

The Symbols of the New Testament Passover

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As we all know, the Passover is just a few weeks away from us and as we all normally do every year in the church of God, this is the time of year we examine ourselves. We take stock of our spiritual lives to see how we're doing in our spiritual walk. We want to make sure that when we come to take the New Testament Passover, that we treat this service and the symbols involved in this service, all its pictures and what it's about, with reverence and respect. As Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11, if we come to this and don't show this service and the symbols of this service the proper respect and reverence, we can be bringing judgment upon ourselves. It is something we want to take seriously and make sure we are doing it with the proper reverence and respect.

What I would like to do for the sermon today is to look at this particular subject and if you would like a title for this sermon it's:

The Symbols of the New Testament Passover

To get started with this, we are first going to look briefly at the Old Testament Passover to establish some foundational concepts we are going to work with. Start by turning to Exodus 12 and look at the story where the Passover was originally instituted with Israel, before they came out of Egypt. We are going to read the first eleven verses and what I want you to notice and particularly focus on, as we go through this, is what is actually being referred to as the Passover. The focus is on the lamb in all these verses we are going to read. They are going to tell us at the end that this is Yehovah's Passover. It's obviously referring to the lamb if we just notice this in context. We will begin with Exodus 12:1.

Exodus 12:1 *Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,*

2) *This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

3) *Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.*

4) *And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.*

5) *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.*

6) *Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. (NKJV)*

I'm reading from the New King James translation but the phrase for "at twilight" is the Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*, and it means between the two evenings. We will come back to that subject later, but just take notice of this in verse 6 for now. It specifically says that what happens between the two evenings on the fourteenth is the killing of the lamb. Continue in verse 7.

7) *And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.*

8) *Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.*

9) *Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. (NKJV)*

Notice throughout this, it is all focused on the lamb and it keeps using the word "it" because "it" refers to the lamb; that is the whole focus of these verses.

10) *You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.*

11) *And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. (NKJV)*

Notice when it says "It is the LORD's Passover", obviously in this context, it has to be referring to the lamb itself. That is the entire focus we have had since verse 1. The whole context is specifically focused on the lamb and when it says "it", referring to the lamb, is the LORD's Passover. What I want you to see from this is that the word Passover refers to a sacrifice. If you look throughout the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, the vast majority of the time you are going to see the term Passover or *Pesach* as it is in Hebrew, it refers to a sacrifice.

Sometimes, because of how this reads in English, we can get a little confused, because Passover and passing over, sound like the same thing. They are similar words in English, but in Hebrew they are completely different terms. We will come back to this, but what I want you to focus on here is the terminology and a lot of the details it mentions in reference to the Passover. They tell us that when it refers to the Passover, it is referring to a particular sacrifice. Notice in verse 21 of Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:21 *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. (NKJV)*

If you are reading from a New King James translation, like myself, you will notice that there is the word *lamb* in italics after it says *Passover*. It is a translator added word and it is not in the original Hebrew. All it is saying is, "kill the Passover", because killing the Passover is killing the lamb. Passover refers to a sacrifice, that's the point I want you to notice.

Also notice, as I pointed out in verse 6, it specifically mentions, *ben ha arbayim*, meaning “between the two evenings or twilight” as it has it in the New King James. It says the fourteenth, between the two evenings. What happened in that time frame? It was the killing of the lamb, the actual sacrificing and offering of the lamb. With that in mind, turn over to Leviticus 23:5.

Leviticus 23:5 *On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight [between the two evenings] is the LORD s Passover. (NKJV)*

It is defining the Passover as what takes place between the two evenings. If you have been in the church of God for any length of time, you are probably aware of the fact that the Hebrew phrase, *ben ha arbayim* is a hotly debated subject. There are two main theories with regard to the timing of the Old Testament Passover and volumes have been written on both sides of that argument. You can get big, thick books arguing both sides of those cases. It is not my purpose to address that argument. But I do want you to notice one particular thing. It is an obvious fact, regardless of which argument you go with in regard to timing, this is still an obvious fact. That is, what takes place between the two evenings is the killing of the lamb. Sometimes we look at the word Passover and think the term comes from “passing over”, but realize the “passing over”—when the destroyer comes to kill the firstborn—Exodus 12 tells us specifically that happened at midnight.

Look at the two different theories in regard to *ben ha arbayim*. Again, it is not my purpose to address that argument in regard to timing, but one theory is that *ben ha arbayim* refers to the time period between sunset and dark; in other words, about an hour— or a little more than that—of the beginning of the fourteenth. The other theory on the meaning of this is, it is an afternoon time frame and the time frame it is referring to is a several hour window that would start in the early afternoon, maybe one o’clock when the sun starts to go down in the sky, all the way to sunset. That’s a several hour window. It doesn’t matter which side of that argument you are on and which theory you think is correct, there is an obvious fact you have to notice here. You can get the sacrificing of the lamb to take place in that time frame but you cannot get the death of the firstborn to take place in that time frame because midnight does not occur in either one of those scenarios in that time frame. There are a lot of details associated with the Passover sacrifice. There is picking the lamb out on the tenth day of the month, there is killing it, roasting it, having the meal and eating it. There is the death of the firstborn and there is the burning of the leftovers that cannot be around until morning. You cannot get all of that to fit in between the two evenings. What you can get to fit into that time frame, regardless of which theory you go with or which timing you want to argue, is going to be the sacrificing of the lamb. What I want you to see here is that Passover refers to a sacrifice. This is specifically what the term is about.

If we notice some of the terminology in the Bible, this can become very obvious. We are only going to scratch the surface on all the verses we could read which illustrate this point. If you read through the different scriptures that talk about this, you are going to

see terms like, kill the Passover, slaughter the Passover, roast the Passover, prepare the Passover, eat the Passover. All of this terminology only works if you are referring specifically to a sacrifice.

Here are some specific examples in this regard.

Numbers 9:2 *Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time.*
(NKJV)

Notice there is an appointed time for what is being defined as the Passover.

3) *On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it."*

4) *So, Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover.*
(NKJV)

Verse 9 in this chapter is introducing the concept of the second Passover, which also tells you the importance of this sacrifice. If you look at all the other Holy days throughout God's plan, there is only a do over with one of them. If for some reason you are sick and not able to take part in some of the other festivals, there is not a second one where you have a do over during the year. The Passover is the only one that has a do over on the second month on the fourteenth day, so it tells you the importance of the Passover.

9) *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,*

10) *Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD s Passover.*

11) *On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.* (NKJV)

They are eating the Passover; they are eating the lamb.

12) *They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones.* (NKJV)

They don't leave any of the Passover, they don't break any of the bones at the Passover. The Passover is the lamb.

12 continued) *... According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.*

13) *But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.* (NKJV)

It was a really big deal if you didn't take part in this. It was not like circumstances outside your control where you were on a journey or you were ill. If you chose not to be

a part of it, that was a problem. Notice in 2 Chronicles—what I want to illustrate is the terminology that is repeatedly used in reference to the Passover. We can get it confused with passing over and we miss the detail that the Passover specifically refers to a sacrifice. 2 Chronicles 30:15.

2 Chronicles 30:15 *Then they slaughtered the Passover*

[I'm reading from the New King James Version and you will notice the word *lamb*s is inserted and is in italics. It is not actually in the original Hebrew, so how it would read is “they slaughtered the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month”]

*lamb*s on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

16) *They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood received from the hand of the Levites.*

17) *For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover lamb*s [they are slaughtering the Passover and the word *lamb*s is in italics, which again is an added word by the translators] *for everyone who was not clean, to sanctify them to the LORD.*

18) *For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover* [notice they are eating the Passover, the Passover is the lamb] *contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone ... (NKJV)*

For one more example turn over to Ezra 6:19.

Ezra 6:19 *And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.*

20) *For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb*s [they are slaughtering the Passover and again the word *lamb*s has been added afterwards and is in italics. It is not in the original Hebrew] *for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. (NKJV)*

What we need to notice is that the Passover is a sacrifice and refers to eating the Passover, which is eating the sacrifice, that is, eating a lamb that was sacrificed to God. To make an illustration, just to make this clear. This was a lamb specifically sacrificed to God according to the biblical protocol. For example, this would be different to going down to the local grocery store and buying a leg of lamb and cooking it and having a family meal. That would not qualify as eating the Passover because you are not eating a sacrifice. This was a lamb that was specifically sacrificed to God.

This becomes important in understanding that it refers to a sacrifice when we think in terms of the New Covenant Passover. The Bible tells us that Christ is our Passover and that's because He was sacrificed for us. We read this in 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7.

1 Corinthians 5:7 *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. (NKJV)*

It specifically calls Christ our Passover and the reason why is because He is the sacrifice. He's the atoning sacrifice that died for our sins and that is why Passover refers to a sacrifice and that is why He is called our Passover. The Bible repeatedly refers to Him as the Lamb and it is based upon this very analogy. There was a lamb killed for the Old Testament Passover service and Christ is our New Covenant Passover. We can briefly notice this in John 1:29.

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (NKJV)*

He is referred to as *the Lamb* because He takes away the sin of the world. How did He do that? By being sacrificed, by facing the death penalty for all of us, taking our sins upon Himself and His death paid that death penalty. He was our Passover Lamb. It refers to a sacrifice. What is important about that is, as I mentioned, when ancient Israel would eat the Passover, they were eating the lamb that they had sacrificed to God. In the New Testament, it refers to us eating the bread and wine as symbols of Christ as eating the Passover as well because He is our Passover. In Luke 22 we see the account of the Passover service that Christ had with His apostles the night before His death. The night in which He was betrayed and which was the beginning of the fourteenth. Luke 22:14.

Luke 22:14 *When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.*

15) Then He said to them, With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; (NKJV)

As we saw, by biblical definition, eating the Passover is eating the sacrifice.

16) for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves;

18) for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19) And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

20) *Likewise, He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. (NKJV)*

Notice, Christ is our Passover sacrifice and these are the symbols of His body and as we will see later in this sermon, He specifically says, for us to have life in us we have to eat His body and drink His blood. Of course, that was symbolic language, but these were symbols of Him as our Passover sacrifice. When we take of this, we are eating the Passover.

Just to clarify one other thing, sometimes the question comes up, where do we get the terminology New Testament or New Covenant Passover. Think about that, Passover is the sacrifice, Christ is our Passover, when we eat the bread and wine, we are eating the Passover and what did Christ say specifically about the wine? This is My blood of the New Covenant. New Covenant Passover, that's where the terminology comes from. As I mentioned there are two biblical definitions of eating the Passover. One is eating the lamb that was officially sacrificed to God. It was taken through the Temple and taken through the normal protocol and sacrificed to God. The other was eating the bread and wine symbols of Christ. We are in the New Covenant church and animal sacrifices don't apply in our situation. Turn over to Hebrews 10 and briefly notice this. In the whole book of Hebrews, the main point of the theme throughout is the sacrificial system. This was pointing to the sacrifice of Christ and that Christ was the fulfillment that once and for all paid the penalty for sin for us. He is there for the replacement of it.

Hebrews 10:11 *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*

12) *But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,*

13) *from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.*

14) *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

15) *But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,*

16) *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds, I will write them,"*

17) *then He adds, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

18) *Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.*

In other words, the sacrificial system doesn't apply to New Covenant Christians because Christ is our Passover. What this means for New Covenant Christians is that there is one definition of eating the Passover and only one definition. That is taking the bread and the wine as symbols of Christ's body and His sacrifice because He is our Passover. By biblical definition, that is the only thing that qualifies.

There is one other issue that I would like to address before we get into the symbols that Christ instituted the night He was betrayed. There is another peculiar thing that we as New Covenant Christians do in the Passover service. It is different from any other Holy day or Sabbath service that we do throughout the year. When we keep the Passover, it is a ceremony that we perform and only baptized adults are part of it. Children are not

involved in eating the Passover and neither are perspective members, people who are just coming in and interested and not baptized. They do not take part in it. Why do we do that? It's because the Bible defines for us, who is allowed to eat the Passover. Notice where this comes from. Turn over to Exodus 12 and we will see who, by biblical definition is allowed to eat the Passover.

Exodus 12:43 *And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. (NKJV)*

Notice a specific criteria of who can.

44) *But every man s servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. (NKJV)*

Circumcision is the criteria.

45) *A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it.*

46) *In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.*

47) *All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.*

48) *And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. (NKJV)*

We have specific instructions regarding who is allowed to eat the Passover and who is not. The criteria here is specifically circumcision. What is referred to here is physical circumcision because this is ancient Israel and they were in a physical covenant, so there is a physical definition. Notice in Leviticus 12, it tells us when circumcision was performed—again, physical circumcision.

Leviticus 12:1 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,*

2) *Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.*

3) *And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. (NKJV)*

What it's saying is the normal protocol for doing circumcision was when a child was eight days old. There were adults who were circumcised as well, but this was the normal protocol. Once all the adults were circumcised, then as new children were born, on the eighth day they were circumcised. When you think that through, it meant that they were able to have the entire family—all the children and everyone involved, when they kept the Old Covenant Passover service. This was because the criteria was circumcision. Even strangers could be involved if they assimilated into the culture of Israel and they were circumcised. They could eat it as well, as the criteria was specifically circumcision. Again, as we have seen in the New Covenant Passover, we

have different symbols. But the same concept of who is able to participate in the Passover applies, but it has a spiritual definition. In Romans 2 we see what the New Testament defines circumcision to be. In Exodus it's referring to circumcision but there is another definition of circumcision.

Romans 2:25 *For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.*

26) *Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?*

27) *And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?*

28) *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;*

29) *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. (NKJV)*

Notice, it is defining circumcision for New Covenant Christians as conversion. That is, they have repented, been baptized, have received the Holy Spirit and have made a commitment to God—that's the definition of circumcision. It is not just cutting off the foreskin as it was in ancient Israel.

Notice one other verse that backs this up.

Philippians 3:3 *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ... (NKJV)*

We are reiterating the concept; circumcision for a New Covenant Christian isn't the physical act, it is having repented, been baptized, and received the Holy Spirit—being converted—that's the definition of circumcision. This is why the New Covenant Passover service is limited to adults that have been converted and been baptized, because that is the New Covenant definition of circumcision. As we read specifically in Exodus 12, no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. So, it is simply following the biblical criteria.

With this background in mind, what I would like to do now is focus on the symbols of the New Covenant and make sure we fully understand these. So, when we come together to take the New Covenant Passover this year, we can do it with the proper reverence and respect and a proper understanding of what all this pictures. To start off, turn over to John 13. There is an order of events that takes place as we keep the New Covenant Passover and it begins with a foot washing ceremony. We are going to read through the part of this chapter where Christ instituted this.

John 13:1 *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

- 2) *And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,*
- 3) *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,*
- 4) *rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.*
- 5) *After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.*
- 6) *Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, Lord, are You washing my feet?"*
- 7) *Jesus answered and said to him, What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."*
- 8) *Peter said to Him, You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."*
- 9) *Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"*
- 10) *Jesus said to him, He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."*
- 11) *For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, You are not all clean."*
- 12) *So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you?*
- 13) *You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.*
- 14) *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- 15) *For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*
- 16) *Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.*
- 17) *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (NKJV)*

There is a lot of meaning packed into this, but one of the most obvious things is, this is a great act of humility and He's teaching us that we should do this to each other. He uses the example that I am your Lord and Master and I am willing to humble myself to do this, so you should follow the same example and humble yourselves. This also puts us in the right mindset for taking the symbols which follow this. As we are going to see, the order of events is the foot washing, the bread and then the wine. We have to have the right humility to be in the right mindset to take the other symbols. The other symbols are about a sacrifice that was given to cover our sins, to enable forgiveness for us and the chance to receive the Holy Spirit and salvation. To properly respect and understand this, we have to understand our need for a savior. The fact is we are carnal, frail human beings, sinful, with an evil human nature and we need to be forgiven. If we don't have respect for that, we don't appreciate the meaning of what we are taking.

Luke 18 is a biblical example of this. Here we see the example of the Pharisee and publican in the Temple. Just to cover a little of the context, remember the Pharisees were basically the religious leadership at the time in which Christ lived. These guys

were known for seeing themselves as the great enlightened biblical scholars. They knew the law, they had all the answers, they had everything worked out and looked down on everybody else who they thought was less than them. As you can see, this guy is in the Temple and praying to God. He doesn't see that he is a frail human being who needs a savior to rescue him from himself. He sees himself as the poster child for Christianity and for living a right life with God and can look down and condemn everyone else. He doesn't see himself as going humbly before God, asking for God's forgiveness and needing a savior to save him from himself.

Luke 18:9 *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: (NKJV)*

If you trust in yourself for righteousness, you don't see your need for a savior.

10) *Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

11) *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.*

12) *I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. (NKJV)*

He is not going and saying, God I need your forgiveness and I need your help, I need to be rescued from myself. Instead, it's I've got it all together, look at me, look at me and look how bad that guy over there is. That's basically what He is saying. Now notice the opposite attitude, the attitude we should be wanting to emulate. Verse 13.

13) *And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner!*

14) *I tell you; this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (NKJV)*

This is the opposite attitude. The tax collector realizes he needs a savior, he needs God to rescue him from himself. He needs help, he needs mercy, he realizes he is a flawed human being who pales in comparison to God and needs God's help. He doesn't see himself as, I've got it all together, look at me—that's not his attitude. Well, his is the attitude we should have. As we look particularly at the Passover, we have to understand that there is a massive significance not only to these specific symbols, but also to what they all picture. Christ directly tells us that this is absolutely a salvational matter. He tells us that if we are not willing to drink His blood and eat His body, we have no life in us. When Christ makes a comment that strong, that's the definition of a salvational matter.

John 6:53 *Then Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. (NKJV)*

You can't get a stronger statement than that. If that's not a salvational matter, I don't know what is. Picking up in verse 54.

54) *Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

55) *For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.*

56) *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

57) *As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.*

58) *This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”*

59) *These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. (NKJV)*

Obviously, He's speaking about the very symbols we take at Passover and referring to more than just the physical act of showing up at the service and drinking the wine and eating bread. Anyone can go through the physical act and miss the whole meaning that is behind it. The greater significance is realizing our need for a savior and that we have to have the sacrifice of Christ to be made right with God. If we don't have that then we have no shot whatsoever of ever redeeming ourselves. It doesn't matter how smart we are, how diligent we are in trying to obey God, if we don't have the sacrifice of Christ, we're toast.

The wages of sin is death and if we don't have Him to take that penalty away from us and grant us forgiveness, we have no shot. We go into the lake of fire if we don't have that. That is how important this is. Obviously, Christ, in saying this, was referring to more than just the physical act of taking the symbols when we take Passover. As Paul tells us, because of the meaning of what this is about, when we take these symbols, we need to have great reverence and respect for them. We have to have examined ourselves ahead of time, because if we haven't, we can bring judgement on ourselves. In 1 Corinthians 11 He says this very thing.

1 Corinthians 11:23 *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;*

24) *and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”*

25) *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”*

26) *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (NKJV)*

Notice several things here. Sometimes people read over this—which is common in the Protestant world—and think He is just talking about taking the bread and wine, that this isn't about Passover because that's a Jewish thing and we don't want to be connected with that. He just means taking bread and wine. Remember when we defined eating the Passover; it has two biblical definitions. One is eating a lamb that was specifically

sacrificed to God through the biblical protocol—that's not a leg of lamb we buy at the grocery store, that it is an actual sacrifice. The other definition is eating the symbols of Christ, of His body and His blood because He is our Passover. He was sacrificed for us so when we are eating them, we are by definition eating the Passover. You cannot separate these two. There are several things here. You will notice when Paul is talking about this, he specifically references, that what he is talking about is what Christ did the night in which He was betrayed. We have already read that Christ referred to that as eating the Passover, so obviously that is the context he is referring back to. The other is, he is specifically talking about eating the symbols of Christ's sacrifice; by definition that is eating the Passover—you just cannot separate these two. In the Protestant world, it is common for some groups to do what they call communion every Sunday. It's a normal thing for them. They have divorced this from the Passover and it is just a custom they can do whenever. Just look at this and the fact that it is defined as eating the Passover. When did Israel eat the Passover? Once a year; it wasn't something they did all the time, it was a single time per year. There was a second Passover but it was only for people who for whatever reason were not able to keep the first one. The do over shows you the importance of this; God thought this was a big deal that we keep this. It is a once a year thing, not an anytime or any Sunday or multiple times per year or Christmas and Easter or whatever definition you want to give it. It was specifically eating the Passover and eating the Passover is a once year thing.

Notice how Paul goes on to emphasize the respect we have to have for these symbols. Not just the physical act—it includes the physical act—but it was appreciating what they mean and what they picture. Pick up on verse 27.

27) Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29) For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (NKJV)

He is saying this is a big deal and we need to have a lot of respect and reverence for this service and what this means. If we don't and we look at it flippantly, what we are doing is disrespecting and not acknowledging our need for a savior, because it's more than a physical act. We can take part in the physical act and totally miss the meaning; that's true with a lot of things. You can go through the motions and miss what this is about. If we don't show this the proper respect, we are disrespecting the sacrifice of Christ; we are disrespecting all that it pictures and its meaning for our lives. Notice the following verse.

30) For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

31) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (NKJV)

In verse 30 when it refers to being weak or sick or asleep; if you have a New King James translation, if you look in the margin, it has a little number next to *sleep* and in the margin, it says, “are dead”. It is not referring to taking a nap, it’s referring to people being dead and it’s not referring to being physically dead either. He is saying many are weak or sick, referring to spiritually sick or spiritually dead. He obviously thinks this is a very big deal and this is an important matter. It is directly tied to showing respect for our need for Christ to be our atoning sacrifice. If we treat that flippantly and treat it as unimportant and brush it aside, it says you are in danger of not only bringing judgment upon yourself but of spiritually dying. The definition of spiritual death is losing the Holy Spirit. That’s what he is saying you are in danger of. It’s not just for the physical act. We need to show great respect for the physical act but it’s more about appreciating our need for a savior and for forgiveness and all that Christ did for us. Without that we are toast and that’s why it is so important that we show the proper respect for it.

As I mentioned, humility is a very important part of the meaning of the foot washing. There is also another angle to this and it illustrates an order of events. The way that the symbols of the New Covenant Passover are laid out is very strategic and very purposeful. It pictures an order of events that take place. When Christ did the foot washing, here He was, a God being who gave up God-being status and came down to be a physical human being and perform this great act of humility. Not only to all these carnal humans who are there, He’s washing the feet of a guy who is going to betray Him; throw Him under the bus so that He winds up getting tortured and murdered. To understand this, turn over to Philippians 2:5.

Philippians 2:5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*
6) *who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,*
7) *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*
8) *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (NKJV)*

This was a great act of humility, to be a someone who had lived a sinless life—He did not deserve the death penalty—He was far superior. He was a former God being who had been perfect to all the other people He had is dealt with, but He humbly submitted Himself to all of this. These are part of the events that started taking place that night. Even in doing the foot washing ceremony, He was washing the feet of Judas—the guy He knows is about to betray Him and put Him through a very ugly ordeal. We know in Matthew 26, that he understood just how graphically ugly what He was about to go through was, because He is begging God the Father for a plan B at that point. Please, I don’t want to go through this—He knows how ugly this ordeal is going to be. Even when the soldiers show up later to take Him into custody and start this, even when Peter is there with a sword, wanting to fight, He says for Peter to put it away, He voluntarily submits to them and it’s an incredible act of humility. This is kind of the first event that takes place in the order of events.

The next two symbols in the Passover service also play out in individual meaning and in order of events. He did the foot washing, later came the bread and the wine. These are not just two aspects of His body. The bread is really a symbol of His suffering and the wine, which was His blood, is the symbol of His death. That's the order of events that takes place. To notice this, turn back again to 1 Corinthians 11—we were here earlier but I want to emphasize a point here.

1 Corinthians 11:23 *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24) and when He had given thanks, He broke it [notice he breaks the bread] and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (NKJV)*

He specifically mentions He breaks the bread and this symbolically represents the fact that His body was broken for us. This directly ties into what He accomplished for us and the ordeal He went through with His death. Turn to Isaiah 53:3.

Isaiah 53:3 *He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
4) Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (NKJV)*

The ordeal He went through—the beating and the suffering—was an important part of what He accomplished for us.

*6) All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
7) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.
8) He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
9) And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. (NKJV)*

It talks about “by His stripes, we are healed” referring to our spiritual healing. The ordeal of what He went through is an important part of this. In ancient Israel, their Passover was a lamb which they slaughtered. That lamb died and its blood was utilized but the lamb wasn't tortured, it wasn't beaten and put through all the ordeal that Christ went through. This is another component of Passover for us that just doesn't exist in the

symbolism of the Old Covenant Passover. That was just slitting the throat of the lamb and it died whereas, a very important part of what is pictured in the New Covenant Passover is all that Christ went through. He just didn't have a pain free death. With a lamb, if you just slit its throat, it dies very mercifully and very quickly and it's not a long drawn out ordeal. In Christ's case, He was arrested that night after the service and the whole ordeal for Him goes on for hours. He's tormented, He's mocked, He's ridiculed, He's beaten—He goes through a very nasty situation all the way up to the point of His death. By the time He gets to dying, death is a relief for all the ugliness He went through. This is pictured by the bread and why when we take the bread and pray over it, we don't just pass the bread out as it is, we break it. It is symbolically representing the suffering that He went through in this whole ordeal.

There is, as well, another symbol involved that He did after the bread and that was the wine. Turn to Matthew 26 and we will look specifically at this.

Matthew 26:27 *Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you.*

28) For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (NKJV)

He mentions handing them the wine and saying it is the blood of the New Covenant. As I mentioned, eating these symbols is eating the Passover and the wine that is involved is the blood of the New Covenant—New Covenant Passover—that's where the terminology comes from. Notice specifically He says here, His blood is spilled for the remission of sins, in other words for the forgiveness of sins—that's what this is about. We have to realize this is more than just bleeding. This expresses what this is really getting at which is His death.

Think about it like this: When animal sacrifices were done—not only the Passover lamb but the numerous other animals that were killed—when they were sacrificed, they were always killed and that blood was used to symbolically atone for sin. But never did they simply cut an animal, let him bleed for a while and then bandage him up and he goes on and that blood qualifies as symbolically atoning for sin because that's not how it works. The wages of sin is death and someone has to take on the death penalty. Turn over to Hebrews 9 and we'll notice this. We see the same phrase used here of the shedding of blood, but if we put it in the context in which it's used, it becomes obvious what the full meaning is. It's not just simply bleeding.

Hebrews 9:22 *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. (NKJV)*

Blood has to be shed for the remission of sins—for forgiveness. Keep in mind, they didn't just cut an animal and have it bleed for a while and take that blood and put it on the altar and patch the animal up and it keeps living—that's not what it was about. If you look in the book of Leviticus when it's talking about sin offerings in particular, you will see it makes mention that before they killed an animal for a sin offering, they laid

hands on its head. This was symbolically transferring the sins of the people onto the animal and then the animal would be killed because it was facing the death penalty. It was taking on the death penalty in replacement of the people who, because of their sins deserved the death penalty because the wages of sin is death. Sin automatically brings about the death penalty and that penalty has to be paid. Turn to Romans 6:23.

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (NKJV)

What we are getting at here is that sin, by definition, requires a death to pay the penalty that automatically comes with sin. Once we have sinned one time, we have incurred the death penalty and that penalty has to be paid. It's saying the gift of God is to receive eternal life and that is through Christ. Why? Because He faced the death penalty for us. He took all that on and He died in our stead. So, realize when it says, His blood is for the remission of sins, it's not just that He bled. Obviously in the ugly ordeal that He went through for hours after He was arrested and tried and then they just beat Him out of recognition. By the time He dies, He obviously bled a lot through that ordeal. He had to take on the death penalty for us. That is part of it all— the beating and suffering He went through was part of all that He did for us. But if He did not actually die, that wasn't going to be taking on the death penalty for us.

If you look back at the symbols, what you have is, you start again with the major lesson for us, the foot washing, which is an act of humility. We need humility to show the respect that this service deserves and what these symbols are about. We can't take these callously because it is a symbol of our need for forgiveness, our need for an atoning sacrifice and for Christ to take on the death penalty that we have all incurred with our own sins, in our own wayward lives. He enables us to take that but we have to have that humility. If you look at Christ, as these events played out, He, through a great deal of humility, humbled Himself even to the point of the death on the cross. This was the first event that took place that night.

The next thing that happened, He was beaten, He was tormented and tortured, beaten beyond recognition and that's why the bread is broken, so we can understand the symbolism of all that He did for us.

Then we have the wine; His blood is shed for remission of sins but that required His death. It's about His suffering and His death and all that He took on for us.

As we look forward to this year's Passover and coming before God to take these very important symbols, let's make sure that we are examining ourselves and seeing our need for a Savior, fully realizing how important these symbols are for us. It isn't just the physical act—we can show up at Passover services and go through the motions and eat the bread, drink the wine and go back to our lives and not think at all about what has taken place. But, as 1 Corinthians 11 tells us, if we treat it like that, if we treat it without the proper reverence and respect, we are bringing judgment upon ourselves. It's a game we just don't want to play. What we need to be doing between now and Passover

is honestly looking in our lives and seeing our need for a savior. Seeing how much we need the forgiveness from God and the sacrifice of Christ to enable us to not have to face the death penalty that we all deserve. We all deserve it, we have all been sinners regardless of how good a life we may have lived, all of us have sinned, we all deserve to die. It is only because of the sacrifice of Christ that we have the chance to be forgiven and have that penalty paid for us. As we come together to keep the New Testament Passover, we need to have that in mind so we are in awe and gratitude for all that Christ has done for us. We can then appreciate Him taking that penalty from us so we can be forgiven of all that we have done, all the wrongs that we have committed in our lives. We can be reconciled to God and we can have the chance to receive eternal life.