of our sin and separation.” In Christ, the wrath of God passes over us because it has been poured out on him. You are now free to put God first, because Christ liberated you from captivity to yourself. You can now love your neighbor instead of coveting their luxurious house or car, because Jesus shed his blood to free you from bondage to sin and separation.

The Archer looks like it will be an impressive flying car, but it is not nearly as world changing as the Passover, which continues to bring us liberation, as communities and as individuals. From the time of the exodus to today, God is always at work in innovative ways, to free us from anything that can enslave us.

Prayer: World Changing God, I’m so thankful forgiveness isn’t something I have to earn or achieve. It’s a gift of grace I get to receive. Thank You that Jesus’ blood was enough to pay for my sin. Help me receive all You are offering me. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

**Sources:**

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**World-Changing Flights**

Sunday, September 10, 2023 [Exodus 12:1-14](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+12%3a1-14&language=en&version=NRSVUE)

Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Before their pioneering airplane flights on December 17, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright spent untold hours, over the course of several years, designing and tweaking their early prototypes. Other aspiring aviators who modeled their work on automobiles and other surface vehicles, tried to devise a means of lifting heavy machines off the ground. The Wrights began by observing birds in flight and focused on unpowered kites and gliders.

Through trial and error, using homemade wind tunnels, they perfected the airfoil, the optimal wing-shape for capturing the power of moving air. As for their propeller, the Wrights started by adapting marine propellers, but quickly realized they needed a revolutionary new shape. Their conceptual breakthrough: an aeronautical propeller is essentially a twisted wing rotating in a vertical plane. So, they adapted their airfoil design into a propeller shape and carved their propeller from wood.

On the windy beach at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the Wrights dealt with numerous drive-shaft failures. They ordered replacement parts all the way from their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, further delaying the test flights. Their first powered flight lasted all of 12 seconds. They made three more short flights that day: the longest one lasting 59 seconds. That last flight shattered the frame supporting the front rudder.

It hardly seemed worth the effort they’d put into it. All that work, and for this? Just 59 seconds in the air, and a damaged airplane to show for it? Of course*,* it *was* worth it. The Wright brothers knew that those few seconds in the air represented an achievement never seen in human history. Soon the world realized it as well. We’ve been fascinated by flight ever since.

Pioneering airplane designs continue to roll off drafting tables. One of the newest is the “Archer,” an aircraft that looks like a hybrid between a helicopter and an airplane. The Archer is intended to be a commuter-style vehicle, fulfilling the dreams of all who hope to own a flying car. To some, the Archer “looks like a space-age tadpole that’s sprouted spike-tipped wings,” which “can take off and land vertically, meaning that it doesn’t require a runway, and once it’s aloft, it flies like a small airplane.” Archer Aviation executives are