

Fundamentals of Belief
#11B: The Ordinance of Passover

Edited Sermon Transcript
Jon W. Brisby; 11-25-2000

This afternoon, brethren, we are going to pick up the series of sermons that I took a little bit of a break from—the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal. If you will remember, we left off after going through the first part of fundamental number eleven.

Let me read that fundamental to you:

We believe in TWO ORDINANCES for this age; water baptism by immersion, into Jesus Christ (not a denomination) for the remission of sins, following genuine repentance; and Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover, observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib.

That is fundamental number eleven. We went through the first ordinance, which is baptism, and talked about the significance of baptism and that which God has required from all of those whom He has called.

I took a little bit of a break from this series because of the timing of the year that fell leading right up to the fall Holy Days. I didn't quite feel right about getting into an in-depth discussion of the Passover, right before the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, so I suspended it for a time and took up some other topics. Even though this is still not quite the Passover season, I want to

get back and continue on this road with the fundamentals. So, you are getting a little bit of an advance on Passover material. You will, obviously, get your meat in due season at that time as well.

We are going to talk, this afternoon, about this second ordinance for Christians. Why do we believe that the Lord's Supper is the continuation of the Passover? Why do we observe it on the 14th of the first month of God's calendar?

Let's do just a little bit of review. Remember, in the last sermon on this topic, I first defined what an ordinance is. Let's go back and look at that very quickly again. When we talk about ordinances that apply to Christians today, what are we talking about when we say an ordinance?

Well, in the common usage, an ordinance can mean: 1) an authoritative command or order, 2) a custom or a practice established by long usage, 3) a Christian rite, or 4) a statute or regulation. With this fundamental of belief of the Church, what are we speaking of when we say "ordinance"? In the sense of God's truth, we are speaking of a ceremony, a commanded ritual—a ritual that God requires of us as a token of obedience, recognition and acceptance of His authority.

I also began last time by comparing that to the rituals that were commanded of Ancient Israel. There were a number of ceremonial rituals that were required—ordinances that they were commanded to keep and perform. By comparison, in this fundamental of belief, we are saying that, as opposed to those temporary ordinances that were called "carnal ordinances," there are two specific ceremonies or rituals required of Christians today. Even though they are ceremonial and ritualistic, they are absolutely required.

Let's review quickly Hebrews 9:1–15 and we will see that comparison in this comment about physical ordinances:

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. [We are talking about something physical—ordinances that were physical in nature.] For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and

Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy [Spirit] this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing . . .

It is referring to all of the physical attributes of that first tabernacle—all of the things that were contained in it.

Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience . . .

We are talking about ordinances—rituals—that were there for a reason, obviously, because God commanded them to be done. Yet, all of those things that the Israelites were commanded to do in their ritualistic obedience were not things that could take away sin. They were not rituals that, in any way, took away the penalty of sin.

. . . in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

We are talking about certain physical rituals that were required only on a temporary basis until something else happened. I have gone through that in past sermons and I don't want to repeat it all because I have already distinguished it for you from the immutable laws of God. The portion of the law of Moses which was the spiritual laws of God, was not considered these "carnal ordinances" at all. Those things were applicable long before the Levitical priesthood. They continued through that time and they were not done away with by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are talking here about certain rituals temporary in nature that were a part of the law of Moses.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

This is the transition to a new covenant that Jesus Christ brought in, which pointed to the opportunity for mankind to finally receive eternal life. This was not offered to Ancient Israel, even through the ceremonies and rituals that they performed at God's command. Those carnal ordinances were replaced by those things which Jesus Christ instituted to be a fulfillment and to point to the real purpose in God's plan—our salvation.

If Christ's sacrifice actually replaced certain ordinances from the first covenant, what specific ordinances are still in force for Christians today? Well, we went through the first one last time, which is baptism. The second one, which we are going to talk about today, is Passover—the ordinance associated with Passover for Christians.

Our fundamental says, "We believe in . . . Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover . . ." Why do we believe that? Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 11:23–28 and we will note the command directed by the Apostle Paul to Christians, those who were members of the Church. Here, we are not talking about something that is reflecting back, applying to Jews. No, we are talking about something that was commanded of those who were Gentiles, who were called and became a part of the Church by being baptized. We are talking about a physical ordinance, a ritual, a ceremony that was required of Christians—those who were a part of the Church.

1 Corinthians 11:23–28:

For I have received of the Lord [Paul speaking] that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was

betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Here, the Apostle Paul is outlining for the Church in Corinth (and its applicability for all of the Church), the requirement to eat that unleavened bread and to drink of that cup of wine in a ritual and ceremony that was associated with Christ. Where did the Apostle Paul get that requirement? Is it something he just made up?

If you will notice, what did it say in the very beginning of verse 23? Where did Paul get this instruction? He said, ". . . I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . ." By what authority then, was the Apostle Paul speaking of the requirement of this physical ceremony to be practiced by Christians? He said he received it from God Himself.

You will remember, Paul was taught directly by Jesus Christ Himself for three and one half years in the wilderness. That is where he received his inspiration—not out of his own mind. Does that match exactly with what Christ taught and required of His own apostles—the disciples at the time, who became the twelve? Well, let's notice it in Luke 22:14–20.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Here we find one of the accounts of Christ actually instituting a requirement of a Passover service for these disciples. We will notice a little bit later that it was at a Passover service. He was instituting a requirement for a physical ritual, a ceremony, and a rite that Christians would be required to keep. We are going to find that it was to be a memorial.

To whom does this ritual apply? To whom does this ordinance, with these emblems of the bread and wine, apply? Does it just apply to the twelve apostles because they were the ones who were there with Christ? Maybe Christ was just talking to those twelve and saying it was something that He expected them to do. What did we read in verse 20, though?

He said, "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Who is the "you"? Was it just the disciples who were required to partake of these emblems of the wine and unleavened bread? It depends on who it is that needs the shed blood of Christ.

Was the shed blood of Christ only for those twelve disciples? What does Matthew 26:28 say? "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Here, we see, it was not just an application for those twelve. It wasn't just something that was required of those twelve individuals. He was speaking of something that would apply to many. Who are those many? Anyone who would be called and given an opportunity for a relationship with Jesus Christ in the Spirit, was going to come under this physical ordinance—the requirement to practice this ceremony once a year.

If we think that we are not obligated to keep that ritual, that ordinance, then what we must be saying is that we don't need the shed blood of Christ; because, as we just read in Luke 22:20, that was who it was for. What was the purpose of that sacrifice, except for those who would come under the shed blood of Christ? We already read in 1 Corinthians 11 that Paul was commanding it of the Church—of those in Corinth, specifically. However, in a broader fashion, it was applicable to all in the Church, including all of those in the last day Church.

It was a memorial of the death of Christ. It also pictured the future, the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and its place in our desire for salvation. There is no salvation—there is no eternal life for human beings—except through the acceptance of that Christ.

These emblems that Jesus Christ was instituting now, hours before His death, were that which would picture and memorialize His sacrifice and its significance as the first step in the overall plan of God for man's salvation. It begins by a call, a conversion, an understanding of the truth, and the understanding of the fact that there is no road to salvation that does not begin with the acceptance of Jesus Christ, and I am not talking about the false christs of this world.

There are thousands and millions of false christs—as many as there are human minds to think and to conjure. That is how many christs there are out there. We are speaking of the only, real, legitimate, true Christ, and that which He has commanded for those whom He has called and given an opportunity; and then, those who will be faithful by keeping that law, those commandments, those statutes, those judgments and the ritual ordinances that He has commanded, including the Passover service.

There is another part of that service as well. Let's see it in John 13:3. We have seen the institution of the bread and the wine. Notice another part of that service as well.

John 13:3–17:

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The

servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It was another significant part of the ritual, the ceremony, and the ordinance that was being required for all who would claim Christ and would be a part of that Body in the future.

So, we have the three elements that are a part of the ordinance as we have always kept it for all of these years in the Church. It begins with the foot washing ceremony. It is followed by the breaking of the unleavened bread and the partaking of a morsel of that unleavened bread by the congregation of those who are baptized. It is then followed by the taking of a small amount of wine, representing that very blood of Jesus Christ that was spilled for us.

These are part of a physical ritual, an ordinance that we do keep, and have always kept, in this Church. It is because Jesus Christ set the example and He said these things were not applicable just to the disciples then, but that they would be for the Church. What is this ordinance based upon? Why these particular emblems? The foot washing, the bread and the wine—what does it mean? What do they specifically relate to?

1 Corinthians 5:7:

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us . . .

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us . . ." What was the significance of these emblems? He was showing definitively that He was the Passover Lamb. The significance of the bread was to be a representation of His own broken body, the sacrificed Lamb. The wine is an emblem of the very spilled blood of Christ and the fulfilling of the sacrifice that He gave. It was because He was the fulfillment of the Passover. He was the representative Passover.

This is a Passover ceremony; the world calls it "The Lord's Supper." The world recognizes these emblems of bread and wine as that which they call "The Lord's Supper." It is those emblems that we recognize, not as their own separate, distinct ceremony, but as the continuation of the Passover service. When we are taking those emblems, we are not doing a new, separate ritual that has no relevance to the past. We take that wine and that bread and we do that foot washing service as a continuation, an expansion, of the Passover service.

Jesus Christ was instituting new emblems for the Christian Passover service—new emblems of a continuing requirement of law that had begun all the way back from the beginning and was revealed, commanded, to Ancient Israel. That which the true Church is keeping today is not a "Lord's Supper," which is separate and has no relevance. What we keep is the continuation of Passover.

Jesus Christ was our Passover, as we just read in 1 Corinthians 5. ". . . Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us . . ." Well, what is then, the significance of Passover to begin with? We are going to have to go back and read in the Old Testament to find out what this Passover commandment was originally, before we can understand its relevance and these new emblems as they apply to the Church today.

Let's begin, as is often helpful to do, with the commandments for the Holy Days in Leviticus 23:4–6:

"These are the feasts of the [Eternal] . . ." These are not Moses' feasts; these aren't anyone else's feasts; they belong to God. He was the one who created them. He was the one who instituted them.

These are the feasts of the [Eternal], even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the [Eternal's] passover.

Whose Passover is it? Who instituted it? Who commanded it? The Eternal God.

In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the [Eternal's] passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the [Eternal]: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

You find a correlation, some sort of connectivity, between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Passover is on the 14th and the Days of Unleavened Bread begin on the 15th, the day following.

I will go ahead and tell you one thing in advance. We are going through the overview today of this ordinance of Passover, including the commands in Exodus and Leviticus. In the next sermon that I give, we are going to cover the nitty-gritty details about why we keep the Passover on the 14th; but I am going to try very, very hard not

to get into that today. We are going to talk about those who have come up with all kinds of rationalizations to change away from the original way that we began keeping the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread many, many years ago.

There are as many different justifications as there are clever human minds, in trying to warp, twist and pervert the commands of God, but I am going to try to avoid all of that today. We will get into some of those details in the next sermon in order to finish this topic.

The last part of this fundamental of belief—I would avoid it if I could—says, ". . . and Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover, observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib." I am going to have to explain to you why we keep it on the 14th and what we mean when we say we keep it on the 14th. It is the beginning of the 14th, not the end of the 14th, but I will save those technicalities for the next sermon.

So, we find that it was a command of God. They are commands that belong to God, not to human beings. We found that the Passover is the 14th of the first month; and a seven-day feast, called the Days of Unleavened Bread, begins on the 15th. How was Ancient Israel then, commanded to keep the Passover? What were the instructions given to them? When we read that, we are going to find a lot of details that help us to understand what God was instituting and what it pictured and foreshadowed.

Exodus 12:1–13:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt . . ." I am going to stop and quickly point out that this was not when the Israelites were receiving the instructions on how to keep the Passover. At this particular point in the chapter, we are hearing what God commanded Moses and Aaron. Here is the instruction that was given to Moses and Aaron and they were told to give it to the people. God didn't reveal this directly in the homes of every Israelite and give them their own direct instructions. He used a chosen servant and He commissioned that servant then, to pass it to the people and tell them what was required.

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an

house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month [that first month of the year, according to God's calendar]: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the [Eternal's] passover.

That which we have just read in these last verses tells the instructions that God was going to require of His chosen people. It was an occasion that was called "the Eternal's Passover." Why is it called Passover? What is the significance of that name and title?

Verse 12–13:

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Why was it called Passover? Because God was going to spare someone. All of the rest of the people involved were going to experience great loss, but someone who was called and separated out, as a people, was going to be spared. They were going to be passed over; they were going to be saved. How were they going to be saved? They were going to be saved by killing a lamb. They were going to sacrifice that lamb, take its spilled blood and strike it on the doorposts of their homes. The very symbolism of that blood being on the doorposts was that which God would look for when He sent His death angel into that land.

Anyone who had that blood upon his home and was dutifully carrying out the ceremony required—he was in his home, eating of the very flesh of that lamb that they were required to roast—would be passed over by that death angel. That is what the Passover instructions were. They were going to be spared and protected from death. The Egyptians, the heathen who were separated from God, would have every firstborn of men and animals alike, killed that night.

Next, let's notice in Exodus 12:21 further detailed instructions that are magnified as Moses takes those commands of God and delivers them to the people and tells the people what they are to do.

Exodus 12:21–23, 28–31, 33–36, 41–42:

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. [Another command and requirement that was part of the Passover ritual.] For the [Eternal] will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the [Eternal] will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the [Eternal] had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

They accepted what Moses and Aaron said, who presented themselves as being the messengers of God. They had instructions which they were to obey if they wanted to live and if they wanted to be spared the destruction that was about to come on that entire nation of Egypt. It says that they did as the Eternal had commanded. Moses and Aaron were the ones through whom it was given.

And it came to pass, that at midnight the [Eternal] smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the

[Eternal], as ye have said. (Verse 33) And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the [Eternal] gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. (Verse 41) And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the [Eternal] went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the [Eternal] for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the [Eternal] to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Without getting into the technicalities, you recognize that which was originally given by revelation through Mr. Armstrong, which this Church kept for more than forty years, before men started corrupting it and trying to merge the Passover in with the Days of Unleavened Bread. That Passover was kept, as we accepted and believed, by Ancient Israel on this first Passover night, on the beginning of the 14th. They stayed in their homes all that night as they were commanded. They did not come out until the morning, as defined by the sun beginning to come up. It was during that day that they prepared for their exodus, and they did exit at night from the land of Egypt. They exited the night of the beginning of the 15th, after they had assembled all of the millions of their host together in the wake of this cataclysmic plague, which killed all of the firstborn of Egypt.

They spoiled the Egyptians, and by virtue of their faithfulness to hear the servant of the Eternal God, they were saved, they were spared and they lived when the Egyptians died. They obeyed the commands to sacrifice that lamb, to sprinkle that blood upon the doorposts of their homes, to eat that roasted lamb, and to stay in their homes all night.

Because they accepted the terms of that sacrifice and the requirement of that ordinance, God delivered them from physical bondage and slavery. For the first time, after all of those hundreds of years, they became a nation and a people. They were God's holy people who were taken out, extracted by an incredible miracle, from bondage. What was all of that Passover about?

I am sure that the Israelites could not begin to understand it at the time. They could only see the plight that they were experiencing as slaves in that land. So, as a memorial that was set up for them, it had great significance, because it was an act of God that allowed them to gain physical freedom from the Egyptians.

They also recognized in time that the very emblems of the lamb—its sacrifice and its blood—had to do with something that was going to happen in the future. That Passover service foreshadowed the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It had very much less to do with that ancient nation coming out of physical Egypt and being saved, than it did to pointing to the very initial step in the plan of God and what it meant for the Church.

The significance of all that which was written, as we know from 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews, is that they were examples for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Why did the Israelites go through all that they experienced? Why did they endure the afflictions under Egyptian bondage? Why were they miraculously saved? Why did they walk out of Egypt? Why did they cross the Red Sea? Why were they sustained in the wilderness? Why were all of their mistakes and errors chronicled and recorded? It was because they were valuable for the Church. They were valuable for each one of you.

I wonder how much we recognize the significance of all of those things that happened in history. They were being accomplished and completed so that the very books before you, the inspired Word of God, could be written and recorded—so that they would be there as a lesson and an instruction manual for those whose minds God would open.

Even in these very last days before the second coming of Christ, all of those experiences were written so that you could have a basis for confidence in the very will of God and His plan for salvation for all of mankind, beginning with the firstfruits. That plan began with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the sacrifice of a little lamb, the spilled blood—which was the beginning command that was required for the Israelites to accept in order to save their lives.

It wasn't just an inane ritual required of God for the purpose of making the Israelites jump through hoops. No, it had purpose and meaning. What was that purpose? That lamb which was sacrificed, that blood which was sprinkled and painted upon the doorposts of their homes, that lamb's flesh which was required to be eaten of Israel, pictured the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the time when He would,

hundreds of years later, come in the flesh—God in the flesh. He would give up His own life to initiate the opportunity for human beings to avoid the second death—to be saved of the same death angel who, through God's righteous judgment, will exact a price upon humanity and will destroy all of those who are guilty of sin, of whom we are all found wanting and guilty.

That Passover represented and foreshadowed the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. Notice John 1:29. John the Baptist knew exactly who this was when he saw Him coming. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John the Baptist understood who He was. He recognized that this Jesus was the Christ, and one of His titles was the Lamb of God.

Notice it also in Revelation 5:11–13:

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

These are things that are going to be happening just before His glorious return and the establishment of His Kingdom on this earth. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He is the Lamb. The significance of the Passover ritual, as first commanded of Ancient Israel, was to picture not only that Christ who would come and be sacrificed, but the entire plan of God and the significance of Christ as the One who would save mankind.

By His sacrifice, we have that opportunity, if we have been called to receive salvation, to avoid the penalty—to be passed over when the death angel comes. That judgment is coming, brethren, and we are all going to be judged. There is something that is going to be required of us to avoid paying the price of the second death. It is equivalent for us as if we had painted that blood upon the doorposts of our houses and were dutifully obeying the commands that were given from God through His chosen servants, including partaking of that lamb, even as the Israelites did on that very night.

They were not just required to sacrifice, to spill the blood and to paint that blood on their doorposts; they were also required to partake of that lamb. They were required to eat of it, to let it become a part of them, to enter into their physical systems, just as we are required to partake of Jesus Christ.

It is not enough to just say the words—that we accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We must partake of Christ. We must imbibe of Him and He must fill us. Unless He does, we cannot fulfill the requirements of God.

As we saw, John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John the Baptist understood, even by prophecy, that he was speaking the very purpose of that sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By the spilling of His blood is the forgiveness of sin because we are all transgressors and guilty of breaking the immutable, perfect, righteous laws of God.

We have all been worthy of death, but there is only one thing that is going to prevent us from experiencing that second death; that is to have our sins taken away, pardoned. How was that pardon going to occur? Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ—He who died and was willing to give up Himself, living perfectly, without sin, that His death could count to take away our own sins and to cleanse us.

Psalm 32:1–2:

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the [Eternal] imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Is this saying that a human being is blessed only if he is one who has committed no sin? No, because there is no human being who has committed no sin. All are guilty and have come short of the glory of God. We are all transgressors. We have all incurred the death penalty, but who is blessed? Who is truly blessed? A prophecy of David says, "Blessed is the man unto whom the [Eternal] imputeth not iniquity . . ."

Who is it to whom God will not impute iniquity, even of that which we are guilty? Those who have had that guilt removed, washed away, by the blood of the Lamb. Those who have had their sins forgiven and are counted as righteous—wearing a white robe by virtue of being cleaned up, cleansed, and purified through the sacrifice of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

That is the significance of that Passover ritual that was commanded of Ancient Israel, which has every applicability today. The churches of this world, even those that use the name of Christ, do not understand the significance of this ritual that they may partake of in some variation, which they call the Lord's Supper.

They understand clinically the idea of the shed blood of Jesus Christ covering and forgiving sin, but they have no way to put it into perspective in the overall plan of God. They are without knowledge of God's plan by His intention.

The newly instituted emblems of the Passover represent forgiveness of sin through the death of Jesus Christ. That is what those new emblems are all about. Why did Christ have to change the emblems? Why do we not continue to keep the Passover the same way that the Israelites did? It is because the sacrifice, physically, of a little lamb, the shedding of the blood and the eating of that roasted lamb, pictured the coming of the Savior.

There was a requirement for new emblems from the moment that Savior arrived. When Christ did come in the flesh and complete His ministry in preparation for His literal sacrifice and death, He became the Lamb. He became the ultimate sacrifice, synonymous with the Passover lamb. He was our Passover, as we saw in 1 Corinthians 5. He is our Passover and therefore, it would be inappropriate to continue to sacrifice lambs. There is no further sacrifice of a physical lamb from the time that Jesus Christ fulfilled that role and became the ultimate sacrifice. He is the Passover Lamb.

So, why was a need required to change the emblems? After Christ's sacrifice, it was required for those in the Church, who would be called and given the Holy Spirit, who would partake of Christ, to recognize that Christ was that Passover Lamb. Then they would begin to partake of the emblems which represented Christ. That is the origin of the command for the change in emblems that Christ gave to His disciples on that night, hours before He fulfilled it, in being killed, hung on that stake and dying for our sins.

The foot washing service shows us the need to be humble and to be servants one to another. As we read in John 13, Christ set the example and He said it was an example; we are to follow and do as He did. He was not doing away with the concept of authority in the Church or authority within His ministry. He was using the foot washing service as a means to say that those who claim and will claim to be

Christians and will be fulfilling certain offices of responsibility in the Church, if they are His servants, will be behaving in a certain way.

What will their behavior be? It is not that there will not be offices of authority. Those offices will be fulfilled by those who are proving that they are there to serve one another. All the lay members of the Church are required, as those who would be called and partake of Christ, to demonstrate that humility and willingness to serve and sacrifice the self in the same way Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself.

He set the example, and that example was for us. It became part of the ritual, part of the ordinance which is commanded of all Christians in observing the Passover. What about the bread? The bread is representative of the body of Christ being broken and, specifically, provided for our physical healing.

Let's notice Isaiah 53:4–5:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

That was the significance of the very broken body of Jesus Christ. By virtue of His willingness to endure such torture, punishment and disfigurement at the hands of those He was there to save, He provided the means for each one of us to come before Him as He has required, to seek and receive healing in our physical bodies.

Notice Exodus 15:26. Here is a promise of God:

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.

He is a God who promised healing to His people—those who would fear and obey Him, who would seek to overcome the self and to obey the physical and spiritual laws that He set forth, which govern us. The very broken body of Jesus Christ became the means by which we can call upon Him and receive restoration when we break those laws. We can be forgiven, because the sacrifice of Christ has everything to do with the forgiveness of sin.

The body, the unleavened bread that we partake of in that service, specifically symbolizes the opportunity that we have to seek Him as our healer. That is another one of those things, brethren, that was perverted in time within the Church. From about the time of the mid-70's, after the initial changes in Monday Pentecost and the corruption of the doctrine on divorce and remarriage, you found the corruption of the concept of God as healer.

We began to be told, contrary to everything that the Church had believed and taught for years and years, that God heals through the medical system of man. Doctors are not to be avoided, as was originally taught, but God actually uses them in order to make us better and to give us good things.

I remember reading an article—I think it was in the *Worldwide News*—with an explanation of this change concerning the symbolism of the body of Christ through the bread in the Passover service. The way they rationalized it away was by saying, "That old belief that we had, about the unleavened bread specifically representing the body of Christ for the healing of our infirmities and afflictions, was a very narrow-minded interpretation. Oh, the body of Christ has so much more significance than we ever really realized before. It is on a much higher plane," they said, "to be shared with the significance of the blood of Christ; and both the body and the blood are significant for the spiritual healing in the taking away of sin."

By trying to use an argument that seemed to elevate the significance, what they were basically doing was corrupting the original doctrine. They were basically saying, "God has not really promised to heal you when you call upon Him, when you obey His commands, when you seek healing, as it is required to go to the ministry and to seek anointing. No, that is not really what He intended." They tried to elevate it in order to change it in the minds of the church members by saying, "No, it is synonymous with the blood of Christ." So now they had a richer interpretation which added so much depth to the significance of the body. All they did was lie and say, "God is no longer our healer." That is what they did.

We understand and hold fast to that original interpretation. We know that when we, in the Passover service, fulfill that ritualistic ordinance that God requires of all Christians today—the partaking of that unleavened bread—it represents the sacrifice of His body, the stripes that He endured, the suffering that He was exposed to. It allows us, in times of grief, trial, illness, disease and suffering, to call upon Him, place ourselves in His hands and know that we do have a God that hears; and He is our healer.

The wine represents Christ's shed blood. The significance of the shed blood of Jesus Christ is for the remission of our past sins.

Notice Hebrews 10:16–22:

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . .

What is it that allowed us as the Body of Christ—those called into the Church—for the first time, to enter in unto the throne of God, pictured by the Holy of Holies? It was by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

It was that shedding of His blood, the sacrifice that He made, which provided the means for our sins to be blotted out—to have our guilty past removed. Having our guilty past removed, we have this opportunity through Christ as our High Priest, sitting on the right hand of God in the third heaven at His throne, to come before that throne in prayer when we beseech Him on our knees. We are accepted, knowing that our prayers are heard; and that when we ask to be forgiven for the wretchedness that we have committed, we can have faith and assurance that He does forgive. It is another opportunity, brethren, to receive the miraculous intervention of God, so that the death angel passes over and does not slay us.

We are all guilty and worthy of that death. However, by this miracle, by His sacrifice and by the significance of the blood of Jesus Christ paying the penalty in our stead for our guilt, we have that guilt removed. We become reconciled unto God through our High Priest, Jesus Christ. Through His priceless blood, we have our prayers heard at the very throne of God. We are consecrated, kept, saved, blessed and prospered, even in these critical and terrible times.

The next question is, was Christ really keeping the Passover? Or, was this "Lord's Supper," as it is often called, something else? You have a number of people out there who will try and tell you that Christ wasn't telling us that we should continue to keep the Passover. They don't want to have anything to do with the immutable laws of God as He has commanded. No, they want to interpret according to their own minds and thoughts. They want you to believe that these emblems that were part of this ritual, which were obviously instituted for the Church, were not really a continuation of the Passover as we believe and as our fundamental states. No, it was a separate service. It wasn't the same as the Passover.

First, we know that Christ did keep the Passover. He was raised in a family with His physical parents who kept the Passover. It says in Luke 2:41, "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." It, obviously, was His practice to keep the Passover.

Then, turn with me to Luke 22:10–15 and tell me, in reading this, if you have any doubt whether Christ was keeping the Passover when He instituted these new emblems for His disciples.

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Now, what was Christ planning to do? Why was He instructing His disciples to go find this man who would lead them someplace to do something?

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

So Christ instructed His disciples to find a place for all of them to keep the Passover. It says that they went and made ready the Passover.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer . . .

Those who want to counter the fact that this was, literally, the Passover service, will tell you, "See, Christ said here, 'I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.' That means He desired to, but He didn't get the opportunity to." They will tell you that Christ was saying, "'I really wish I could eat another Passover with you.' Yet, He knew that He was going to be taken, arrested, and crucified before He had an opportunity to keep the Passover."

That is one of the arguments of these who try to tell you that the Passover was really kept the following evening—not the beginning of the 14th, when Christ was here with His disciples eating this meal. They will try to tell you that this was just a new ceremonial meal. The Passover was really being kept twenty-four hours later on the next evening, the Night to be Much Observed—the beginning night of the Feast. That was when the Jews were keeping it and that was also when Christ would have kept the Passover service. So, this could not have been the Passover service and what Christ is saying here is, "I have desired to eat the Passover service with you; too bad I won't get to."

They seem to forget the previous verses which demonstrate without a doubt, for anybody who wants to see the truth, that He sent His disciples to prepare the Passover. They went and prepared the Passover; and then, when the hour was come, which means the beginning of the Passover night, He sat down and what was He doing? He was having the Passover. Can it be any more clear?

Christ was keeping the right day, don't you think? I don't want to get ahead of myself because I want to save that for the next sermon, but we are going to go through this. We are going to find out when Christ was keeping it in comparison to the Feast Day, and how His crucifixion fell in line with the Feast Day and the commanded Passover. When did the Israelites do these things? How do these events fall in line on the time basis? There are answers and there are ways for us to know if we desire to hear the truth.

Christ was keeping the Passover. He instituted these emblems in the midst of the Passover-keeping. As those scriptures that we have already read said, when supper was finished, He instituted the foot washing, the bread—representing His body—and the wine as a representation of His shed blood. When He instituted these

emblems, He did something new that had not been done before. Then, He instructed those disciples to do those things in remembrance of Him. He was setting up a memorial service that pictured and rehearsed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who came to be the Lamb, who was slain from the foundation of the world to take away the sins of the world.

We already read in 1 Corinthians 11 that this was a continuation of the Passover with new emblems. It was an ordinance that applied, not only to those disciples who were with Christ on that fateful night, but for all Christians, for all time to come. The Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread were kept by the Church.

Let's go back to 1 Corinthians 11:23–29. Remember, I emphasized this point already, when Paul said, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . ." When did Paul receive it? He received it by inspiration when He was taught personally by Jesus Christ. Divine revelation in the wilderness for three and one half years—that is where Paul learned what he taught.

Was it consistent, exactly, with what the apostles were taught at the very feet of Jesus Christ? You better believe it was. Paul received it. He was not there to partake of that last Passover, but he obviously understood that it was incumbent upon him. Not only that, it was incumbent upon him to teach it to the Church; and then, all the Church was commanded to partake of this ordinance. The Church must partake of this physical ritual that has every significance, because it pictures the requirement of the sacrifice of Christ as the first step in the plan of salvation for any human being who is called.

That calling comes only one time. Before you can even begin to walk on the road to receive salvation, you and I must accept Jesus Christ as the means for salvation. We must accept His broken body and His shed blood. We must accept the real Christ and all that He embodies—the immutable laws of which He is the author because He is the Word made flesh.

Accepting Jesus Christ means accepting all that is a part of Him and all that He represents. Through His shed blood, we have the opportunity to have our guilty pasts removed—to be cleansed, so that we do not have to walk forward in guilt any longer, no matter what we have done, no matter what we have been guilty of. We are all guilty to the extent that we deserve death.

We all have an opportunity, brethren, to be passed over by that death angel, if we will accept, heed, and obey God as He has commanded and given. The same way Israel was saved because they obeyed the commands that they received through the chosen servants—the human agents whom God used in order to save them.

It works the same way and it pictures, more significantly, that which is incumbent upon us as a part of the Church. If we want to be saved from the death angel, brethren, we have to recognize who is speaking appropriately in the name of the living God, to give us instructions that lead to life. If we do and if we recognize and act upon it, if we obey and act in faith, then we can be passed over.

So, we fulfill this ritual year by year, in the beginning of the spring, to partake of the foot washing service and the emblems of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. It pictures that sacrifice of Christ, the beginning of that perfect plan of God for the salvation of all of mankind. It is that Father who starts us on our way to overcoming—that which is pictured by the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Paul commanded it of the Church. Even though he was not with Christ, He received the very same instruction in the wilderness by divine inspiration and revelation. He taught what he had been given, not that which came out of his own mind. That which he had been given, he taught also to the Church.

1 Corinthians 11:23–29:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. [It was to be a memorial.] After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

The other point Mr. Armstrong used to always make about this very scripture: Catholics and certain Protestant denominations continue to take their equivalent of the Lord's Supper, Passover, Eucharist or whatever they call it, on a regular basis, multiple times—daily, monthly, quarterly—throughout the year. Was that how God intended the Passover to be taken? Absolutely not.

It is a memorial of the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ—His shed blood. How often does any memorial of a death take place? Does it happen every month or every day? No, it happens once a year. This was not an instruction to say, "Take it as often as you want." Paul said, ". . . this do ye, as oft as ye drink it . . ." He wasn't saying, "Do it as often as you want." He was saying, "as oft as you drink it." How often is that? Once a year. That is when it is commanded. It is a Passover service.

The Passover comes once a year. It is on the 14th of the first month of God's calendar. That is when the Passover occurs. That is when the institution of these emblems is applicable, and no other time.

. . . as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. [It is a memorial.] For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

That, brethren, is why we do keep the Passover service as we do. That is why we believe that what is called the Lord's Supper, is a continuation, by those emblems, of the Passover that was initially commanded of Ancient Israel. We believe it is incumbent upon true Christians today, those who have accepted the real Jesus Christ and are a part of that Body.

Now, how do we know whether it is kept appropriately on the beginning of the 14th of that first month, or on the 15th? That, we will see next time.