

There Was No King In Israel

King of Peace

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Given 14-Feb-26; Sermon #1859B

Please open your Bibles to the book of Judges, the 21st chapter, verse 25, where we are going to begin this sermon, and then we will go to Psalm 47.

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

And now over to Psalm 47, verses 1 through 9. I want you to keep these two scriptures in mind as we go forward with this sermon.

Psalm 47:1-9 Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah. God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne. The princes of the peoples have gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

Two days ago was the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, which took place on February 12, 1809. When I was a boy, that day, as well as the anniversary of George Washington's birth that took place on February 22, 1732, were each considered days of remembrance. Although not national holidays, many states considered one or both significant enough dates in American history that many schools and local government offices were closed as poignant days of remembrance. As a boy in grammar school, we had no classes on one day or the other.

And on the days we were in school, the focus throughout the day was on efforts to memorialize either of those two American presidents. Please keep this idea of days of remembrance or memorial in the back of your minds as we continue through this sermon. If we were in school on either of those days, there were studies focused on that particular American president and on the period in which they lived and the legacy that historians considered they left behind. Please keep in mind the old saying that history is written by the winners. Although pretty cynical, there is quite a bit of truth in that, which we will get into in a minute.

Neither was considered a national holiday, yet both were considered important days of remembrance across the United States, with different states observing them in various ways from about 1879 through 1970. Although Washington's birthday was observed on the national level for many years, Lincoln's never was set aside nationally.

However, by 1968, these days of remembrance had been relegated to nothing more than a part of the Uniform Monday Holiday Act enacted by Congress on June 28th of that year. It was purposely established to boost the travel industry and give federal employees a three-day weekend. The act moved Washington's birthday observance to the third Monday in February, which can occur anytime between February 15th and the 21st, beginning as it started in 1971. Although many believe it combined Lincoln's birthday and Washington's on this day, because both were so close shoulder dates of the 15th and the 21st, it did not. The Uniform Monday Holiday Act of Congress actually moved two federal holidays, Washington's birthday and Memorial Day, to Mondays within each month in which they had been kept in the past.

It also created Columbus Day as a federal holiday to be kept on Monday in October. Labor Day was already on the first Monday of September, and over the years, Dr. Martin Luther King's January birthday was added to the Monday Holiday Act. Contrary to what many believe, this third Monday holiday in February that we will observe this coming Monday on February 16th this year, never combined Lincoln's birthday with Washington's nor changed the name from Washington's birthday. As opposed to what many incorrectly believe, it is not President's Day, even though many of your calendars say that.

Although this watered down day of remembrance soon became known as President's Day, considered by most to honor both Abraham Lincoln and George Washington's birthdays together or any single president of choice, it has always been Washington's birthday. It was always intended as the day of remembrance for the first President of the United States that had set the standard of the office for all who would follow after him.

As you can see within the self-serving minds of men, days that had been set apart as distinct memorials became distorted, watered down, and incorporated with distortions of fact. But for right now, I would like us to turn our attention to Lincoln and something that was required for each child my age in grammar school, boys and girls, to memorize, and publicly recite when called upon.

It is probably the most recognizable of speeches in American history. On November 19, 1863, at the dedication ceremony of the cemetery in the open field of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said,

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any other nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We have met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate nor can we consecrate. We cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who have struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it will never forget what they did here.

It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion, that to

that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Brethren, I did not have this in my sermon, but I wish all of us could think of our own lives with the great witness of those who have gone before us in the same way. But that is an aside.

As I said, when I was a boy and memorializing February 12th, it was required for each child in grammar school to memorize those words. Although many, many years have passed, most of those words are still etched in my brain and all the various anecdotal stories that went along with it.

But I want to read to you the introduction to a section on a website that is entitled, Abraham Lincoln Online: Speeches, the Gettysburg Address. It starts:

On June 1st, 1865, Senator Charles Sumner referred to the most famous speech ever given by Abraham Lincoln in his eulogy on the slain president.

He called the Gettysburg Address a monumental act. He said Lincoln was mistaken that the world would little note nor long remember what we say here. Rather, the Bostonian remarked, the world noted at once what he said and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech.

There are 5 known copies of the speech in Lincoln's handwriting, each with a slightly different text and named for the people who first received them. They're the Nicolay, Hay, Everett, Bancroft, and Bliss. Nicolay and Hay were President Lincoln's secretary and his assistant who were there at Gettysburg. So what they have is probably the actual address at Gettysburg.

Two copies apparently were written before delivering the speech, one which probably was the reading copy. [Those are the copies that I just mentioned from Nicolay and Hay.] The remaining ones were produced months later for soldier benefit events. Despite widely circulated stories to the contrary, the president did not dash off a copy aboard a train to Gettysburg. Lincoln carefully prepared his major speeches in advance. His steady, even script in every manuscript is consistent with a firm writing surface, not the notoriously bumpy Civil War trains. Additionally, versions of the speech appeared in newspapers of the era, feeding modern day confusion about the authoritative copy. [What I just recited to you a few minutes ago as the Gettysburg Address was the Bliss copy of the address.]

It is the only copy that is dated and signed by Lincoln himself. And although it's dated November 19, 1863, which was the date of the dedication ceremony, it was in fact a copy written by Lincoln in 1864 and sent to Colonel Alexander Bliss, who was the stepson of historian George Bancroft at George Bancroft's request. Bancroft, who was the author of the 1834 work *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent*, had requested a copy to be used as a fundraiser for soldiers. Bancroft held on to this copy.

But because it was written by Lincoln on both sides, the page itself could not be reprinted. So Lincoln wrote another exact copy on a single page that could be reprinted, and that became the Bliss copy. This is the copy etched into the wall of the Lincoln Memorial and on display in the Lincoln Room of the White House. This is important because this exact copy of what Bancroft had asked for is important because Bancroft, a politician, scholar, and historian, maintained four major themes throughout his historical works, with the main one being providence and his belief that the destiny depended more on God than on human will, but of course with God on the side of the United States.

I mention this because I think Lincoln's copy of the Gettysburg Address he penned for Bancroft and copied again for Alexander Bliss brought the edition that was not in the original address that scholars agree was the script Lincoln used at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863.

In Lincoln's copy to Bancroft, he added, under God, and I believe it was a deft political move by Lincoln, who undoubtedly knew Bancroft's perspective on history to make sure that the Democrat Bancroft stayed in line with him.

Brethren, I have taken a great deal of time in the introduction to this sermon, which I hopefully will finish, God-willing, the next time I speak, not to exalt or demean President Washington, President Lincoln, or any who have walked through this life from their own perspective under the sun. Many, like Washington, Lincoln, Bancroft, etc., believe that God is in charge, but at the same time relegate their view of His sovereignty to be in line with their own personal beliefs within circumstances of this life under the sun.

Although I do not consider this to be Part 5 of "The Proverbs 31 Wife of Christ" sermons that I gave, I am picking up on this main theme of that last sermon because I feel for various several reasons that I really did not do a good job focusing our attention on God's sovereign authority over every aspect of His creation, to move His plan forward regardless of the poor choices made by men, using even them perfectly to accomplish His work.

What I am trying to point out is, the farther we get away from times of remembrance, the more vaguely we begin to remember truth. For instance, although many think that the Civil War was fought over slavery, as we memorialized Lincoln when students, we looked at the whole truth as far as we understood it concerning things like the Civil War.

The truth of the matter as far as we understood it from historical references of men, the Civil War was not directly fought over the issue of slavery. It was fought over two things primarily. One was economics. The South was fundamentally built on agriculture, and the slaves were a big part of that, while the North was industrialized and did not depend as much on slave labor. The second and probably more important was the opinion, like

Lincoln's, that it was necessary to preserve the union of states at all costs, a perspective that ultimately meant denying the Constitution and the union of republics, putting a unified democracy above states' rights as republics. It actually changed the form of government as some considered for the greater good, while usurping rights of each state to determine its own destiny, even if it meant secession.

I am not trying to come down on either side of this issue of the government from the minds of men. All I want us to get from this is an example of what happens when we start getting farther away from deeply considering things within truth because we fail to remember or memorialize things properly. Particularly for us, when we fail to memorialize God's commanded days thoughtfully, we become more divided, losing sight of God's sovereignty, and we become more divided by hearsay.

The government of this nation and the governments of men are much more complicated because men determine for themselves right and wrong and therefore division follows. They may become absolutely convinced that God is sovereign over His creation, but always with this idea that God is on their side. Brethren, the truth is that we need to dive deeply into our minds and hearts that God is sovereign over His creation, and we need to make sure we understand how to stay under His sovereign authority according to truth that will truly produce unity and peace and righteousness—and be on *His* side.

This is why I said when we started this sermon to keep Judges 21:25, those words in mind that there was no king over Israel and everyone did what was right in his own sight. Because the only way for us to live in unity is to know that there has always been a King over Israel, over the nations, over the universe, our great and holy King of peace. And we need to live according to His law and His way of life that will produce unity if we do it together, remembering and living His Word. We are living in a time when men continue to decide for themselves right and wrong, disunity is plaguing the society. But God has established His memorials and days of remembrance with specific purposes in mind, and we cannot let any one of them slip away from what God intends for us, who know He is always in control.

In just six and a half weeks, we are going to be keeping the Passover, followed by the Night to be Much Observed and the Days of Unleavened

Bread. We cannot keep Passover properly if we do not understand the focused intent of our great God for this day and its part in annually recommitting ourselves to the unity and peace that He Himself has made possible with the Father, with Himself, and with one another. As Richard noted in his recent Forerunner Passover Bible study, the peace offering is the major part of the Passover that we will be keeping. If we do not prepare properly to keep the Passover with an understanding of the perfect sovereignty of God and the peace that He provides for our unity with Him and one another, we are not going to keep the Passover properly in six and a half weeks.

With that in mind, please turn with me again back to Judges the 21st chapter, in the 25th verse. This is the verse that we focused on last time that was the last verse in Judges preceding the book of Ruth. Before reading this verse and a few more verses after it, I would like to remind you that this last verse of the book of Judges is in direct opposition to what we see in the book of Ruth, which clearly focuses on someone who saw the King of Israel and forward towards the incarnate King of Peace.

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Hold your finger there, please, and turn with me back to Acts the 13th chapter. We are going to be picking it up in verse 16, with the apostle Paul there at Antioch.

Acts 13:16-23 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also

He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus."

Now, keeping in mind what Paul said there in verse 18, that for a time of about 40 years God put up with their ways in the wilderness. Please turn with me back to the book of Deuteronomy in chapter 12. We will pick it up in verse 1.

Deuteronomy 12:1-10 "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall possess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.

"But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, . . .

As we just read there in the book of Deuteronomy 12:8-9, Moses told the people, "You shall not do as we are doing here today—every man doing what is right in his own eyes," as they crossed over into the Jordan. From that point forward, they should have been coming into the place of rest. They should have been finding the peace that God would give them, which comes with His blessing in the land of promise and peace for those who would obey His voice. It was truly the land of peace that comes from living the Word of God.

Now please turn with me back to the book of Judges. There we are going to see it mentioned four times there that there was no king, and twice we see added the added phrase that we just read about Israel, who Moses said continued through their 40-year journey in the wilderness doing what was right in their own eyes, which was not to continue in the land where they could have peace. Here are the four places in Judges. The first one appears in Judges chapter 17.

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel.

Judges 19:1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains in Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine. . .

And then finally, chapter 21 and verse 25 that ends the book of Judges.

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

The book of Judges is in sharp contrast to the book of Joshua, where the people did under Joshua as Moses said they needed to do when they came into the land of rest. They stayed obedient under Joshua to God. However, in Judges we see a people that were disobedient and idolatrous and had no peace in God's intended place of rest and refreshment. For the first 16

chapters of the book of Judges we see the recording of God in His sovereignty continuing to raise up judges to bring the people back in line, time after time, finally ending with the 13th judge, Samson's humble repentance as he brought down the temple of Dagon.

In the last five chapters of the book, God clearly points out how far Israel had fallen away from Him, totally losing sight of the King, who was always there. They lost sight of God because they failed to obey His word, and they fell into such depravity that they were keeping what they considered right in their own eyes the right way to go. But without carefully remembering and memorializing the truth of God's Word, they swung farther and farther into depravity and away from God so that by the end of the book, God makes it absolutely clear, in those days they saw no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, realizing the results of their depravity in pain, suffering, and warfare.

In Judges 21:25, the Hebrew word translated as king is #H4428 in *Strong's*, *melek*. It appears 2,525 times in the Old Testament. But for our purposes today as we focus on our preparations for the Passover and the commanded remembrance of our commitment at baptism, I would like to turn to where the term *melek* first appears in the Old Testament. So please turn with me to Genesis, the 14th chapter and we are going to pick it up right there in verse 1.

Genesis 14:1-4 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

In this chapter, we find Abram in command of a 318-man army coming to the rescue of his nephew Lot and those who had been taken captive after this revolt. In verse 1, this is the first time we see the word *melek* in the Old Testament used for a provincial king and other kings that pushed to make war and enslave other men. In verse 8 we see that the king of Sodom and his allies moved against Chedorlaomer and his allies in war. In verse 10 we see

that the king of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and abandoned their people, including Lot, who had taken up residence in Sodom with his family.

We will pick it up now in verse 11.

Genesis 14:11-16 Then they [the people that fought against Sodom] took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. [Notice that Abram did not pull any allies. He did it with his people born in his own house.] He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

We now get to the point where it really gets interesting, and we come to the whole point of this sermon that I will not be able to finish until the next time I speak.

Genesis 14:17-24 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave Him a tithe of all. Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing from a thread to a sandal

strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'—except only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Although the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the King's Valley to collect his booty, Abram was first met and refreshed by Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who brought out bread and wine to share a meal with him that He provided. The King of Peace was the Priest of God Most High, as it says in verse 19, and He blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be Abram of God the Most High, Possessor of heaven and the earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." This was the preincarnate Son of God as King of Peace, refreshing Abram at a meal with bread and wine, a satisfying and refreshing meal with the King of Peace.

We know from this point forward, Abraham was a friend of God and he continued through things that personally showed his faithful dedication to the God of peace, most specifically when he offered in faith the sacrifice of his own son Isaac, as James just mentioned. However, as far as I could tell, from this point forward, we never see Abraham going into physical battle against men again.

Let us pick it up in Genesis 15, verse 1.

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

From this point forward, the King of Peace would continue to do what He needed to do to assure Abram's courage going forward. "Do not be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

Brethren, at this point, I think it would be helpful for all of us if I read to you a section cited from John Ritenbaugh's Bible study on Abraham. It is a Bible study that he gave, interestingly enough, on February 20th, 1990, today, just six days shy of 30 years ago. In the Bible study, John said the following.

When Christ comes, He is going to make war. He is going to stop the madness through His warfare. God only makes war in righteousness. That is why He has forbidden man to go to war. No man, including Abraham, should go to war because he does not have the nature. He is not equipped with the nature and therefore the character, you might say, the heart to wage war in righteousness against each other. [Continuing] Abraham lived in a different time, a different era, you might say, a different dispensation of God's work at a time when God's Kingdom, as it were, was of this world, and it fought even though it was not God's will for it to do so. God's purpose must stand, and if God's servant decided to go to war, God's purpose was going to be worked out regardless.

[John continues] Now I do not think Abraham thought of warfare in terms of being a noble idea. His warfare symbolized his depth of feeling and love toward Lot, his brother, as it said, but literally his nephew. It exemplifies his willingness to lay down his life for him. Does that remind you of anything that Jesus said there in John 14 and 15 that "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." Lot was Abraham's flesh and blood, and he risked everything. He did not calculate at all what the cost was going to be to him. His only thought was to rescue his nephew Lot.

And this comes out as we got closer to the end of the chapter. He was willing to lay down his life for Lot. [John continues] We are involved in this war, and part of our warfare is focused on getting the gospel out, and there are those who are against us in this regard. We have to fight the battle. Abraham, in an uncalculating way, is willing to lay down his life for his brother. And that is the lesson for you and me. It is not the fact that he went to war. It is the fact that he was willing to lay down his life. We are going to see that in a little bit more later how uncalculating. In other words, Abraham

did not go to war to see what he could get for himself. He was not after glory. He was not after money. His only thought was to preserve the life of someone else who he loved. We have to begin to ask ourselves questions in this regard. Do we love our brother? As Jesus was beginning His ministry, He made the statement in this regard in,

Luke 4:18-19 He said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Down a bit further, John continues.

And though we do not literally go to war as Abraham did or as David did, we are nonetheless involved in a war with a very real enemy who fights very hard to resist and keep us from fulfilling our role. What I am talking about are those principalities and powers that the apostle Paul named them back in a couple of his letters.

Let us nail that down by turning to Ephesians 6 is what John said.

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Brethren, there is much more John had to say that we could add, but we will not go any further with this. Hopefully you get the point that our battle is one

that we continue to wage, but not with other men. Our battle is to maintain the perfect unity with the Father, the Son, and one another, as memorialized in our recommitment to share the table with the King of Peace.

In Genesis 14, within the first use of the word *melek*, the most significant appearance there is the one who was like the Son of Man that greeted Abraham with the blessing, with the meal and the bread and wine and refreshment that prefigured Jesus Christ's keeping the Passover meal of the peace and providing the unity that only He can bring. Passover is a celebration of peace with the Father, the Son, and one another, as has been provided by the King of Peace who has always been there. I hope to go into this in more detail in the next sermon that I give, God-willing, a couple of weeks before the Passover.

But please keep in mind as you prepare for the Passover and that commemorative memorial of Jesus Christ as the King of Peace, that when we keep the Passover on the night of March 31st this year, we need to understand that this is more the peace offering than any other offering. A meal shared in unity with the Father, the Son, and one another. The King of Peace is going to sit down with us that night with the Father to share a very important meal, indicating a peaceful sharing of the bread and wine in unity with the Father, the Son, and each other.

Brethren, between now and the Passover, I strongly recommend that you go over David Grabbe's article on why Jesus Christ was not crucified in the beginning of the Passover. It should prove to be a good tool for properly keeping the Passover time correctly as God intends it.

So now, with the final scripture, please turn with me to the book of John, the 18th chapter, and we are going to be picking it up in verse 33. Christ stands before Pilate just before His crucifixion, declaring His work and our unity with Him.

John 18:33-38 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me.

What have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Jesus Christ, on the night of the Passover He shared with His disciples, had lived a perfect burnt offering to the Father, a perfect grain offering to the people that were there, and He had finished His work. Passover must be with a focus on a remembrance of our shared meal with the King of Peace, who was born to this end as the King of Peace, who completed His work to have us sit at His table in peaceful unity with Him, the Father, and one another.

Brethren, be strong and of good courage. Our King of Peace was the perfect burnt offering, grain offering, and He offers us to sit with Him in the peace offering on this coming evening on March 31st. Try to keep these things in mind as you prepare for the Passover, and God-willing, I will be talking to you again in a couple of weeks before Passover.