

A Pre-Passover Look

Pre-Passover

John W. Ritenbaugh

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I am going to break away from the series that I have been giving on *The Christian and The World*, and resisting the world, because we are getting so close to Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, and I do not want to be guilty before God of failing to meet my responsibility of giving meat in due season. So we are going to take a pre-Passover look at things that we should be looking into in our lives at this time in order to be better prepared for the Passover.

Every festival—every holy day—has its significant preparations, but a day that is not even a holy day has attached to it, I think, undoubtedly the most important preparation of all, and that is of course Passover. Then Passover itself is preparatory, because it prepares us for participation in the remainder of God's plan since it begins the annual rehearsal of the plan of God.

We are going to begin tearing apart parts of this area so that we can understand it better, to understand what our responsibility is as we lead into Passover.

I Corinthians 11:26-32 For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Such a sacrifice as the one given by Jesus Christ must be fittingly remembered, and Christians are enjoined to recall it with a deep sense of appreciation, coupled with understanding, because with the cup God is sealing His agreement of salvation with His people through Christ's blood. William Barclay has translated one phrase here as saying, "This cup is the New Covenant, and it cost Me My blood." This is kind of a chilling reminder of what we are doing at this time.

You might recall that when the Old Covenant was sealed in Exodus 24 that Moses took the blood of the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, and he sprinkled it upon the people so that they got hit in the face or on the hands, or their clothing was stained by it. I do not know how thoroughly he did this. I doubt if he went around to all two and one-half million, or three million of them, but he sprinkled enough of the people who were near to him that I am sure that everybody got the idea that this blood was staining them. By contrast, the New Covenant is sealed, not by the offering of an animal, but by the offering of the Man, Jesus Christ, and rather than be sprinkled on the people, the people *drink* its symbol, and it comes *inside* of them.

This bit of typology certainly indicates the inwardness of the New Covenant as contrasted to the outwardness of the Old Covenant. The purpose of taking it is not merely to remind us of the *fact* of Christ's death, but a great deal more than that.

First: By participating, you are silently proclaiming Christ's death and return. That is in verse 26.

Second : By partaking, you are silently proclaiming that you are a partner in the New Covenant of which Jesus is Mediator.

Third : By partaking of it you are proclaiming that you are in unity with those who are also in the body, ("not discerning the Lord's body"). Therefore, Paul concludes that the person who participates with nonchalance, without due appreciation, without being worthy (I will change "taking it unworthily" to "worthy"), who does it with nonchalance, is *guilty* of the *murder* of the Savior.

The *Amplified Bible* translates a portion of it this way. I think they do a pretty good job:

Let a man thoroughly examine himself and only when he has done so shall he eat the bread and drink the cup, for anyone who eats and drinks without discriminating [discerning, dividing rightly] and recognizing with due appreciation that it is Christ's body, eats and drinks a sentence upon himself, that careless and unworthy participation is the reason many of you are weak and sickly, and quite enough of you have fallen into the sleep of death.

I think we really need to consider this portion of this service at this time, because as I gave you an observation that came from me, I have never seen a time like this in the greater church of God, when more *tragic* accidents and difficult diseases—and so many of them!—have hit the people of God. Is this tied to that?

You read in the prophecies, for instance in Lamentations 2, where God says "I have done this," and "I have done this," and "I will do that," making sure that we understood that *He* was the One who scattered Jerusalem, scattered the church. One of the things that He says is, "I will break down the wall." A wall is a symbol of defense. The wall is a symbol of protection. The bars are down. The world is streaming in, and with it are the curses the world would normally get and from which curses the church would be protected from, but this protection is gone. So this is a time to examine ourselves in the light of this.

[Still quoting from the *Amplified*] For if we searchingly examined ourselves, detecting our shortcomings and recognizing our own condition, we should not be judged, and penalty decreed by the divine judgment. But when we fall short and are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined and chastened so that we may not finally be condemned to eternal punishment along with the world.

The *Amplified* used the term "with due appreciation." Appreciation in this case means *a recognition of what caused the need for such a sacrifice*. The

Passover is not just to celebrate His memory, but to get the point of His death. If we do not get the point, we will in all probability treat it to some degree "unworthily."

What about that word *unworthy*, or *unworthily*, its adverb? It means "to treat in an irreverent, profane, careless, common, frivolous, or ritualistic manner." I have applied those synonyms because of the context, because that is what is alluded to by the word there. It is to treat Christ with insolence. We need to just reflect upon Hebrews 10:25-30, because it is those who *disrespect* the blood of Jesus Christ that are going to go into the Lake of Fire. So this is no small thing. To treat it unworthily is to treat it with insolence, with disrespect, because one has not seriously considered nor acted upon what it represents.

A person may examine himself and be of the opinion that he is unworthy to take it. At first glance this is something that appears to be a righteous approach, because without a doubt we technically are unworthy, but if we fail to take it, it will only exacerbate the problem of a lack of faith in God's Word, that He is merciful enough to forgive us. If we have this concept, it only makes us *more* unworthy through disobedience to God's command to take the Passover. Right in the context it says that we are to take it. So do not exacerbate the problem by thinking of yourself as being unworthy, and I think by the time that we get done with this sermon, you are going to find out that in the eyes of God you are *not* unworthy to take it. Not in the least! Technically, yes, because we are sinners and we do not *deserve* forgiveness or the blood of Christ. That technicality—that idea—is correct, but there is another side to this coin, and that carries a great deal more weight with God than our thinking emotionally that we are unworthy to take the Passover.

If a person comes without repentance, and therefore without self-examination, then that person is unworthy. What that person is doing is that he is treating it as ritualistic, [like] it is just something we do, without understanding, without really getting the point of it. There are people who keep the Sabbath this way. It has turned, unfortunately in the lives of some people within the church of God, into something not really distinctly different from the keeping of Sunday, that it is just something people go through.

Right within the larger context of I Corinthians 11, the Corinthians kept the Passover with contempt for the poor, and therefore they did it without discerning the Lord's body. These poor people were part of the body, and if you treat other parts of the body with contempt, you are not discerning the Lord's body. They were not discerning the Lord's body, because the Lord's body is also the church. It was not only what He gave in sacrifice—"by whose stripes we are healed"—it is spiritually His body, and so those people should not be treated with disrespect and contempt. To do so is to treat Christ that way. In Matthew 25 you will get the principle there.

Fourth : (This is also a part of the context.) By turning it into a frivolous feast.

Paul is not demanding perfection before one is allowed to partake, but he is demanding serious consideration of, leading to appreciation of, and a lifestyle commensurate with, the standards of God's way. So to treat the Passover with disrespect is in principle, let us say, the same as burning the flag. People have burned the flag in the United States and have gotten a lot of newsprint and television coverage because they have done that. We might expect our enemies over in Iraq and Iran and those places to burn the American flag.

Why are they doing it? They do it to show their *contempt* for what the flag represents—the United States of America. We know the flag is merely a symbol of the country, but to burn it is to reveal the disrespect and lack of appreciation for what the symbol represents, and that is the nation. To treat Passover, to treat or mistreat the symbols of Christ's sacrifice, is to mistreat the One that those symbols represent. This is serious business that we are involved in here.

It seems to me that there are three subjects being dealt with in the broader context of the whole chapter.

1. Our own personal relationship with God.
2. Our own personal relationship with other members of the body.
3. Spiritual liberty, because God permits punishment and death to invade the body of Christ when disrespect of Christ becomes the pattern of our lives.

We do not, as a church—and even as individuals within the church—have the liberty that we had when we were all unified in one organization. Now we are being restricted to small groups. Now we wonder who is really "with it" anymore. Our liberty is being impinged upon very greatly.

We cannot just walk through this memorial of the death of Jesus Christ without some preparation in study and meditation, and so I am going to give you some areas that I would like you to think about. These are areas of broad consideration, but at the same time they can serve as a focal point for introspection, especially prior to Passover; and to a lesser degree at other times throughout the entire year. These are things that should be thought upon from time to time. We are going to begin at the beginning.

1) Believe that God is.

Paul says in this very familiar scripture:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [or assurance] of things not seen.

In that first phrase that "faith is the substance of things hoped for," Paul is not really defining with this statement what faith is, but he is showing rather what faith *does* in an operative sense. Faith undergirds. That word "substance" means "that which stands under." Faith is a foundation for what we hope. It is the foundation for our relationship with God and *everything* that implies within His purpose. This is the very *beginning* of everything—faith.

When he says that it is the evidence or assurance (the word can literally be translated "title deed," but "assurance" seems to be the best all-around word) of things hoped for, he comes much closer to defining what faith is. Faith in its simplest form is merely *belief*. As our understanding becomes more complex and operative, meaning we begin to put faith to work, it becomes "confidence," and finally in its best form, when it becomes fully operational, it is *trust*. This final one, this trust, this measure of faith, is alive and it is working within the relationship with God.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Enoch is an example of somebody who pleased God, and the way he pleased God was that his faith was operative. He carried his concept of God beyond merely being a matter of belief. If we would look back to the very brief examples of teaching that are given about him in the book of Genesis, it says very clearly that "Enoch *walked* with God." That is how his faith was expressed. He *walked* with God.

When you *walk* with somebody, you are close to them. When you *walk* with somebody it is usually because you have a relationship with that person. It may be very close and intimate as in a husband and wife situation. It may be just a little bit further out in that you might be walking with your children, your family. It might be a little bit further out in that you are walking with a neighbor or a business associate, but you can see that even if you meet a stranger, there is a little bit of a relationship there when you are walking along with them. Walking implies relationship.

Walking with somebody implies a relationship, and Enoch specifically *walked* with God. That is how his faith was expressed. Now would you walk with somebody that you felt was going to pull out a gun and shoot you? You would not walk very long with somebody you *feared* was going to take things from you, including your life. You walk with somebody because there is a measure of trust that goes along within the relationship. Enoch was an outstanding example. Perhaps when God was inspiring Paul when he wrote this, maybe he was one of *the* outstanding examples of anybody who ever *walked* with God, in that his relationship with God was especially intimate and close.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

To this point we have seen that faith includes within its parameters not merely that God *is*, but trusting God as well. That is the kind of faith that Paul is talking about. Walking is an activity, and it exemplifies faith in its

use. What this means when we get right down to it without spending a lot of time in proving it, is that Enoch included God in every aspect of his life. The inference is that wherever Enoch was, God was. They were partners, as it were, in life. Enoch's life was a life of trust.

The instruction that Paul is beginning to get into, and is laying the foundation for by using this example of Enoch, is that we please God by doing as Enoch did. These are things to begin examining yourself. How do you measure up to Enoch? Could the same thing be said of us as was said of Enoch, that God is involved in every aspect of our life? This is seen from the point of view of Enoch. He was not trying to get away from God. He *wanted* God to be involved in every aspect of his life. He was not afraid to subject himself to evaluation and examination by God because he knew Him well enough.

Enoch exemplifies a life with true dedication. This begins with believing that "God is." In other words, we are looking at a process here. Enoch was not like this all of his life. There was a time when we would say Enoch was unconverted, but when God began working in Enoch, Enoch responded in such a way that he became exemplary of somebody who included God in every aspect of his life.

The same is true for you and me. There was a time when we did not know God. Have we grown over these past years to the place where, like Enoch, we have invited God into our lives, and He is in *every* aspect of our lives? This is such an important factor to growth and salvation that faith in God should be something that we are looking for reinforcement for all the time—not to re-prove, but rather to strengthen, as if by exercise, to keep it toned. What this example of Enoch does is it shows that he was using a faith that was more than mere intellectual belief. The first of the great commandments is what? That we love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind.

Galatians 5:5-6 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith which works by love.

You might recall in the sermons that I gave just a few months ago that involved these verses, that basically what that last phrase is saying is, "but faith which works by love is *everything*." It is contrasted to circumcision which avails *nothing*.

Galatians 5:7-9 You did run well; who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion comes not of him that calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

In another place in this same book it says that faith works through love, or it works *by* love. This is a two-sided statement. The love of God produces faith in us for Him, because without His revelation of Himself we would never have faith in Him because we do not *know* the true God. We do not know what He is like. We do not know where to look, and until He reveals the truth about Himself, we are behind the eight ball. So faith works by love in the sense that in God's revelation of Himself He opens up to us knowledge and understanding that was not previously available to us, and so that love begins by building faith in us in Him.

The other side of the coin is, in return for the love that God gave to us that produced the faith; faith reveals itself to God by giving the love back to God. We give it back to Him in submission. "If you love Me," Jesus said in John 15:14, "keep My commandments." A living faith will do that. Now suppose you ask your mate, "Do you believe that I love you?" and your mate said back to you, "Yes, I know that you exist." Do you get the point? God, as our lover (Jesus Christ is going to be our husband); if He said to us, "Do you know that I love you?"—what does He expect back? An answer that says "Yes, I know that You exist"? That is faith at its lowest form—merely a belief.

I just told you the answer. If we really love Christ, our faith in Him who is going to be our husband will respond by giving the love back to Him. Faith works by love. That is how God can tell how much faith there is in us. It is not merely the fact that He tests us through trials, it is the fact that we give the love that He gave to us *back* to Him, by submitting. You know very well that from human life you can only give love back to some other human that you trust. I mean intimate kind of love. If your mate, who is the one that you

should be giving that love to, disregards you and let us say commits some horrible sin that *destroys* that trust, it is awfully hard to give love back, is it not? You had better believe it.

I am giving you ways that you can test your faith, and probably the one that we are going to be evaluated on most thoroughly by God is the one that I just gave you, because the first of the great commandments is whether we love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our being, with all our might, with all our strength, and everything else. If we love Him, we will submit to Him and be keeping His commandments. That is where faith works. How well have you done this past year in that area?

Notice also it says in Hebrews 11:6 that "He is the *rewarder* of them that diligently seek Him." What that means is that God is aware of what we are doing, and that He cares enough to bless us. Now whom does He bless? Those that *respond* to His love by walking with Him like Enoch did, in their daily lives, not just those whose profess that they believe that He is. We are talking here about a pretty mature faith, because he goes on to use those towering examples of faith like Abraham and Sarah and Joseph and Moses. The things that Paul writes about faith here is "first-class" stuff. It is not sand pile faith at all. They are exemplary of what we should be striving to live up to.

Go with me back to Exodus 3. This is prior to Israel coming out of Egypt.

Exodus 3:13-14 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers has sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.

A name expresses more than just surface identification. God's name expresses His nature and operations. He was explaining to Moses His name. Israel in Egypt did not know God. They undoubtedly had a memory of Him or they would not have been crying out to Him to relieve them of their bondage; but there was no relationship with Him, and therefore they did not really know Him. They knew *of* Him, but they did not *know* Him. By

comparison neither did we when we were in spiritual Egypt, even though we were not completely ignorant of Him.

When Paul was speaking to the pagan Greeks there in Acts 17, he spoke to them with the assumption that they *knew* somewhat of this God that he was representing, because he introduced this God to them as the "unknown God," and he explained enough about Him that they could relate to Him, so they were not completely ignorant of the God of creation either.

But the ignorance is pretty deep for all of us when we are in spiritual Egypt, and that is part of the basic problem. We find something in II Corinthians 3 that is very important to you and me in regard to God's revelation of Himself. Paul is referring to the time that Moses came down off the mount, and his face was shining, reflecting the glory of God, and he put a veil over his face.

II Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

You can see that Paul is making a play on words here. The metaphor is the veil that Moses put over his face. But the veil represents something different to us spiritually.

II Corinthians 3:15-16 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

We are in this condition because all of us are spiritual Gentiles at the time that God calls us. God initiates the contact with us, and thus begins a process of revealing Himself, and as we turn to Him, we begin to be able to "see" Him, to understand God. But even after conversion, some of that veil yet remains. Because of the former blindness, it takes a long time to come to the place where we really do "see" God in a great deal more of His glory.

It says in John 17:3 that eternal life is to *know* God. How can you have faith in someone that you do not know? Do you see what I am saying? What I am saying is that the relationship with God, once He begins the revelation, has to

be developed. He does not reveal Himself fully all at once. We could not take it, and so what He does is little by little He reveals His glory. He takes the veil away from our eyes, and we see more and more of Him.

Do you see God? Do you see Him working in your life? Do you see Him working in the world? Those that see Him most clearly are those who have the closest, most intimate relationship with Him, and those people will also be the ones who have the highest, greatest degree of *faith* in Him. Because they *know* Him, they *trust* Him, because to *know* Him is to *love* Him, and to *love* Him is to *submit* to Him. We get in a circle and keep coming around to the same concepts. Paul shows here right in this context, in verse 14, that:

II Corinthians 3:14-15 Their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it . . .

Do you see the word "it"? My margin says "one." If you look in some commentaries they will tell you probably the word that fits best is "anyone."

II Corinthians 3:16 Nevertheless when anyone shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

God has called you. He has opened your mind, and so when you turn to Him, He will remove the veil so that the blindness is taken away so that the relationship can be more intense and *pure* and more trusting. That is His promise. He will remove the blindness, and all of us, brethren, have blind spots. We do not understand God completely, and so do not feel that you are the only one in the world who really does not see God well. We all do not see Him any way near the way that we are going to see Him someday, but we should be growing in that area, and it is something to evaluate our lives on, as to *how* we are responding to God, because we will respond to Him to the degree that we are able to "see" Him, know Him, and trust Him.

Now back again to the book of Hebrews. Just a reminder of how important this principle is.

Hebrews 4:1-2 Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the children in the wilderness]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Israel failed because they did not accept what they heard in faith. Therefore they did not *submit* in obedience to God. They *never* came to love Him. They *never* came to *know* Him. And so to me, the ones with the greatest faith are the ones who know God best, because they are continually working to develop their relationship with Him by talking with Him, letting Him talk to us through study, yielding to Him, living in conformity to His way.

That is what Enoch did. That is why he stood out, and there is something very interesting about Enoch that might be noteworthy of us living in the end time. It says, right on the heels of the fact that he walked with God, is that "God *took* him, and he was not." Is that an indicator of who is going to the Place of Safety? I think it is a pretty good indicator [for those who walk with Him like Enoch walked], who was taken away from the trouble, that he should not see the kind of violent death that otherwise would have come upon him. God took him out of it and placed him in another area, and he lived out his life in peace, and he died a normal death. I think that is worthwhile paying attention to.

Is faith important to Passover? You had better believe it is, and I personally feel that it is *the* single most important aspect to Passover, because everything else is strung out, built upon, founded upon, anchored to our faith in God and the depth of our relationship with Him. Israel knew that God existed, but that knowledge never carried through into their daily life in living trust. It was "business as usual," even though they were separated from Egypt, and thus it is clear why Israel failed. There is a direct connection between *knowing* God and *submitting* to Him, because to know Him is to love Him, and we submit to those we love.

Now back to Galatians 4 once again. There is a warning here.

Galatians 4:8-9 Howbeit then [before conversion], when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

It was astonishing to Paul that people were so quickly drifting back to their pagan ways. This record is *proof* of what can happen in the church if one does not use what one professes to believe in developing the relationship that God has made available. If we do not have faith in what brought us out of the world, then this is giving us evidence that we will go back to what we were before. It is that simple. If we do not have faith in what brought us out, we will go back to what we were before.

Please turn to Romans 10. This is especially important at this time because with the church in the spiritual condition that it is in and the physical condition that it is in, being scattered and confused, divided, and bickering amongst ourselves, it says in verse 14:

Romans 10:14-17 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? [Paul is giving a cycle, a process.] As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. [Certainly the Galatians were not obeying it.] For Esaias says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God [Christ].

Do you understand that this is what brought us out of the world, and that to which we were converted? The word of Christ. And it is when we *drift* away from that that we become confused, and we begin dividing, that we bicker and fight amongst ourselves. The solution is given in other portions of the Bible, and you know that well. *Get back to what brought you together in the first place*—the combination of the word of Christ and devotion to Christ, to the love that we had at the beginning (Revelation 2:4-5).

Genuine ignorance may be a defense before God, but neglect never is. We need to remember in Hebrews 2:1-4, "How can we neglect so great a salvation?" God can forgive ignorance, because you cannot believe what you did not know, and even though we may be punished in our ignorance, that is far different from being punished when we know better. "To whom much is given, from him much is required." We are not in ignorance. If we are slipping away, it is because of neglect. We need to evaluate faith in light of the Passover, and what our mind is, and what our heart is as we go into it.

"Faith must come from what is heard," is the way Moffatt translates it, "and what is heard comes from the word of Christ." We are saved by grace through faith, and faith comes from knowledge of God and His Word, and so the importance of studying His Word, meditating on it, seeking practical applications for our life, cannot be overstated.

So along with obedience, it is a must if we are going to have saving faith. Check yourself before Passover to see whether you have passed up or neglected opportunities to make practical use of your faith.

This second point I get excited over because it means so much to our attitude, the way we approach life on a daily basis.

2) We can be unworthy at Passover time *by neglecting or forgetting what we are now*.

We will go back to Galatians 3:16 and review this. This is something that we do not want to discount in any way, shape, or form.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, "And to seeds," as of many; but as of one, "And to your seed," which is Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Do you see what that says? The "one" seed was literally Jesus Christ, but because of God's calling, because of our repentance, because of our faith, because of our baptism, we have been put *in* Christ's spiritual body, and therefore we are *in* Christ. The church is *in* Christ. The church becomes *the one Seed*.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed [one seed] were the promises made. He says not, "And to seeds," as of many; but as of one, "And to your seed," which is Christ.

We are now the *one Seed*, and the promises that were made to Abraham are ours! Now because we are *in* Christ, we are Abraham's seed, and we are heirs according to the promise.

Romans 4:13 For the promise that he [Abraham] should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Do you see what that says? The promise is that we will be heirs of the world! This earth is our inheritance! Are we neglecting or forgetting what we are now?

Hebrews 1:1-2 God who at sundry times and in different manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.

Hebrews 2:5-10 For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that you visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands: You have put all things in subjection

under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Now, since we are co-heirs with Christ, we are co-heirs with Him of *all things*—everything that God made through Jesus Christ: the universe and everything that is in it! Are you forgetting that in the rush of life, *who you are*? Are you neglecting the fact that God is going to turn the governance of these things that He has made—this awesome universe—over into our poor, pitifully weak hands? (Well, when that happens, we will not be so poor and pitifully weak as we are now.)

But please brethren, do not undervalue what you are. If you undervalue what you are, you are not going to take Passover in the right attitude, because what that Passover represents was done for you and me so that we would be in a position to inherit *everything*. Brethren, we do not have to feel like we just crawled out from under a rock like some crayfish. We are *blessed* beyond our wildest imaginations! But for right now we are a little bit lower than *Elohim*.

What a future! Even now we are the "apple of God's eye." We are the focus of His attention. We are so important that His Son died for us. Yes, He died for the whole world, but right now it is for you and me that the Creator died so that we could become co-heirs *with* Him, so that He could *share* what He made with us because He *likes* what He made, and it is beautiful and it has awesome potential, and like any artist who makes something beautiful wants to *share* with others the thing that He has made, so does Jesus Christ, so they can appreciate and go on and emulate it as well.

In Romans 9 Paul goes into this to quite an extent, opening the chapter by showing that there are two Israels. In that sense right now we are in the one that counts.

Romans 9:6-13 Not as though the word of God has taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall your seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise, [you and I] are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

We can insert *your* name in here. *Your neighbor have I hated, but **you** have I loved.* And what did you and I do to deserve this? Nothing! That is the point. It was dropped into our lap by the will of God, by His grace, by His mercy, by His kindness, by His generosity. We did nothing to deserve it. Boy! You talk about winning the lottery! That is peanuts! For yet a little while we are lower than *Elohim*, but boy! is this one going to pay off in the end!

Will you not give it due consideration before you take Passover, so you can take it not only seeing your faults in terms of lack of faith, and putting it into operation in your life on a day-to-day basis, but also you might see that there have been times, maybe a lot of times, that you have neglected, you have forgotten, and not taken into your consideration what God has expended for you and made available for your future?

It is awesome beyond belief, and we need to repent of failing to remember it, and treating it with neglect, and treating His calling as something common. It is very *uncommon*. Only 144,000, as far as we can see, as well as we can understand, from Adam till now. What an elite group! Do you appreciate it? Only you can answer that question.

Now I am going to continue this sermon. It will come after Passover, but the points that I have given in this sermon apply to the Days of Unleavened Bread and to the rest of the year as well.

Should you not be building your faith through the year? Certainly you should, and be coming out of those sins.

Should you not be strengthening your understanding of what you are right now through the year? Sure you should.

There is leaven mixed in our lives in both of these points, and many others beside.

So God willing, if He permits, I will continue this sermon on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, and you will see what else you should have repented of for Passover.