

# Understanding The Bread of Passover

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Good morning to those of you in North America, USA and Canada. Here, it is late afternoon, a very beautiful Sabbath afternoon, in England. The signs of springtime are very clearly here. The temperature today is probably nearly sixty degrees with blue sky and warm sunshine. It is really very, very pleasant, and of course, yesterday was the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, which was the spring equinox, so we are now, technically, in the second day of the spring season. Next weekend in England, and I suspect probably the same in North America, the clocks will go forward by one hour, and so the nights will seem a bit brighter well into the evening.

Really, this time of the year is my favorite time. You see the daffodils appearing and the crocuses. The trees' new leaves appear. Things start to be nice and bright and lush and green. Springtime is, to me at least, a very pleasant, much-awaited time. Of course, it is also the time that brings us into the beginning of God's sacred calendar. It brings us into the Passover season and, believe it or not, Passover is just over three weeks away.

At this time of the year, at least in my experience, often we can become very distracted people, very, very busy with many tasks taking up our time and our attention. I have noticed this over many years in the Church. At the moment, for example, we have our attention perhaps on Iraq, on the battle and conflict over there. In the fellowship we are in, there have been distractions for the past several months. And in our lives, individually, day by day, there are always lots of things happening that require us to divert our attention and deal with some problem or some issue.

It would be very easy in the next three weeks or so to be **so** busy that the time would speed right by and all of a sudden we realize, "It's Passover tonight! Oh dear! I had better get ready." Oops. We turn up at Passover without perhaps doing very much in the way of preparation, and yet, really, the Passover evening is **far** too important, much too important, to just

casually, carelessly turn up on it, and expect to obtain the benefits that God has in mind for us.

Mr. Armstrong, in his Passover letter, the one that perhaps many of us use when we actually take the Passover service at home, says:

"There should be no visiting, talking, laughing, joking or conversation. You are meeting on the most solemn and serious occasion of the entire year."

We are meeting, he says, on the most solemn and serious occasion of the entire year, and that is why it is important that we don't just roll up on Passover night rather lack-luster, coming at it almost with no preparation, no real thought because you have been so busy with the previous few weeks.

When I first came into the Truth, into the Church of God, I remember very well my first springtime actually attending Church services. I was very much impressed by the fact that perhaps four or five consecutive Sabbaths before Passover there was a Passover message. Every Sabbath. Sabbath, after Sabbath, after Sabbath, four or five times, discussing the Exodus story, the escape of the Israelites; the symbols of the Passover, the bread and the wine; the meaning for us today; the importance of self-examination. All designed to make sure that, at least our particular Church or congregation, was fully prepared to take Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, and really obtain the most that we could from it.

Very specially, I remember, just how much the minister told us, "Make sure you are there. If you have to make your journey two or three hours early, do so. Under **no** circumstances miss Passover night! Get a taxi. Make sure you are in town, at the hall, hours early, if need be. Do not allow any opportunity of missing out on the Passover." All that was to try to make sure that we all thoroughly understood just how important the Passover would be to us and to make sure that we were there ready, prepared, and in

the right spiritual attitude to **fully** benefit from the Passover

So today I would like to take some time to focus our minds on the upcoming Passover, hopefully to help us to prepare ourselves to take the Passover in a fully worthy manner. If you are not eligible to take Passover, perhaps not yet baptized, keep listening anyway because I will try to cover at least one other aspect that you still need to know about. So my purpose, as I say, is to just focus our minds and help us prepare for the Passover, because, believe me, the next three weeks will speed along and if we don't start thinking about this now and preparing now, we may well miss the opportunity.

In looking at the Passover, this morning, (or for us, this afternoon) I particularly want to dwell on the meaning of the bread that we take at Passover - the bread. So I have entitled this message, "Understanding the Bread of Passover."

Let's take our Bibles now and open to Exodus, chapter 11. Just to put some background together as to where we are, we'll begin in verse 1: ***And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring yet one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether.2 "Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold."3 And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.*** He was quite a celebrity, although not always for perhaps the best reasons.

***4 ¶ Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: `About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt;... So this is going to be the one more plague, the final plague, the tenth plague, as we know. 5... `and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to***

*the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals.* **6** *Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again.* This was going to be an extraordinary plague that would cause an outcry of anguish and grief and fear unparalleled in Egypt's long history.

**7** *But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.* So here is an incredible event, plague number ten, to strike ancient Egypt and the firstborn of man and even the beasts were to be slain. Now that is quite a lot of people, quite a lot of important people, the ones who inherited the land and the assets, to die.

I look around this room. I was the firstborn in my family. Maureen was the firstborn in her family, and Nathan was the first and only born in our family, so that means that, for example, if we were a typical Egyptian family, this whole room would be dead after this particular plague. So this thing is going to be an extraordinary, destructive plague upon Egypt. It was pretty frightening, frankly.

Now on to chapter 12, as we move now into the actual Passover ceremony itself.

**1** *Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,*  
**2** *"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.* So we know that that is month number one because it tells us so, and the month was named Abib and later named Nisan, and it is about this time of the year. According to the calculated calendar that most of the Churches of God follow, including, I imagine, most of ourselves, this year that date would be April 3<sup>rd</sup>, so that is just twelve days from now that we come to the beginning of the new Hebrew calendar year.

**3** *"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.* And we know very much about the Passover lamb, and this is the young lamb being taken.

At this time of the year, I don't know what it is like where you live, but I drove along the highway yesterday coming back from the office, and in the fields I could see newborn lambs. Very cute, very pretty, bouncing and gamboling about. It is a beautiful time of the year, springtime. When I see the young, new lambs, it does tend to make me think, at this time of the year, obviously, of the Passover lamb.

**4** *And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb* So the families may share a lamb if there is only a small number per family. **5** *Your lamb shall be without blemish...* We know why - because the lamb, as we know, represents Jesus Christ, our Savior.

*... a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.*

**6** *Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same (first) month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.* This is the New King James version. The Hebrew is "between the evenings," and we take that to be the time between when the sun sets, sunset, and when darkness arrives, perhaps forty minutes or an hour later. In that period of gloom and dusk is the time when the Passover would be slain.

**7** *And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.* Of course, they were in their houses, in their homes, eating the lamb. They were to take the blood, first of all, and splash it, painting it, up on the door posts and over the top of the door, which, I have got to say, is a rather strange way of doing things. You would hardly class this with what appears to be some religious ceremony. You take a young lamb and you slit its throat. You collect the blood and then you splash it over the door posts - very strange.

**8** *Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.* So there are two things that they have to do. They have to kill the lamb and

splash the blood around, and then they don't just throw the body of the lamb into a near-by waste bin. The lamb's body has to be separately attended to. It has to be roasted and then they have to eat a meal and consume the lamb's body. So there are two aspects here which I do want to dwell on as we go forward. There is the blood which is used for one purpose and there is the lamb's body which serves another purpose.

**9** *Do not eat it (the body) raw* (thankfully, it doesn't say to eat the lamb's body raw!), *nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails.* **10** *You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.* **11** *And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover.* The Eternal's Passover. It says to eat it in haste, and some people will think, "That means that they are about to leave immediately. That is why they are all dressed up." But, in fact, the Hebrew there more properly means, "eat it in trepidation, eat it in fear, eat it in grave concern." I think that if you or I had been there, we might well do that, because you know there is coming on the entirety of Egypt a horrendous plague that will slay the firstborn in every household.

If you were the firstborn Israelite in a house, you might just wonder whether you have done things as per instructions, because if you haven't, you might well fear that you will be slain too. Remember, I think we will see a few weeks later, just how much the Israelites did **not** believe in their God. How they thought that He bought them into the desert to slay them, time and time again. How they murmured and doubted Him time and time again. I suspect that many of these people were really quite nervous when they ate this meal. Just suppose they hadn't taken the right sort of lamb! Just suppose they hadn't spread the blood far enough around the door! Perhaps they hadn't roasted it all the way through! "If we have done it wrong, I'll bet this Being who speaks to Moses will slay me too!" So I suspect that there was quite a bit of nervousness in the Israelite camp that night!

12 *For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night (of the fourteenth), and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.*

13 *Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.* So we can see that the blood on the door was a sign, an emblem. When God would pass through the land on that night, with the blood there on the door, He would pass over. Hence the name, "Passover."

21 ¶ *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.22 "And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.* So they couldn't leave the houses they were in until daybreak, until morning.

23 *"For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.24 "And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25 "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.26 "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'27 "that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

Of course, that is a very well-known story, a very interesting story that even the young kids in the Church can understand. It must have been an amazing night, which brought enormous grief and devastation to much of Egypt, but, as Moses said there, the blood that was used and spread over the doorposts and the lintel brought about

the deliverance from death of ancient Israel. Their firstborn were secure. They were saved from death because of the emblem of the splashed blood over the doors.

At this stage, of course, we know that they also ate the lamb's body. Question - Was the lamb's body of any particular effect, or was it just the blood that was important to ancient Israel? We will pick that up a little bit later.

Turn now to Matthew, chapter 26, and let's see a New Testament fulfillment of the Passover by Jesus Himself. 17 ¶ *Now on the first day of the Feast* (Feast is in italics in the King James and New King James because the word isn't there. It wasn't the "Feast" of Unleavened Bread. It was before that.) *Now on the first day of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"* That was the question they had. It was now springtime. It was the first month of the year. It was getting pretty close and the question was, "Whereabouts are we going to get ready to eat the Passover, Jesus?"

18 *And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" That is in red letters. Jesus said plainly, "I will keep the Passover."* 19 *So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.* They got it all ready for Jesus. 20 *When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.* 26 ¶ *And as they were eating* (the Passover), *Jesus took bread,...* Now we are about to see a transfer of the symbols of Passover. This is the New Testament version of the Passover. Same time, same date, same meaning, but rather than just having a lamb's body, and so on, we now have some new symbols being introduced.

...*Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."* Or this represents My body. So here is something new for us to think about. Jesus, during the Passover evening, breaks the bread. It would be a rather large piece of bread, not

all sliced up like our modern loaves of bread. This was one big piece of bread, and He breaks it up and says, "Eat of this broken bread. This represents My body." Hmm. What does that mean?

27 *Then He took the cup (of wine), and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.28 "For this is My blood* (or, this represents My blood) *of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* So the red wine pictures, represents, Jesus' blood of the New Covenant and His blood shed for many, for what? For the remission, or forgiveness, of our sins.

So we have the broken bread symbolizing Jesus' body, but, as yet perhaps, no clear picture of quite what that represents. If the wine represents His blood, which is the blood of the covenant, a new covenant, that has to do with 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."* So we have two different symbols, and just before we move on to the bread, let's just remind ourselves of the meaning of the wine, the blood, something we probably do know fairly well, but it is well worth reminding ourselves.

Turn to Hebrews, chapter 9: 11 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood...* So here we start looking now at blood. This is now where Paul's attention is turning as he writes this letter. 12 *Not with the blood of goats and calves* (That's what you got from the Old Testament sacrifices.), *but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.* Was it for Himself? Well, no. He obtained eternal redemption for us. That is what Jesus was doing when He took His own blood into the Most Holy Place.

13 *For* (says Paul) *if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh...* If there is any merit at all in the blood of an animal, some ashes from a carcass..... 14 *how much more shall the blood of Christ*

(pictured, remember, by the wine on Passover), *who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God* (just like the lamb had no blemish), *cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* 15 ¶ *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant,...* Exactly what Jesus just talked about on the Passover night, the blood of the New Covenant, and for this reason, it says, He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. *...by means of death* (when He shed His blood, of course, *for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

So we can see linked in there, the death of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the transgressions being forgiven and us redeemed from them, the promise of eternal inheritance, all tied into Jesus' very valuable blood, brought in to the Most Holy Place. That was all tied up, of course, with Passover. But it is important to realize that the blood of Passover is a symbol of a very special New Covenant of which Jesus Christ is Mediator.

Hebrews, chapter 10, *12 But this Man* (still talking of Jesus), *after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. 15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," 17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.*

So the New Covenant referred to here is a covenant which brings about God writing His laws in our heart and mind. It is no longer going to be a struggle to keep God's laws. They will actually be part and parcel of our very thinking. That is part of the New Covenant, that God's laws are written in our hearts and, as it says here, that our sins are remitted. 19 ¶ *Therefore, brethren* (That's for you; that's for me; we're brethren), *having*

*boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus* (The very thing that the Passover wine symbolizes), *20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,....* So we should be boldly able, courageously, confidently able, to go right before God's very throne, into the very Holiest itself, because we have the blood of Jesus, the blood of the New Covenant.

*21 ... and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near* (to God) *with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* So Jesus' blood is extremely effective. The blood of the New Covenant is vitally important and it would be a great shame, wouldn't it, in a sense, to arrive at Passover and have forgotten, really, or let it slip from our mind, the importance of what the blood does represent.

Hebrews, chapter 13, *20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead* (after He was the Passover lamb sacrifice), *that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* So, in looking there at verse 20, it is through the blood of the everlasting covenant that God makes us complete in every good work to do His will. Through that blood, through the forgiveness, through the washing clean, that allows us to boldly go into God's very company and presence to receive from Him mercy and help, through that blood of the everlasting covenant, that New Covenant, to which we have been invited.

So there is no question at all that the blood covenant pictured by Jesus' shed blood, pictured by the wine that we take at Passover, is extremely important. Generally speaking, I would say, that we are all pretty familiar with that story. We know about the blood of the lamb being splashed on the door posts which meant safety from the death penalty, and, of course, we understand, reasonably well, what that means for you and me.

But, of course, as I said earlier, there is another part to the Passover. There was the body of the lamb which was roasted, eaten, consumed, digested by ancient Israel, and they were **commanded** to eat it. It wasn't optional. It wasn't, "Well, if you splash the blood on the door posts, that's fine. You're okay." It was, "You roast it; you roast it this particular way, not any old way; and you eat it. You leave nothing for the morning; if you do, it has to be burned up." The body of the lamb had a very important part to play in the Passover ceremony. Jesus said, as we read earlier, that the broken bread pictures His body, the lamb's body.

So let's now take a closer look at the bread that we partake of at Passover time to see just exactly what that does mean, so that we ensure that as we approach Passover and take Passover, we do deeply appreciate what the **whole** Passover ceremony means to us.

Let's turn to Psalms 105 and start in verse 26. This Psalm really is an historical Psalm dealing with the events of the Exodus, of Israel's escape from Egypt and what took place. It is a quite interesting Psalm to read in any event, but beginning in verse 26: *He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron whom He had chosen. 27 They performed His signs among them, And wonders in the land of Ham.* The land of Ham being Egypt. *28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word. 29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.* I think that we recognize some of the other plagues here.

*30 Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings.* I think that would be pretty unpleasant. Frogs are okay, sort of, and I used a cute picture of a frog in a recent Bible Bulletin. A few frogs here and there might be okay, but frogs in your bedroom, frogs in the toilet, frogs in the kitchen, frogs under your feet, under the blankets, frogs everywhere, frogs in the fridge. I think that's too many frogs and ancient Egypt had too many frogs. Of course, once they die there are too many stinking, dead frogs.

*31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.* Well I guess that is probably worse, come to

think about it. **32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.**

**33 He struck their vines also, and their fig trees, And splintered the trees of their territory.** Everything broken, wrecked, ruined. There was really not much left. **34 He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number,** And I guess with a pretty big appetite.

**35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground.** So really, this country was utterly devastated. Plants gobbled up; trees smashed, splintered and broken down; fire; hailstones; plagues of all sorts. Anything left, the locusts scoffed.

Verse 36, as we read earlier, **He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, The first of all their strength.** So that pretty much put paid to Egypt as a military and economic power. **37 He also brought them** (That's Israel, this time) **out with silver and gold,...** Remember we read earlier how they spoiled the Egyptians of **their** silver and gold, so He brought them out with silver and gold.

Now notice, **...And there was none feeble among His tribes.** Among the tribes of Israel, when they left Egypt, there was **none** feeble. Is that not a bit surprising? You have something like two million, three million - no one is quite too sure how many Israelites left Egypt, but it is a number up in that sort of order - some would say perhaps even five or six million. They were in age from newborn to perhaps one hundred or more. Old grandmas, old granddads, people who had been in accidents, people who had not looked after their health. Remember that they were a slave people. I don't know that their diet would be necessarily the best that was available, and yet it says here that when they left Egypt, there was **none** feeble?

The word feeble means "weak," so weak as to cause you to stumble, and turn your ankle, and so on. But here are a people where everybody appears to be, frankly, healthy! Yet you take two million people anywhere, in any city, any combination of towns, anywhere across the USA, Canada, Britain, Europe, and you will find, I would think, several tens of thousands who are **extremely** feeble, possibly more than that. If you tried to take a bunch of us

today across the desert... I think you give us thirty-six hours and we're all gone!

So here there is something rather mysterious when you take ancient Israel, two million of all shapes and sizes and ages out of Egypt and there is none feeble. In essence, anybody who was ill, or weak or sick had been healed. The question would be, "Is that the case? If it was, where did the healing come from?" Of course, that is when we look back at the other part of the Passover. Two parts - the blood AND the body of the lamb, which they had roasted - the wine AND the bread. So to the bread of Passover - what part, precisely, does it play for you and me today when we take the Passover?

Let's turn to Isaiah, chapter 53 and we will read the entire chapter. **1 ¶ Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He** (talking of Jesus, the Messiah) **shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty** (in appearance) **that we should desire Him.** Jesus looked, apparently, just like an ordinary Jew of the day, nothing special. He didn't have beautiful Hollywood appearance, glowing halo over His head, women falling at His feet as He walked past. He wasn't some astonishing, mega-celebrity. He was, apparently, just an average-looking chap.

**3 He is despised and rejected by men,...** Nothing, frankly, has changed there! Even today, Jesus is pretty much rejected by men and women. His name is most often used as just a swear word today, so I guess nothing has changed. **...A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.** That's a pretty clear comment. **4 ¶ Surely** (That means certainly, definitely, for sure.) **He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;** Which is an appalling translation, obviously done by individuals who are, I'm sure, sincere, but didn't understand or grasp what God was trying to achieve.

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" is **not** what it says in the Hebrew. I'll give you the Young's

Literal translation. Young is the guy who did the Young's Analytical Concordance, which is similar to the Strong's Concordance. Young did another concordance which is pretty good as well. I prefer it slightly over the Strong's. Young was a real scholar of the Hebrew and Greek. His translation and his Bible which he also translated, apart from doing a concordance, says, "Surely our **sicknesses** He hath borne and our **pains** He hath carried them."

Also, I will give you another translation, which is the Jay P. Green's Interlinear. That is quite popular these days. It translates this verse as, "Surely He has borne our sicknesses and our pains." Surely He has borne our sicknesses and our pains. So we're not talking of grief and sorrow, we're talking of sickness and pain. The word for "griefs", for example, in the Hebrew is translated disease and sickness nearly twenty times. That's the vast majority of times in the Bible it is translated as disease and sickness, and that is actually what it means. And "sorrows" is translated commonly as "pain," so a more proper translation of that verse, and it will be backed up by some other things that we will look at later, shows that it is talking about how surely, definitely, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, has borne, and that means borne away, taken away, carried off, our sicknesses and He has carried, taken upon Himself, our pains.

**Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace...** One version says "well-being. **...was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.** By His stripes we are healed. We might ask the question, "When did this all take place? When did Jesus Christ carry off our sicknesses and our diseases and pains? What stripes was it which brought about our healing?" We obviously know the answer, but it would be good to remind us of these things. "By His stripes," or some versions say "by His wounds," and the New American Standard Bible says "by His scourging" we are healed. So Jesus did something to bring about our healing. He gave His body up to be scourged, wounded, beaten, and striped, that we might be healed. By His stripes we are healed.

**6 All we like sheep have gone astray;...Amen to that, I would say. ... We have turned, every one, to his own way;... No argument with that. ... And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.** I think that we can all say, "Thank God He did!" The LORD has laid on Jesus the iniquity of you and me and that is something to be very, very grateful for as we approach Passover.

**7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.** It was rather a lot for Jesus to pay the penalty that you and I have earned by our sins and wayward way of life. We should never belittle the enormous courage, endurance, and, frankly, just incredible compassion and love that Jesus showed toward us, and, for that matter, His Father, too. It must have taken a huge amount for the Father to give up His only Son, and we will see the scriptures on that shortly.

**8 He was taken from prison (or confinement, or arrest) and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living;... That is almost incredible to perceive that Jesus Christ, the Creator, Who made the universe and every living thing on it, was Himself, after Eternity, cut off from being alive! How much did Jesus have to do, in a sense?**

**...For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked (with some robbers)--But with the rich at His death (He was buried in the tomb of a rich man.), Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.** Pretty high standards, aren't they? **10 ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief....** The Jay P. Green Interlinear says, "It pleased God to make Him sick," or suffer pain and agony. You think, "Why! How could it please God to bruise and beat upon His own Son? How could God take any pleasure in the violent, horrible, painful, agonizing ten to twelve hours leading up to Jesus' death? How could that please God?"

The answer is that it pleases God because it means He is then able to heal you and

me, again and again and again and again. It opens up healing for all of us. That is what gave God the great pleasure. He could see that this horrific event that Jesus was going to go through would purchase for us not only forgiveness of our sins, but it meant that God could heal over and over and over again, as many as would come to Him for healing. That is what the great pleasure was, and Jesus Himself was satisfied to present His body to be horrendously beaten and scourged to make that healing available. It is an incredible and impressive message

**When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.** And again, thank God for that! **12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death,...** And Jesus did pour His soul out unto death. His blood seeped out for a number of hours, bit by bit, as He grew weaker and weaker, and finally that spear jammed into His side and the last bit of His life seeped out into the ground and He poured out His soul unto death.

**...And He was numbered with the transgressors (utterly disgraceful), And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors (for you and me, because we are the transgressors).** So it is an absolutely marvelous event, incredible, unbelievable in a sense, to be able to understand just what Jesus went through, what the Father was willing to **allow** Him to go through, for you and me. A fantastic thing!

Now turn to Matthew, chapter 8, just in case there is any doubts about some of those words that I translated, or Young translated, or Jay P. Green translated. We will see how God translates that passage. **14 ¶ Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.** That's Peter's mother-in-law. **15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them. 16 When evening had come,...** This probably was a Sabbath day, so people waited until sunset. **... they**

**brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick...** In fact, that is what Jesus **always** did; He always healed **all**, every sickness, every disease, no exceptions. He healed **all** who were sick **17 ... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying...:** And this is the inspired translation, shall we say, of Isaiah 53, inspired by the Holy Spirit to Matthew, as recorded here: **... "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."**

So it doesn't refer to griefs and sorrows, although, of course, there is grief and sorrow when you are sick. But the actual meaning of the words, as **clearly** identified here by Matthew is, "He Himself," talking of Jesus, "took our infirmities, bore our sicknesses, carried off our diseases." That is what Jesus did when He healed all, but the way He did it was to become a Passover sacrifice and pay the penalty not just for our spiritual sins, but also for our physical sins and transgressions.

If we turn to I Peter, chapter 2, we can see this emphasized yet again. It is not just one scripture being privately interpreted, but it is throughout the Bible. **21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us (and that is what we are talking about, rather a lot), leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit (guile) found in His mouth";...** That would be a pretty good example if we could follow that consistently. **23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return (and again that is also something we could think about doing); when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; (namely, the Father) 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness----by whose stripes you were healed.**

So there are two things we can see there. We had died to sins and been forgiven, and should now live righteously because Jesus bore our sins on the tree, and "by whose stripes (or wounds, my margin says) you were healed." Of course, that is exactly what we read in Isaiah 53:5, and

my margin actually refers back to that. It talks about “by whose stripes,” or wounds, or scourging, or “by whose bruise” as one translation has it - “you were healed.” The word for “healed” you might think perhaps just means healing your mind from anguish or anxiety, but the word “healed” there is the word used commonly throughout the entire New Testament for physical healing of sickness and disease. It is used, I believe, 26 times in the New Testament, and it means “physical healing,” “physical healing,” “physical healing,” “physical healing.”

So there are two aspects, as I keep reiterating in a sense, to the Passover, to Jesus’ sacrifice. There is the blood AND the body, there is the bread AND the wine, and, as you see here, there is forgiveness AND there is healing. Let’s turn to Psalms 103, yet another reminder, **1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!** Really, when we understand the Passover, truly and deeply, this is what we have to be saying, because when we understand the truth of God’s Word on this subject, everything God has done and God is doing, then, of course, this is how you respond. **2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,** Notice that forgiveness and diseases being healed go side-by-side. They are linked together, and the reason, as we were seeing and as we will continue to see, is because Jesus purchased our forgiveness and He purchased our healing at the **same** time.

Let’s turn now to I Corinthians, chapter 11, which brings many of these aspects all together. Paul writes, **23 ¶ For I received from the Lord...** So this is actual, direct revelation; this is not something that Paul received from other preachers in the church. This is something, he says, “I received from the Lord.” One would imagine, if Jesus Christ actually gave this as direct revelation, then Jesus understood it to be rather important. **23 ¶ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it (He broke the bread.) and said, “Take, eat; this is My body**

**which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”**

Of course, we read these verses on the Passover evening. It is pretty clear; the broken bread symbolizes Jesus’ broken body. “This is my Body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Do it year by year to remember My broken Body. This bread symbolizes My broken Body.”

**25 In the same manner He also took the cup (of wine, that would be) after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”** So every year, on the fourteenth day of Abib, we take the broken bread, drink a little sip of red wine to picture Jesus’ broken body and to picture the New Covenant. **26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.** “As often” doesn’t mean as often as we feel like it. If you are a Catholic, you would take Communion potentially every day if you wanted to. In some churches it is once a month. I think for the Adventists it is four times a year, every quarter. As often as you “show the Lord’s death” is when **you show the Lord’s Death** —on the day He died, once a year, as a memorial.

It starts to get rather important when we pick up the message of the next few verses. **27 Therefore whoever eats this bread (That’s one thing you could do) or drinks this cup of the Lord (Another thing you could do) in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** I wonder what that would mean? To take the bread in an unworthy manner, or to take the wine in an unworthy manner, means we will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? What is Paul getting at here?

**28 But...**(In connection with that rather cautionary note) **... let a man examine himself, and so (having examined himself) let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.** So there is something here that we are told we have to do, **before** we take the bread and the cup of wine. It says, “Let a man examine himself...” Some versions say, “test himself.” Some say, “prove himself.” “But let a man (or woman for that matter) **examine** himself...” He should look at

himself, consider himself, consider his life, his conduct, his attitude, his behavior, his direction and **then**, having done that, **then** “let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.” In other words, you and I dare not just roll up on Passover night, sit down, and take the emblems without some preparation. We are required to examine ourselves beforehand.

**29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.** Not understanding, really, what it is all about. **30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (Margin - “are dead”).** So Paul is bringing out something just a trifle worrying here. People who take the bread and wine in an unworthy manner, not understanding or discerning what they are doing, he says about them: “Look. For this reason (because they haven’t examined themselves, because they haven’t understood) **many** - (it doesn’t say a few, it says many) of you (that he is writing to) are weak and sick. You are not healthy; you are not strong. You are physically frail; your health is shot and lousy. In fact, many are dead!”

Now, there is nothing is wrong with being dead, if you have lived a long and healthy life and reached the end of your life. You go to sleep in the grave and await the Resurrection. But Paul was clearly disturbed that many were dead who obviously he thought ought **not to be** dead. I have to take it here that he is talking of people who have died prematurely, who have been weak and sick and died sick, full of disease. He is saying, “Look. This should not be the case. If you understood what you are doing when you take Passover, if you understood the emblems properly, if you discerned the Lord’s body, then you wouldn’t be weak, sickly, and dying prematurely. You have got a problem.” Any of us, who take Passover without fully grasping, are made to suffer penalties that we need not suffer, because part of the focus of Passover, particularly the bread, is because it has to do with our physical healing.

**31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged (by God), we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned**

*with the world.* It is preferable for you and me to judge ourselves. When you start to examine yourself, and I start to examine myself so that I fully understand what God is doing for me, so that I understand His laws, so that I understand how I should be living, so that I properly appreciate His sacrifice, His shed blood and His broken body, and I start to consider my understanding, whether I am really showing by my actions that I appreciate it, then if I see things that I am doing which are wrong, it is better for me to take some action and put them right. It is not better for me to ignore the problems that I see in my life and wait for God to come along a bit later and sort me out.

Ideally, if He is opening up our minds to understand His Word and we can compare our lives to what His word says, and we find out, "Oops. There is a discrepancy there. God says this and I am doing that. Oh! I had better get moving and try and overcome that problem and start to sort it out..." Then, of course, if we do that, God doesn't have to come along and judge us a little bit later. If we would judge ourselves (not, of course, judging each other), we wouldn't need to fear God's greater judgment.

Judgment can apply spiritually. If you see in your life that you are guilty of certain things that God's Word speaks against - a typical problem would be, for example, gossip - then it is up to you and me to deal with that in our lives. Judging ourselves could be physical too. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are supposed to look after our body. If we want to trample all over the laws of health, getting three hours of sleep at night, drinking twelve pints of beer at a time, consuming a gigantic chocolate gateau, and carrying a few hundred pounds of extra weight, well, we are not judging ourselves, are we? Most of us have a reasonable knowledge of the laws of health, perhaps not perfect in every area, but we know enough to know that carrying a ton of weight that we shouldn't have, is not good for us.

If our only exercise is walking to the fridge and walking back to our easy chair that is not much in the way of exercise. If sleep is something you don't find time for, and I hold my hand up there somewhat, then we are not judging ourselves. But if

we see these things in our lives and start to deal with them, then we aren't going to worry too much about God having to intervene for our best interests a bit later.

So we can see, looking through 1 Corinthians 11, that there is a great deal there, but the important thing to recognize is that if we don't understand the full range of Passover, its benefits spiritually and physically, then, like in Corinth, people like you and me can be sick, ill and even die prematurely because we don't see what God has done for us and for our physical healing. We don't have the faith in it; we don't take advantage of it and we don't therefore get the benefits.

I have a little booklet here, one of the old black and white booklets by Mr. Armstrong. It's a thin booklet; 1952 is the date of it. It is "How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?" I will just read one or two short sentences. Mr. Armstrong says:

"To take the bread and wine while not truly accepting the body and blood of Christ with our whole heart would be taking it unworthily and to one's damnation. Let us observe it worthily!"

In other words, Mr. Armstrong is saying that we should fully understand and accept the whole meaning of Passover when we take it. We dare not be casual about Passover, take it for granted, say "Ho hum. Oh. Here it comes again. It's Passover tonight, I had better get ready."

For the most part, most of us, I would think, understand the blood part, Jesus' death paying the penalty for our spiritual sins and making it possible for us to enjoy eternal life. We're fairly comfortable with that, but that is not all. We can't ignore what Jesus went through physically on our behalf, before He was actually nailed to the cross and died. I don't actually like reading the passages about Jesus' arrest and what took place in the few hours afterward because I find it rather uncomfortable. Mentally, it's not easy to picture the events and see them and deal with what took place. It's not pleasant, is it?

Jesus was blindfolded; at times He was spat at. This is the Creator. He was humble, compassionate. He did good

everywhere He went, He was perfect. He was punched by soldiers, He was stripped to the waist and scourged until His body was black and blue and flesh falling off of His bones. For many hours He suffered terrible torture, the way you wouldn't treat even an animal. Before being stripped and nailed to that tree, He had many hours and hours of suffering, and then He was hung in the tree, naked, humiliated and shamed for more hours. Then finally He was speared to death.

Why? Why did Jesus go through all of that horrific physical punishment? Why was He beaten? Why did He accept that scourging? To pay the penalty for our spiritual sins just required Jesus' death. That could be accomplished just like you would kill a lamb. The little lamb which was chosen in ancient Egypt wasn't kicked around for four days and beaten up and left a bedraggled, wrecked, bruised and bloody mess. It was humanely and swiftly killed. You could do that with Jesus, so all of the punishment and the agony and physical pain and the scourging were for a reason. It was for our benefit, for our healing.

You have to recognize that this was God's idea. I don't think, even though we are carnal, that you or I could ever have actually **asked** for Jesus to have done that. No matter how carnal we are, we could never have thought of something as **bad** as that. So God demonstrates, really, in an incredible way, how much He cares, not only for the forgiveness of our sins, but how much He cares for our physical well-being. That is why He did it. What more could God do? How unthankful we would be if we treated Jesus' broken body as of little consequence. "I'll take advantage of the blood and Jesus' death. That's fine. But I'm not too concerned about His broken body."

Really? Would we treat His physical pain and the tribulation He went through as irrelevant, of no consequence and to be ignored? Sometimes the answer is, "Well ... it sure looks that way," because some people set new speed records as they race off to the doctors at the first sign of illness, trying to get the surgeon's knife or some pharmaceutical product into our bodies as quick as we can, when there is a Healing God who has paid an **enormous** price for our healing.



Let's turn to Romans, chapter 8, to just remind us of how much God is willing to do for us. Really, there is no boundary on it. **31 ¶ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?** That's pretty true. If God is for us, would you be worried about what Saddam was saying, and all these military men? If God was for you, if He was for me, who could possibly be against us. Who could do anything if God is for us?

**32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** God has already given the most precious, valuable possession He ever had. He gave up His Son to be beaten, scourged, whipped, pummeled, bloodied, wrecked, suffering all this pain, and to be hung in a tree and speared to death. If God gave up His own precious, only begotten Son, what more could God **do**? He has already shown that He will give the maximum. Nothing else counts by comparison. If God sent a convoy of trucks to your front door and dropped off a hundred billion billion dollars of gold, that is nothing to God. God is not interested in metal. He has already given the most valuable possession that ever existed - His own Son. That demonstrates God's level of concern for us that cannot be measured. God's love for us is immeasurable. What Jesus did for us on that Passover night ... the message is all there. Do we fully realize that when we take the Passover?

Let's turn to Hebrews, chapter 12 **1 ¶ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,** That links in nicely to the Days of Unleavened Bread. We should be laying aside the weight, the sins, that tend to dog us. At some stage of our lives, we have to put away these sins that we have enjoyed so much that we keep them company for decades, sometimes.

**2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...** And this is where our attention should be focused. It says "looking unto Jesus." Of course, at Passover time there is no better time of the year to start focusing upon Jesus Christ as

our Savior, as our Passover. **...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** Thankfully, that whole episode didn't last too long, and now it is over, but Jesus was willing to endure the cross and everything that led up to it, all that horrible suffering and pain and humiliation and has now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We are to look to this individual, this Being, to Jesus Christ, who is the author and completer of our faith.

**3 For consider Him...** That is something Paul says we are to do. We are to consider Jesus; we are to think about Jesus, and when we are looking at the Passover and what it means, the real focus is on the Passover lamb, the lamb of God. The focus is on Jesus Christ and His broken body for you, for me. The focus is on Jesus Christ's shed blood for you and for me. We are to examine ourselves, but only in the sense of making sure that we properly recognize just how important Jesus is to us, just how important His sacrifice is to us. The focus is not on you and me. Heaven forbid. It is not for you and me to look at ourselves as being the important part of Passover. What is important is the Individual who did all the work - Jesus Christ. "For consider Him," it says, **...who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.** If you feel sometimes like life is a bit tough, just look at Jesus, the Being who made the whole universe, and what He went through for us.

**4 ¶ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.** But Jesus did. He shed His blood, all or it, resisting sin and resisting sinful men, and so on. So the example there is that we need to make sure that as we approach Passover, we keep our eyes firmly fixed on, and consider, our Passover lamb, Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.

Turn back to Hebrews, chapter 2 and start in verse 14, **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself (talking of Jesus) likewise shared in the same, that through death (and we have been reading all about that) He might destroy him (or nullify him) who had the power of death, that is,**

**the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.** So there is deliverance for us because of Jesus' death. **16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.** And you and I are the seed of Abraham, either directly by physical descent or by spiritually being brought in to Abraham's seed.

**17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren** (become a human being), **that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** This ties in nicely, of course, to Passover and forgiveness and remission and the New Covenant. **18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.** He is able to help us, to support us, to work with us because He is a faithful, compassionate High Priest. Dropping down to chapter 3, verse 1: **Therefore, holy brethren** (That's you and me, isn't it? We are holy brethren.), **partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house** So Jesus had to face up to a pretty horrific end to His life, despite all the good things He had done, despite His compassion and mercy, despite His life of giving. He knew that last few hours would be pretty horrific, to be left by all of your friends, to be treated like an animal, and then finally, of course, "MY God, my God, why have **you** forsaken me?" It was a pretty horrific end, but Jesus was faithful. He didn't divert; He didn't swerve away. He was faithful in all His house. We are told to consider, to review, to look at, to focus your attention on Jesus Christ, High Priest, Apostle, and, of course, our Passover.

Turn to chapter 2 in the same book **1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.** This is always the danger, frankly, that if we are not careful, things can just slip away little by little, almost undetected. I know people who kept the Passover for years, who looked to God for healing, who have drifted away. They no longer keep Passover. Now they keep Christmas; now they have a bathroom

cabinet stuffed full of chemicals and drugs and all sorts of potions and lotions, because, as far as they are concerned, healing died out two thousand years ago, if it ever existed. But we are told here that we must give the more earnest heed, we must consider, we must review, we must attend to the things that that we have heard lest we drift away.

**2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,**  
**3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation** (and salvation is a word which includes both spiritual **and** physical), **which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,**  
**4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?** So Paul's warning there, in that little passage, is to make sure that we don't slip away and drift away from the things that we have heard, because if we forget the **truths**, if they become of little consequence to us, if we are so busy, so distracted that we have no time to approach Passover in the right attitude and the right spirit, then we lose the understanding and we lose, therefore, potentially at least, the benefits and some of the things, for example, that we have heard.

Mr. Armstrong wrote quite a great deal on the meaning of Passover, and in particular, the meaning of the wine and the bread. I have three of four paragraphs here taken from his booklet, "Healing for Today" which I will read to you. These are, I think (referring to Hebrews 2 — it says to give the more earnest heed to things that we have heard) ... well, here are some of the things that you and I, mostly at least, have heard. Perhaps some people haven't read Mr. Armstrong's booklet, but for many of us, we have, and these are the things that we have heard, and read, which we are supposed to be holding fast to:

"God wants His people to rely on Him, to trust Him. Is this because some of us do not know and rely on the true God but we rely instead on medical doctors? God has said, 'I am the God who heals you.' "

"What a tremendous price God Himself, through Christ, paid in order that He might perform for us the miracle of healing. He is so willing, and He is so anxious to relieve us from the pain, suffering or affliction that He gave His only begotten Son to be beaten, to suffer in our stead so that, without violating any principle of His law, we may be healed."

"We need to realize God's love and compassion. Healing must not be taken for granted or treated cheaply."

"And when we ask, for instance, for healing, do we have evidence, proof positive that the healing will be done? He promised to heal you, but according to your faith be it unto you."

"The Bible reveals God's will. We need never say, 'Well. I know God could heal me, if it is His will.' You can know His will, and as far as healing is concerned, I can tell you definitely that His Word says plainly and emphatically that it is His will and He can't break a promise."

"And so with a member of God's church who has not yet achieved full faith to believe God's promises for their physical healing. He should have that faith. He may pay himself the penalty of the sickness or disease if he lacks faith to believe Christ paid the penalty for him, to rely on God's promise to heal. So, therefore, if a member has not yet grown in the faith of Christ, to absolutely know he can rely on God's promise of healing, and if this member does call in the doctor or look to the medical profession for help, God's church does not condemn him." And that is absolutely right. God's church does not condemn.

"Rather, God's ministers should encourage such a one to grow in faith until

he can rely on God instead of relying on man."

And that really, of course, is an important aspect for us. Our lives are growing in grace and knowledge. We live in a world where it is the norm to rely on the medical profession, to rely on mankind, to take our chance with the drugs and pharmaceuticals that are available at enormous expense with horrendous side effects in many cases. That is the world we live in. To leave that for the world and rely on God for healing is quite a challenge. It is an important challenge and one that Mr. Armstrong says God's ministry should be striving to try to encourage and lead people in that direction.

So, if you understand everything that Jesus did for us, everything the Father has made available for us in the Passover, I think we can see that God paid an unbelievable price because He wants to be able to heal us.

In conclusion, it is just over three weeks from now until the Passover. It is the most solemn evening of the entire year in which we will take of the bread and the wine. The wine we are fairly knowledgeable about. We know Jesus shed His blood for our sins, and we know about the blood splashed about the doors in ancient Egypt. But the bread is like the lamb's body; it is there at Passover time to teach us that Jesus suffered intense physical pain and took enormous physical punishment upon Himself that "by His stripes we are healed."

So, in the next three weeks, let's try to find the time to understand what we will be doing on Passover evening. Let's think deeply about what it cost God and Jesus Christ when They did for us what we picture at Passover. Let's make sure that we take the Passover worthily, fully understanding its complete significance. As the title of this message says, let's "Understand the Bread of Passover!"

Transcription and formatting by Diane Goddard and Don Goddard

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