

# A Fresh Look at the Passover Emblems

## Our Messiah, the Cup, Bread, Footwashing

Originally 2008, using again

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Abstract: This sermon was first given in 2008 or 2009, but it is timeless and forever fresh, so we present it here again. We go deeper into the footwashing, broken matzah and red wine and how these depict our relationship with Jesus and the first step of God's plan of salvation. Also: the Jewish Seder, why the 15<sup>th</sup> is called "the Night to be Much Observed", why 4 cups of wine at the Seder and why Jesus did not drink the 4<sup>th</sup> cup. Meaning of "The Cup"; the engagement to Christ; Cana's significance, and more!

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The Catholics celebrate the Eucharist. The Protestants celebrate "the Lord's supper"—some more frequently than others. Some use real wine and some use grape juice. The Jews celebrate their *Seder* on the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> of their first month of the Hebrew calendar.

But we're different. The Churches of God groups observe the Passover, and we do different things than most other groups. We *do what Jesus did* – we observe the Passover once a year, most of us doing so on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first Hebrew month, a day before the Jews celebrate their Seder. A few church of God groups do it the same night as the Jews do, but one night after Jesus broke His bread and drank His wine from His cup.

We all wash feet. Not just the Pope, not just a few elders – all baptized members do. We eat broken unleavened bread, and drink real red wine once a year.

WHY do we do all that? Sounds pretty strange to a lot of people. I hope – whatever your age – whether you're children, grownups or teenagers – that you'll find this interesting and help you understand why we do what we do a little better. Let's take a fresh look at the New Testament emblems of the Passover – the unleavened Bread, the wine and footwashing – and we'll also tie in here and there some of the Jewish *Seder*, and that's what the Jews call their Passover meal, as I think you'll be surprised what is in their own service that also, unbeknownst to them, that pictures Jesus as well.

**We "COG" folks don't keep the Seder**, and I'm not recommending we do – I just thought you'd find it interesting to understand some little known parts of it because I think Jesus clearly had a meal, and clearly did parts of His Passover right along traditional lines. So we need to understand it.

**This follows up on the message last week, of understanding the incredible *gift* God has given us** with the Passover – how He passes over our sins and we can now look forward with a clean slate and be joyful of the wonders that lie ahead as the gift of God's grace.

**Passover is always kept in the Jewish month of Abib** – later called Nisan – which corresponds to our early March to early April most years, though it can be later some years, as in 2005, depending on the state of the spring barley in Israel. **Abib** (same name used in Tel Aviv) is the first name

given – and then it was changed to Nisan in Babylonian captivity, though the Bible also uses the label “Nisan” in **Nehemiah 2:1** and **Esther 3:7**.

We *also* need to understand how and why Jesus instituted the new emblem of the FOOTWASHING, as well as replacing the lamb eaten at the usual Passover meal with the bread and wine. The Jewish Passover already included unleavened bread and 4 glasses of wine, and we’ll go into that today too. The Passover is the oldest continuously observed festival or solemn observance in the world, formally instituted around **1443 BC** at the time of the Exodus, whenever it actually was.

We are told to remember the Passover *forever*, to remember how God saved and redeemed His people in Egypt. We are the “Israel of God” today (**Gal. 6:16**), and *we* are called out of *spiritual* Egypt – sin and the world -- and we are *all* spiritual descendants of Abraham, whether we are Hispanic, white, black or Asian believers (**Galatians 3:27-29**). So *we too* should understand it.

**My main objective today is to discuss the various emblems of the Passover – the footwashing, bread, wine – and not the calendar controversy** of whether or not we should observe the Passover at the *beginning* of the 14<sup>th</sup> or the *end* of the 14<sup>th</sup> and into the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup>. I will discuss that in a future message, perhaps next year. I’ve read and studied both sides of the argument. So should you – and then in prayer, decide what you must do in faith and let’s not condemn someone who has, after careful study, decided something different than what you or I may do. Christ will resolve the calendar issues when He returns. It seems clear to me that Jesus broke His bread and offered His cup a whole day before the Jews were going to celebrate their Passover service (**John 18:28, 39; 19:14**). No matter which direction I take on this point, many will disagree. Let’s cover the question of “when” in another session.

### **THE “NIGHT TO BE MUCH OBSERVED” (the NIGHT OF VIGILANCE)**

**Most of the Church of God (COG) groups I know keep the Passover on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib, and then celebrate a “Night to be Much Observed” (NTBMO) the following night** - on the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup>, when Jews are celebrating their Seder/Passover. The NTBMO comes from **Exodus 12:39-42**, which speaks of Israel coming out of Egypt **by night** (also **Deut 16:1**). Where does the label “to be much observed” come from and what does it mean? *I believe even many COG groups don’t have this nailed down right. So let’s examine it.*

The term NTBMO comes from the **King James Version** of the Bible in **Exodus 12:39-42**. I think many COG members think of this night as a “night to be much *remembered*” – but that’s missing the main point. **The word “observe” is definitely there in the KJV – and it has to do more with being observant, keeping watch or a vigil, being alert** – not “be sure to observe the day” – though we are to remember and observe this day too.

#### **Exodus 12:41-42 KJV**

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 LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

**42 It is a night to be much observed** unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is **that night of the LORD to be observed** of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

Because of the language used in the KJV, we think of the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup>, when they marched out of Egypt, as being a night we must “keep” or “observe” – with that meaning. But the Hebrew has to do more with **being on guard, being vigilant**. The Hebrew word “*shimmur*” is used only here – and it means to keep a night watch, a vigil.

Remember the meaning of the Passover: Jesus, the Lamb of God, has just died for us, and has erased our sins, and freed us from slavery to sin. All things God does for us by His grace. But *after* we are freed, Satan will try to enslave us again, much like the Pharaoh (a type of Satan) came back after the Israelites after he had freed them (Ex. 14:5-9). So we have to be vigilant against sin creeping back into our lives!

**And – very important – we honor the fact that this night reminds us of how GOD “watches our back”, or as they say today “has our back”, protecting us as He delivers us, so we can safely get away from Satan, pictured by “the day after the Passover” (Leviticus 23:5-6; Numbers 33:3), by night (Deut 16:1).** Even today, Marines will tell you that any departure from an area by a large group is a very hazardous venture, fraught with danger. *So on the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib, after the Passover observed the 14th, we remember what God did for us and we are reminded to be observant, on guard, keep a vigil.* That is the real meaning of the so –called “night to be much observed.” It does not imply a party attitude, but quite the opposite. **It implies “being on guard, observing, watching solemnly, even though the Israelites did indeed come out “with a high hand” – or with boldness, almost defiantly (as some translations have it) – Numbers 33:1; Exodus 14:8.**

So the **New International Version** I feel has the best translation on **Exodus 12:42:**

42 “Because *the LORD kept vigil* that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to *keep vigil to honor the LORD* for the generations to come.”

**Ex 12:42 TEV (Today’s English Version)**

42 “It was a night *when the LORD kept watch* to bring them out of Egypt; this same night is *dedicated to the LORD* for all time to come as a night *when the Israelites must keep watch.*”

So “much observed” in the KJV is really better translated “to be very *observant*”, or “to keep a **vigil, a careful watch**”. All through the New Testament, we are commanded over and over to **watch, to be on guard, to be watchful, to be alert -- against sins and temptations**. We’ll cover that as an entire subject someday. It *doesn’t* primarily mean to watch world news, though that’s not a bad idea either, but to watch *yourself* and things around you – so you’re not taken by surprise by sin and the Devil. That *includes* the news of the world, but that’s not the primary focus. Watch your garments lest you find yourself naked, for example (Rev. 16:15; Luke 21:36). **Be alert; don’t get sleepy and lazy about sin now that God has forgiven you. That’s the focus of the NTBMO.**

**It would be good to have someone review the scriptures and the meaning of this night when and where we gather together to observe it. Get the children involved. Ask them what they know about it, explain as necessary, and convey the lesson of God being our Savior and delivering us from spiritual Egypt and sin.**

The Jews read portions of the *Haggadah* (which means “narration”) – their book that contains the prayers, hymns, scriptures, lessons, etc. about the Exodus and *Seder* meal they are eating. That’s a good thing – and we can follow that example and be sure we’re teaching our children also. Seder has the meaning of “order, organization”.

But *that* night is the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib, the first month of the Hebrew calendar that falls usually sometime in March-April. THAT much is clear. **The Jews' Passover and what we call the NTBMO are one and the same to the Jews, but 2 separate nights to most of the COG groups.**

### **THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER compared to Passover today; the LAMB**

**So – back to the Passover, first instituted by God in Exodus 12** with the slaying of a lamb, symbolizing Jesus, the true “Lamb of God”. I covered all that in the last message. We don't kill a lamb today because Jesus, our Passover, what the Passover pictured, has already been slain FOR us, to pay for our sins for us, and no lamb needs to ever be slain again on the Passover. It's done. That's clearly stated in **1 Corinthians 5:7** and many other places I covered last time.

**Even Jews today *do not, cannot, kill a lamb*** for their Seder meal because there is no temple, no priesthood to certify the lambs are kosher or approved for Passover. Did you realize the Jews do *not* eat a whole roasted lamb or goat at their Seders? They eat chicken usually (except for the shank bone of a lamb). No kidding. Because they feel they *can't* eat lamb without the temple and priesthood in existence **since Deut 16:5 makes it clear that – when they arrived in the Promised Land – they were no longer to kill the Passover in their own homes as they had done in Exodus 12**, but were to take it to the city where God had placed His name (Jerusalem) and do it *there*. Did you realize that? Go back for yourself, on your own time, and re-read **Deuteronomy 16:5-6** for yourself if you have any questions on that.

The original **Passover was a meal of 3 items**: roasted lamb or a kid of a goat, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Red wine was believed to be included, though not listed in **Exodus 12:8**. The original Passover and subsequent Passovers were handled differently in a few ways:

- Ex 12 Passover: they killed the lamb in their own homes originally. God ordered them to kill the Passover only in the prescribed city (Jerusalem) when they entered the Promised Land. Some disagree and have elaborate explanations of scripture to “prove” their point. But where did Yeshua and His parents keep their Passovers? In Jerusalem.

#### **Deuteronomy 16:5-8**

5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; 6 *but at the place where the LORD your God chooses* to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7 And you shall roast and eat it in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents."

\* **Another difference**: the first Passover was eaten while standing up, fully dressed, staff in hand, ready to leave (**Exodus 12:11**). The Passovers by Jesus' day were very different: they were relaxed, even reclining, symbolizing they were no longer slaves (**John 13:23**). The meal Jesus ate with the 12 was NOT like the Michelangelo picture of all of them on one side of a huge table, with Jesus in the middle. Nothing like that – but sitting/half lying down on the floor more of the Oriental nature.

**The Jewish Passovers were hosted by the family patriarch.** Usually there's a pillow near the head of the host. Usually during the meal he will recline his head on that pillow. It looks awkward to us. **Jesus was taking the place of the "patriarch"** at the table.

**WHY THE PILLOW?** *Slaves* were not allowed to recline when they ate. Slaves were to do master's bidding, not be reclining at this special dinner. *The reclining with a pillow was to show they are no longer slaves.* The one who would put his head on the host's bosom was usually the youngest of the family. It could be that John was the youngest in the group – and he was also the one Jesus was closest to.

**The meal was called the SEDER. It was not unusual for it to last 4-5 hours.** The Seder begins with **KIDDUSH**, which consists of **3 blessings: over the wine, over the festival, and then a thanksgiving blessing for life.** It is **the first of 4 cups of wine** which will be consumed at the Passover, plus a fifth cup they reserve for Elijah. They reserve one empty place setting: with an ornate cup and place setting. This was for **Elijah** - in case he shows up. The Jews base that on Malachi 4. **When Elijah doesn't show up at their table, they say a prayer that says, "Maybe next year"**. John the Baptist fulfilled a type of Elijah. Jesus said the prophesied Elijah 'has come' in the form of John the Baptist (**Matthew 11:14; 17:11-12; Luke 1:16-17; Mark 9:12-13;** ) but it seems Jesus leaves room there for a future one yet who will still restore all things.

Jesus is now in the heavens awaiting the restoration of all things, it says in **Acts 3:21**. So I personally believe John the Baptist could not have been the final type of the Elijah – and there must be one at the very end time, I believe. The final Elijah was to be *preaching just before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord"*. John the Baptist did not come before the "great and dreadful" day (**Mal. 4:5-6**) and neither so far has the Messenger of the covenant preached and then "suddenly the Lord whom you seek" come to His temple (**Malachi 3:1**). We're still awaiting that.

**So other than John the Baptist as a strong type of the final end time Elijah, I don't believe we've seen the Elijah of the very end time – yet – unless John the Baptist fully fulfilled that. I just can't see how John's preaching could be classified as being just before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord".**

**After Kiddush blessing, they have a ritual HAND-washing.**

### **JESUS INSTITUTES THE FOOTWASHING**

We'll talk in a minute about the Meal, but let's pause to look at something *new* Jesus added: the footwashing. **Please turn to John 13:3.** *They're still eating* when Jesus interrupts the meal and does the footwashing. I know – you're thinking the verse says, "Supper being ended" – in John 13, but that's not a good translation. Most translations say "during supper" and it's obvious it was during supper since Jesus goes back to eating after the footwashing.

**John 13:3-8** "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.**" Other translations say, "If I don't wash you, you won't belong to me".

**So this was the day when the Son of God washed his followers' feet, though that was a task for the lowliest servant usually.** The footwashing that Jesus did - - means and shows various lessons:

- Humility, serving one another are obvious meanings
- Lording it over others is specifically forbidden in scripture, whether it is a pastor over the flock God has given him to protect and guard – or a father over his family, or a husband in his role as head. There *are* leadership roles, headship roles. There are people “over” us and even the word “submit” has in its Greek meaning the intention of “being under”. Some heads are very controlling, they are control freaks. That’s not what Jesus has in mind when He assigns some (husbands) as the head. But we are to learn submission and being like a servant. Even leaders are to be leading servants!
- **but it also pointed to something new: seeing each other as washed/cleansed and accepted by the Master; washing one another in our own eyes.** We no longer view each other in the former way; we *recognize that* Jesus has already washed the sins off one another. **Jesus washed *their* feet first – and then He sat down and told *us* to wash the feet of one another: the feet He has already washed.**

**John 13:12-17** “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.”

The footwashing is God’s way of starting the new Passover service with humility and acceptance. The newest member could happen to be the one the pastor washes and vice versa. The recently reinstated formerly disfellowshipped member could be the one the most upright member has to wash. The lesson: love, accept, recognize the body of Christ!

***We are the body of Christ. I think the biggest lesson of the footwashing is this: accept the one Jesus has already accepted—with or without your permission! See the person you may dislike in the church as “washed” by the Master, and since Jesus has washed Him, you and I are to wash/accept, see-as-cleansed and forgiven – this person we may more naturally not like as much.*** 1 **Corinthians 11:27-32** says we must *recognize*, or *discern*, the body of Christ (the church), or we will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

**This year as you wash feet at the Passover, consciously think about loving everyone in that room. Be thinking how you see this person as without dirt, without spot or wrinkle – the same way as Jesus presents the church unto Himself, as having no spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27-28, 32). *Jesus* is the One with the spot remover. *Jesus* is his or her judge. We’re not that person’s**

judge – and besides, when we sit down in the chair and have *our* feet washed, we're reminded then that *we* have issues that others have to overlook, forgive and accept too, right? Once we've set our minds in that direction, then we can eat of the One Bread– for we are all of His one body. But if we're not accepting and recognizing each other, and if we're not *one* in our hearts and minds, then the Passover bread becomes a sham to us.

### **THE MATZAH BROKEN FOR US; THE Afikomen (the hidden matzah)**

In the modern Passover service in the Church of God (COG) groups, we next break some **unleavened bread – or *matzah*** – followed by drinking some real wine, red wine from a small vial. The Jewish Seder is quite different: they've added quite a few items to the original 3 items listed in Exodus 12:8. Nowadays they have **parsley** to picture the spring time, they dip a **vegetable into salt water** to picture the tears and sweat of a slave in Egypt, a **bitter herb – usually very hot horseradish** – dipped into a **mortar-like mix of chopped apples, raisin, wine -- called *charoset***, to remind them of being slaves, building the Treasure Cities for Pharaoh. The horseradish is to be so hot as to bring tears to their eyes to remember the slavery. But these are all added items to the original Passover except for the lamb and the horseradish.

Today they also have a **HARD BOILED EGG** often dipped in salt – associated unfortunately, I believe, with the Babylonian practice picturing new life, fertility. It is associated with Easter, in my mind at least, and should not be on the table, in my opinion.

Today they cannot, and do not, kill a lamb since they don't have a priesthood, but they do have a **roasted shank bone of a lamb** on their plate.

**MATZAH** – in lovely container designed to hold the matzah. 3 pieces of Matzah stacked one on top the other in 3 layers. Always 3 pieces. Not 2, not 4 or more. Rabbis don't say why there are 3.

**SLIGHT DIGRESION: WAS THE BREAD AT JESUS' MEAL UNLEAVENED?** *I want to put to rest one error that is going around out there that I carefully looked into:* One preacher says the bread Jesus broke was ordinary leavened bread, *not* unleavened, because he claims this was not a Passover meal. His "proof" for this is the Greek word used for the word "bread", that Jesus broke, is *artos*, which most often clearly refers to leavened bread. They did not use the Greek word for unleavened bread -- *azumos*. *Artos* was the *Greek* word usually used with ordinary every-day leavened bread. In the Old Testament, or in Hebrew, the word for unleavened bread would be *matzah*. But in the Greek, he claims, they would have used the word "*Azumos*" for *unleavened bread*. And since the scripture clearly uses the word "*artos*" for the bread Jesus broke, he claims this was not unleavened bread, and therefore could not have been the Passover meal itself.

**However, one cannot make a solid case from the Greek alone, for there is ample evidence that the word "*artos*" can be used for leavened *or* unleavened bread.** Just like if we today during days of unleavened bread, might say "pass the bread, please" without specifying it was leavened or not.

**VINES** Expository Dictionary – says *artos* can refer to either leavened or unleavened. The New Testament also uses the word *artos* to refer to the *showbread* that David ate – and the showbread definitely had to be unleavened (**Matthew 12:3-4**) We're also told that Jesus is the

“ARTOS” – bread -- from heaven – **John 6:35** – and HE is surely unleavened. One more passage: DURING the days of Unleavened Bread, when Jesus appears to a couple of the disciples, he broke “artos” for them (**Luke 24:30-31**) and that bread had to surely be unleavened. ***This clearly shows that “artos” can be used for both leavened and unleavened bread and I believe clearly that the bread Jesus broke was Unleavened bread.***

### **The MYSTERY of the AFIKOMEN**

Continuing on: At one point, they pull out the *center* piece of matzah. It’s a drama, very exciting for the youngsters in the home.

The **center** piece *matzah* is pulled out. **It has a very special Greek name – the “AFIKOMEN”.**

**4 GLASSES OF WINE** -- must be On the Passover table and the rabbis insist the wine must be RED. There are 4 times when wine is drunk or sipped. We’ll cover that in more detail in a few minutes. **Later, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> glass of wine is sipped, the broken piece of matzah, which was hidden, is located by the children and a time of great rejoicing.**

***Back to the broken matzah:***

**The Jewish Seder has 3 matzah breads** – the first one in the top of the pouch, one in the bottom of the pouch, and the middle portion pouch contained the one which was broken, the *AFIKOMEN*. **The Jews today say the AFIKOMEN REPLACES the Passover Lamb.**

***Then they take a cloth and wrap that center piece of matzah, and hide it.*** They then take the children under age 13 (13 is when the Bar Mitzvah occurs, when a lad becomes a man), and take the children out of sight – and the middle *matzah* is *hidden*, the children brought back in and now they have to ***find*** that hidden *matzah*. Songs sung, prayers said, stories recited. A very exciting kind of occasion.

The Paschal Lamb was traditionally the last item eaten at the Seder so they would remember its taste. Therefore, after one of the children finds the *Afikomen*, it should be the last bite everyone takes during the Jewish Seder, they say.

**Surely most of you are ahead of me here.** The “hidden *Matzah*”, the center-piece that was broken and eaten: who did it represent? Jesus Himself gives the answer. I believe in **Luke 22:19** it is very likely Jesus was enacting the very Passover ritual of the *Afikomen* – and was making it clear to the disciples: **Luke 22:19** “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.”*** His literal body was still there in front of them. The bread *symbolized*, stood for, His body – but the bread does not become His literal bone, blood and skin and body, as the Catholics teach.

Now watch this carefully: **Jesus took the matzah, and broke it, and said – I think referring to the hidden matzah, the *Afikomen* -- “this is my body, given for you”.**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-25** “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.***”



*Look at Passover matzah today – stripes across it, pierced with holes, very appropriate, for “By His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24).*

**“THIS IS MY BODY” – so the Passover bread replaces the Lamb as the symbol of Christ, in the Passover. Hence today, even the Jews do not eat a Lamb. Neither do we, neither should we. We just eat the bread and the wine, the body and blood of Christ in symbol.**

**1 Corinthians 10:16-17** “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? **The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?** 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”

**“Communion of the body”** = has more a meaning of “fellowship” – but not like we think of “fellowship”, which is a group of people sharing ideas, laughing, getting along, talking, etc. It has more the meaning of **“belonging”, or “sharing”**. We are a part of the body of Christ, we now belong to Him. And the others Jesus calls, also belong to Him and we have to accept that and accept them too. Remember that He told Peter? “If I don’t wash you – you won’t belong to Me” (“have no part with me”).

The way we do it today is that the unleavened bread comes from one source on the table, and it’s blessed by the minister or host in charge – and then broken. There is one bread, then broken, and all of us partake of that one bread, symbolizing our *unity* and ability to get along and be of one mind, one spirit. ***It symbolizes we all come from and all are a part of, and all belong to, the one body of Christ.*** But what a shame to see the divisions in “the church” today. Or perhaps those who are truly of the “the church” are not divided? Ponder that.

Remember this: **the Afikomen had previously been carefully wrapped – as HE was wrapped in preparation for his burial. It was then hidden out of sight – just as Christ was hidden from sight after His death – as He was buried in the tomb for 3 days.**

**The Afikomen, the hidden/broken matzah-- was found, and then eaten after the 3<sup>RD</sup> glass of wine – because, I believe, it pictures Jesus who was found, and seen, after 3 days in the tomb!** There is great rejoicing in the Jewish Seder when one of the children finds the hidden matzah, the *Afikomen* – just as there was great rejoicing when the disciples finally realized Jesus had risen! **It’s exciting, isn’t it!?**

That broken piece of *matzah*, now located, is passed around, and everyone present must partake of that broken piece of matzah. It was *mandatory*. Then the patriarch or host says ***that broken piece of matzah now replaces the lamb.*** Correct! There is no need to roast a lamb today – for whom the lamb represented – has been sacrificed once and for all (**1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19**)

**Now, the name for that hidden matzah – broken for us – hidden and then found after the 3<sup>rd</sup> glass of wine – is a Greek word, Afikomen.** It’s the only Greek word used in the entire Jewish Seder. ***It’s the Afikomen. You know what that means? Are you ready? The Greek word means -- “HE CAME”.***

What an unbelievable tragedy that the Jews still say “one day the Messiah will come, one day” – but since they don’t recognize *Jesus* as the Messiah, they don’t recognize the name they give that central piece of matzah – broken and hidden from them -- the “Afikomen” – pictures the one they seek, the CHRIST! “HE CAME”. True Christians today always acknowledge that Christ has come. (Luke 19:9-10; 1 John 4:2-3)

### NEXT, THE CUPS OF WINE

THE WINE picturing the blood of Jesus shed for us, is usually well covered at the Passover services – and so what I want to do is cover some material that is *not* usually covered.

***There were 4 cups of wine at Jewish Passovers. The rabbis said the wine must be red. We know that Jesus always equated Himself to the grapevine (John 15), and the fruit of the vine is wine. The wine would picture His blood, His life shed for us. Jesus was very aware of that from day one of His ministry.***

**Matt 26:26-30** “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” **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. **29** But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of **the vine** from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” **30** And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

**We are in the NEW COVENANT.** **A covenant was more than a contract.** A contract usually had an end date, and a covenant was usually for forever. A contract was for a particular skill usually, but a covenant covered the whole person. A covenant was between 2 parties that involved promises from each side. God made a covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with Israel, with David for his kingdom lineage, and so on.

**This is the new covenant “IN MY BLOOD”.** Why? First of all we already covered that without blood there can be no remission of sins (**Hebrews 9:22**). More germane to the question of “in my blood”, **covenants were sealed by BLOOD. The root word for the Hebrew word for “covenant” –*berit*–is ‘cutting’.** An agreement was *cut*. A covenant was something cut (we might say “struck” in our vernacular today). An animal was cut open and the people involved in making the covenant walked in the midst of the broken, bloody bodies (**Jeremiah 34:18** is a good example).

**You can read of this kind of covenant in a personal study you can do of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15.** That covenant, by the way, pictured, to the very day, the Passover of Exodus 12 and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (**please read on your own Gen 15:7-21**). Abraham pictured God the Father, and the sacrificial animals pictured Jesus, and you’ll notice the story talks about cutting the animals in half, walking in their midst, and then a great horror coming over Abraham, just as surely as Abba in heaven felt great horror when Jesus was cut open on the cross, for you and me, and His spilled blood forgave us. Also, remember when God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17, it was sealed in blood of *circumcision, a cutting of the foreskin*, in that particular case (**Genesis 17:10-11**). In the covenant with Israel at Sinai, Moses once again sprinkled blood on the people and on the altar (**Exodus 24:3-8**).

And when we accept the life of Jesus, shed in our behalf, when God sees the Lamb's blood on our households, **He passes over (Exodus 12:13) our sins previously committed (Romans 3:25)** and declares our debt "paid in full". It all starts with faith in the blood of Christ and accepting His righteous life in our behalf. Our salvation is "from faith to faith" and that is why I prepared a 3-part series on Living by Faith. It's crucial to the Christian life.

**Please be turning now to Exodus 6:6-7. Leave a marker there for we'll come back to it often. I suspect what I'm about to cover will be new material for many of you.**

### **WHY 4 cups of wine at Passover**

*The 4 cups of wine* set before the Jews had names and purposes. Why four? Did you know it comes from **Exodus 6:6-7**?

**The four cups of wine the Jews have in their Seder, and apparently that Jesus had that evening when He picked up the cup, represent the 4 PROMISES of God given to Israel through Moses.** The four "I will's that God promised. In a sense, I want you to get this – this passage is also about *the SEQUENCE of the plan of salvation God is offering us. Keep that in mind as you read it.* These 4 I will's were accomplished in a limited way when God brought Israel out of Egypt, but will not reach their full fulfillment until the Kingdom of God is established on earth. I find this to be very exciting! The Jews drink their 4 cups of wine as they look back – and we Christians drink our Passover wine as we look back to Christ's sacrifice, but we need to realize it is also something to help us look forward, if we realize the cup's origin in Exodus 6:6-7

**In Ex 6:2-5**, God sets the stage as He speaks to Moses, saying He remembers the covenant and the promise of the Promised Land – and then says, and notice that the *4 promises are things GOD does, not things Israel was to do. And note that each of the "I will" promises represents one of the 4 cups of wine:*

**Exodus 6:6-7** "Therefore say to the children of Israel: "I am the LORD; (cup #1) ***I will bring you out*** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, (cup #2) ***I will rescue you*** from their bondage, (cup #3) ***and I will redeem you*** with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 (the 4<sup>th</sup> cup) ***I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.*** Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians"

**So the FIRST CUP = "I will bring you out."** I will, God says. Not you, not by your might. You can't save yourself. You and I need GOD to bring us out of the burdens of the Egyptians. Spiritually that means God saves us from "spiritual Egypt" which includes Satan, the world, and sin. *God* brings us out of spiritual captivity. We can't save ourselves from sin! We need a Savior!

**2<sup>nd</sup> cup: "I WILL RESCUE YOU"** – God is the one who saves us! Rescues us!

**3<sup>rd</sup> cup: I WILL REDEEM YOU** (The Jews call this cup "the cup of blessing". Remember that.)

This is the cup which most believe Jesus used when He took the cup and blessed it. *Paul* also calls that cup at that Passover and the one cup we use today – "the cup of blessing" – same name the Jews call their 3<sup>rd</sup> cup. **It has to do with redemption.** That requires a whole separate message which I'll perhaps cover soon in light of Boaz redeeming Ruth. It has to do with being

blessed by God PAYING THE PRICE of the penalty for sin for us, he BUYS us, and He pays for us. Let's read it.

**1 Corinthians 10:16** *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"*

*Remember this 3<sup>rd</sup> cup is the cup that says, from Exodus 6 – "I will REDEEM YOU".... "buy you back", pay the penalty or cost of sin for you, I will die for you, I will pay the price! And that is what He did. He died for us. We have been bought by God and we now belong to God.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (also 1 Cor. 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1).*

So as we drink of the cup, remember that you're drinking a representation of the blood of Christ to remind us that "you are not your own", but belong to another, and need to live with that recognition in the forefront of our everyday lives!

**NOW BACK TO THE 4 CUPS – AND EXODUS 6. WHY DIDN'T JESUS DRINK THE 4<sup>TH</sup> CUP?**

*NOW REMEMBER, JESUS DID NOT DRINK THE 4<sup>TH</sup> CUP – because He actually says "I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in the kingdom" (Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Why did He not drink the 4<sup>th</sup> cup? Exodus 6:7 says why: because it pictures the 4<sup>th</sup> "I will", the 4<sup>th</sup> promise of God, which – in the spiritual sense – won't be fully realized until the Kingdom comes.*

**4<sup>th</sup> cup:** *"I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY PEOPLE and I will be your God."* (Ex. 6:7).

*Jesus did NOT drink any more cups of wine after that 3<sup>rd</sup> cup – He didn't drink the 4<sup>th</sup> cup in other words --- for the Jews were not yet ready to have Him be their God. When He does drink of the cup again, I believe it will be the 4<sup>th</sup> cup that He apparently left on the table that night, when He says to the world, in his KINGDOM, at a future Passover, when ALL the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God – the 4<sup>th</sup> "I will" – I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD.*

*.... And at that time the world, and the Jews, will finally accept Him as their King, their Messiah, their Savior – and their GOD. Finally Deut 26:17-19 will truly happen. Finally, the prophecy of the Song of Songs, chapter 2:16, will happen: "my Beloved is mine, and I am His."*

**4<sup>th</sup> cup:** *"I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY PEOPLE and I will be your God."* (Ex 6:7).

Paul says – in Hebrews 8:7-13 – **quoting the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33-34**, that it is being fulfilled in the New Covenant that Jesus brought, and the Old Covenant has become obsolete.

**Hebrews 8:7-13** *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are*

coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days**, says the LORD: *I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; **and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*** [the 4<sup>th</sup> cup; the 4<sup>th</sup> "I will" of Ex 6] 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, *and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*"

**13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."**

This makes it clear, as to why Jesus said He wouldn't drink of it again until the Kingdom, *doesn't it? The Jews were not yet ready in 31 AD to take Jesus as their God, nor to be His people. But they will be, and the whole world will someday be ready to do just that – and that time, in the kingdom, Jesus will finally be able to drink of the fruit of the vine again; perhaps even drinking the 4<sup>th</sup> cup finally.*

**Turn now to John 2. The FIRST miracle of Jesus in Cana** also shows that from the very FIRST part of His ministry, Jesus is thinking about His mission: to shed His blood for us. Don't forget: the miracle at Cana was just before the Passover (**John 2:13**). No wonder when Mary came to Him, mentioning they were out of wine, Jesus answered "My hour has not yet come". Wow! He's thinking of His mission already – and with Passover so close, and wine being the topic, no wonder!

**John 2:6** "Now there were set there *six* water pots of stone, according to *the manner of purification* of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece."

**There were 6 pots, but not just any old pots, but ones used for purification!** What does the blood of Jesus do for us? It purifies us, cleanses us of all sin (**1 John 1:7**).

Notice these pots hold LOTS of water – 20-30 gallons apiece x 6 pots = 120-180 gallons! There's plenty of Jesus' forgiving blood to go around for *all* humanity ever born, and to cover ALL our sins – all yours and all mine. ALL is buried in the blood of our Master!

There were SIX pots. **Six is the number of man.** Jesus' blood was for us – for all mankind.

### **"The CUP" is MORE THAN JUST THE CONTENTS OF THE CUP**

**NOW LET'S MORE SPECIFICALLY EXAMINE THE CUP itself – and not just the wine.** You'll notice the Bible emphasizes the CUP sometimes, and not just the *contents* of the cup. Jesus says to "drink from it, all of you", not "drink the wine" – but "drink of the cup".

We know the red wine symbolizes the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins (**Matthew 26:28**). We know we need to remember that it took the blood of the son of God to forgive us our sins, and we certainly rehearse that aspect of this service every year. We know that as

we drink the wine, we are accepting His shed blood in our behalf, forgiving our sins and wiping our sinful slate clean. Praise God for that!

**AND, as I've just explained, as we drink the cup, we are also remembering it is specifically the cup of blessing, also called "the Cup of Redemption"—the 3<sup>rd</sup> "I Will" – I will REDEEM you. We have been bought at a price.**

But now I hope to remind you, or bring to light if this is new to any of you, a concept I started to preach on several years ago: that the Passover wine is more than just the wine; it is also about the meaning of **drinking "of His cup"** -- which adds so much to the meaning of the Passover *wine*. The cup's meaning is different from the wine's meaning, though they work together.

### THE MEANING BEHIND *THE CUP* of JESUS CHRIST

We've already covered how the CUP that Jesus offered was the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of the Passover, called the cup of blessing. **I feel, of the 34 Passovers I've kept so far, that only 1-2 have even discussed this vital meaning of "the cup". It has a joyous – and solemn – meaning.**

**There are traditions that when a young Hebrew man would propose to a woman, the man poured wine into his cup and invited the woman to drink of it. The cup symbolized whatever lay ahead in his life.** Drinking or not -- was up to her. If she drank from it, she was accepting whatever their life together would hold – happiness, sorrow, health, sickness, fame or disgrace. Whatever! If she did not take the cup and drink from it, there was *not* going to be a marriage. **If she drank of his cup, she was accepting his new covenant with her, his marriage covenant or contract.** No wonder Jesus said, "this is the new covenant in my blood, drink of it, all of you".

We read in **II Corinthians 11:2**, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For *I have betrothed you to one husband*, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ

**As we drink of His cup, we're accepting His calling to become His bride, we want to be among His elect, His chosen -- and as we drink of the wine – we are accepting His means of purifying His Bride so we can be perfect, spotless, just like He is (Jude 24-25). When Jesus used the language He did at that Passover, He was actually using language that was very similar to what young men used all the time to propose to the young lady who had caught their eye.** His disciples had to wonder, "why is He proposing to us?" But what did they do? They took the cup, drank from it, accepting the agreement to enter a *covenant* with Jesus Christ. The cup is also about, therefore, accepting a life tied with Jesus, married to Him, being one with Him in marriage.

Also interesting, is that once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, and Father sees His Son's blood covering us and passes over our sins, **God then gives us the earnest of the Holy Spirit.** "Earnest" is sometimes translated "downpayment" or "guarantee" (see **Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5**). The Greek word for "earnest" is "*arrabon*". The Holy Spirit we receive joins with our spirit, confirming we are children of God (**Romans 8:13**), and that we will marry Jesus Christ. It is God's SIGN on us that seals us. It is God's guarantee that we are HIS; that we belong to Him. The Spirit "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" – **Romans 8:16**.

Having the Holy Spirit is like wearing an engagement ring that should be a sign to everyone that we belong to another. The Spirit we receive at baptism, upon acceptance of Jesus' blood for us, **is the earnest, the arrabon**, of God's *guarantee* that He will finish what He started in us, and present us faultless and perfect, so when we are changed to fully born children of God, in God's FAMILY, that Jesus can marry US, **since at that time we will be of the same kind as Jesus is, and kind can marry kind**. THAT was the lesson of Adam and Eve. Eve had to be of the same *kind* as Adam, and in fact, of His very body. *We are of the body of Christ, and we remember that as we eat the bread and drink His wine*—and wear **His sign: the arrabon, the earnest of the Spirit!** I hope you're following this!

**And surprise, surprise: the modern Greek word "arrabona" means ...are you ready... engagement ring!** You can verify what I just said by looking up "earnest" in *Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*. We drink His *marriage proposal cup* entering us into a covenant with Him to marry Him and He puts an engagement ring on us – but the "ring" is the Holy Spirit He gives us as a guarantee of His promise to come for us and marry us.

Can you see why – when we drink of the Master's Cup from now on – it should be a solemnly exciting moment. ***We've just been proposed to! By GOD'S SON!*** We've just been asked to enter into a formal agreement to marry His Highness, the King of Kings! To be His Executive Assistant, confidante and partner! This Passover service is not an everyday meeting, brethren!

**Now we have to be faithful to the One we've agreed to marry.**

**1 Corinthians 10:21-22** "You cannot *drink the cup of the Lord* and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. **22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?** Are we stronger than He?"

**The cup represents accepting the marriage covenant, the agreement to marry, Christ and Him alone.** Once we take of that cup – if we participate in the sins and goals of the world – it's like continuing to date other girls once you're engaged! And Paul says this can provoke our Master to jealousy!

I'm out of time just about. **Another important concept of the CUP: it carries massive responsibilities too.** When the girl took the cup and drank of it, she was saying she was willing to go through life *with* that man, with *whatever* was in store for him, represented by the contents of the cup: in good health or sickness, in blessing or cursing, in good or bad, in fortune or poverty—she would suffer with him, or be glorified with him.

When **Salome**, the mother of James and John (and possibly the aunt of Jesus) – asked that her sons sit on Jesus' right/left hand in the kingdom, **Jesus asked her in Matthew 20:22** – 'are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink' – do you know what you're asking for? James was the first martyr. John, though he didn't die a martyr, went through a lot as well. Read all of it in your own time in **Matthew 20:20-23**.

**Do we remember what Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, just minutes after urging His disciples to drink of His cup?** As He prayed fervently and heartfully to His Father in heaven, the symbol of "the cup" was ever before Him. Just as Jesus had given His disciples a cup from which to drink, so had God the Father placed a cup before Him!

**Notice Matt. 26:39:** "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, **"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;** nevertheless, not as I will, but as YOU will."

Jesus, the second and third times He prayed in the Garden, changed His words slightly, as He realized He definitely had to drink of that cup: "...*"O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done"* (Matt. 26:42, 44). He was now fully accepting the fact that the only way to get past this ordeal was to go through it. Even moments later, when Jesus was being arrested, and as Peter cuts off Malchus' ear, as Jesus heals Malchus, He asks Peter: "*What, shall I not drink of the cup which my Father has given me?*" (John 18:11) The cup was ever before Him. The cup meant accepting whatever God is laying in store for us.

It should be very clear by now that we don't just drink the *wine* at Passover. We drink "of the cup" of Passover, meaning we are proclaiming our willingness to share in similar trials as Jesus did. We're willing to endure whatever He has appointed for us as our lot. We're identifying ourselves with Him. Exclusively. **We are cupbearers to the King of kings** and to Him only. **Ps. 16:5** says, **"O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;** you maintain my lot." ***The Eternal IS our cup!*** Do we grasp the meaning of that awesome scripture? We cannot simultaneously identify with Christ's kingdom and Satan's kingdom (**1 Cor. 10:21**) as we try to belong to Christ, to commune with Him (**verse 16**).

We'll be meeting soon to eat and drink of the Passover symbols at the table God has set before us. ***What an honor to eat of the Bread of Life and to be His cupbearer, and drink of His cup.*** Jesus said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until it was fulfilled in the kingdom. It won't be long now when we may well witness with our own eyes our great Savior blessing His cup at a future Passover, and once again asking us to "drink from it, all of you". We will soberly and thankfully lift the cup to our lips and drink of it -- the cup of forgiveness, the cup of blessing, the cup of salvation -- and the cup signifying ***our beloved is ours, and we are His.***

**When we really understand "drinking of the cup", we can say with the Psalmist, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (**Psalm 23:5-6**). Amen. May God speed that day.

I pray you have a blessed and solemn and *meaningful* Passover as you remember the signs and emblems of God's incredibly profound love for you and me. Philip W. Shields



