March 8

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 33

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Christ's Sacrifice BEGINS God's MASTER PLAN

YOU HAVE probably heard the teaching that Jesus did everything for you — that all you must do is *accept* His shed blood for your sins. And then you are "automatically saved"!

Is the mere acceptance of Christ's death all there is to salvation? Does the blood of Christ really "save" anyone?

What Was Finished?

The common teaching today is that Christ finished the plan of salvation on the cross. The world sees, consequently, only a *DEAD* CHRIST HANGING ON A CROSS—not the living Christ at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, guiding and controlling the whole universe! (Heb. 1:3.)

Just what *was* finished? Notice Jesus' own words: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to *finish his work*" (John 4:34).

JESUS came to accomplish a specific job—the Father's WORK. That job was two-fold. One, to preach the gospel and to commission the apostles to carry on the Father's work till Christ returns. The second was TO OFFER his LIFE FOR the SINS OF THE WORLD.

Of the first part of the Father's commission Jesus said: "I have *finished the work* which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

At the climax of the second part of that commission, as Jesus was expiring His last, he said: "It is finished" (John 19:30).

What was finished? The sacrificing of His life for the sins of the world! But did that finish the plan of salvation? Not at all!

Consider!

If the death of Jesus completed the plan of salvation, then why the need of a resurrection?

Suppose Jesus were not resurrected, would His shed blood be sufficient to save you? Have you never read I Corinthians 15:17? "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; YOU ARE YET IN YOUR SINS"!

Notice it! "Yet in your sins"! Without salvation!

Then Christ's sacrifice alone is not all that is necessary for salvation. Christ had to be resurrected! Unless Christ is *alive* today, acting as your Advocate, making intercession as your Savior, your faith in His shed blood is in vain! You would yet be in your sins. You would be without a resurrected, living Savior to plead forgiveness on your behalf in the presence of the Father in Heaven.

That's why Paul wrote to the Romans: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son"—that's the work Christ finished on the cross—the work of reconciliation, SO WE can BE *FORGIVEN* OUR PAST SINS, "much more," continues Paul, "being reconciled, *we shall be saved by his life*" (Rom. 5:10).

Do you comprehend this all important verse? The death of Christ—the shedding of His blood—paid for our past guilt, but we shall be saved, that is, inherit eternal life, *by his life*—the power of the resurrection! If Christ is not living today, if he were yet dead, you never could be saved! You never could inherit the Kingdom of God and live forever! That takes the power of the Holy Spirit!

What people have not understood is that there are two meanings to the word *save*. We save or rescue someone from fire. So Christ saved us from the penalty of past sins by paying that penalty Himself. But we also save, that is, keep or preserve, money in a bank. So the life of Christ—the *Holy Spirit—is what saves us,*

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keeps or preserves us living forever. That part of Salvation is yet to be finished at the resurrection!

The *truth* is that God's plan only BEGAN with Christ's sacrifice! Christ's death is in reality only the *beginning*, the very FIRST STEP, in God's great Master-Plan of salvation.

Let's begin to understand why.

God's PURPOSE for Mankind

Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, during World War II, told the American Congress: "There is A PURPOSE BEING WORKED OUT HERE BELOW." He acknowledged a Higher Power above who is working out that purpose!

That great and wonderful purpose for human existence was first revealed in the Garden of Eden. *God* said, "Let us make man in our *image*, after our likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:26). Man was made of the dust of the ground—of clay—in the form and shape of God. But man was made *incomplete*. Man was made to need God—to receive the Holy Spirit without which he has no hope of eternal life. God, on that sixth day of creation week, had only BEGUN His master creation. God made MAN a perfect *physical* creation. He was NOT YET A PERFECT *SPIRITUAL* CREATION! God made mankind for the purpose of BEING FASHIONED INTO the VERY CHARACTER "IMAGE" OF GOD—into very spirit-born sons in God's Family! But that takes *time*. To accomplish it God has ALLOTTED 7,000 YEARS —seven millennial days.

The entire creation of God begins with *Christ*, and, when we fully understand, it is also *finished in Him!* God created all things *by* Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9). Jesus was the workman who created the physical Adam. But our SPIRITUAL creation also *begins* with Christ. It is He who became our living *example* to follow. He came into the world to lead the way. He came to shed His blood for our sins. He became, also, the *firstborn* from among the dead— the FIRST completed, perfected *spiritual man!* Notice it in your own Bible:

"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" (Heb. 2:9-10).

There it is! The purpose of life is that in us God is re-creating *His own kind—reproducing Himself* after *His* very own CHARACTER "IMAGE"!

God first revealed His purpose and plan to Adam in the Garden of Eden. But Adam didn't really comprehend it.

Only rarely in Old Testament times did God intervene in human lives and call men to walk with Him and to talk with Him about the GOAL *of life* and HOW *to achieve it*. In the first 1656 years of human history, we have a record in the Bible of *only three men*—Abel, Enoch, and Noah—who were called to *really understand* the purpose of life.

After the flood, God revealed His purpose and plan to Abraham, the outstanding example of faith and obedience in Old Testament times (Gen. 26:5).

But IT was NOT UNTIL the days of Moses that God began to call the descendants of righteous Abraham — the twelve tribes of ISRAEL — out of Egyptian captivity, THAT GOD BEGAN TO REVEAL the DETAILS OF HIS PLAN FOR WORKING OUT His PURPOSE FOR MAN here below.

Sabbath Pictures God's Rest

When God, who is the *author* of time, set apart and made holy the seventh day Sabbath for man, He gave mankind a rest day carrying special significance. To His "Church in the wilderness" — the *congregation* of Israel (Acts 7:38)—God said the SABBATH was A "*SIGN*" between Him and His people (Ezek. 20:12). This "sign" is *a supernatural proof* of IDENTITY. It is the sign by which we know that He is God. It is a *memorial* of God's creation—a *WEEKLY REMINDER* OF GOD'S CREATIVE POWER.

But the Sabbath is *also* a reminder to God's people of the millennial rest from sin—when all the world will be at peace for 1000 years—when the knowledge of God's purpose will fill the earth as the waters cover the depths of the seas (Isaiah 11:9). No other day but *the SEVENTH* DAY OF THE WEEK could have such significance and MEANING. It was designed to *continually keep* us in this true knowledge!

But did you know God also *set apart* and made HOLY certain other days of the year *besides* the weekly Sabbath?

Pictures God's PLAN

God called Israel out of Egyptian slavery to perform the most important mission any nation

has ever been given in all the history of mankind. Israel was not God's "favorite" people. They were not chosen for any goodness of their own (Deut. 7:6-9). Rather, God called them so He could, through them, *reveal Himself* as Creator and Ruler of the universe—so that through them, as His instruments, He could make known *His* PLAN, His laws, and His blessings to all nations (Deut. 4:5-9).

God has mapped out a definite PLAN, allowing *seven thousand years* for the process. Seven is God's number of perfection and completeness. And so GOD HAS GIVEN TO His PEOPLE *SEVEN ANNUAL FESTIVALS* TO *KEEP* THEM IN the KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PLAN. EACH festival PICTURES A VITAL *STEP* IN the WORKING OUT of that PLAN FOR MANKIND. Whenever the people of Israel forgot these festivals they also forgot the plan of God. These festivals are MEMORIALS of *God's Plan.*

These memorials which God gave His congregation in the wilderness, begin with the commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt —*a PICTURE for His Church* of the PLAN OF GOD IN *DELIVERING the WORLD FROM SIN.*

Just as the weekly Sabbath is a "sign" between God and His people, so are these festivals (Ex. 31:13). They are not Canaanitish feasts, nor Jewish feasts, nor the feasts of Moses. *Not once* in all the Old Testament are those days called "Jewish feasts" or "feasts of Moses." They are the "feasts of the *Lord*,"—"My holy days," says God (Lev. 23:2).

The whole story of God's plan is to be *re-enacted* year after year by God's people. The yearly observance of these days *impresses* God's Plan on us and continually *reminds* us of OUR PART in it!

To keep His children constantly in the true understanding of His great PLAN of salvation, Christ — the LORD of the Old Testament — originally TOOK the yearly *AGRICULTURAL* HARVESTS OF PALESTINE AS a TYPE OF God's SPIRITUAL HARVEST OF HUMAN BEINGS.

In Palestine there are two annual grain harvests. First, produced by the EARLY rain, is the *smaller spring harvest.* Second, produced by the "latter rain," comes the main harvest—the much *greater fall harvest.*

Christ intended the SPRING HARVEST festivals to *PICTURE* to His Church repeatedly *year by year,* the fact that THOSE He calls now to become His SPIRIT - BEGOTTEN CHILDREN *before* Christ's return, are *only* the "FIRST-FRUITS"—only the beginning of His great spiritual harvest!

In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, we find a *summary* of these annual holydays and festivals. Christ—not the Father—spoke them to Moses and the Levites—who were the teachers and ministers in Israel—so they would know what to teach the people. The *first three* festival periods, beginning with the Passover, are MEMORIALS of the first part of God's Plan. They picture only the first-fruits of Christ's labors.

The *last four* festivals look forward to the future and show how God will reap THE LATTER *GREAT FALL HARVEST* of BILLIONS OF SOULS!

Holy Days Preserved for God's Church

The One who became Jesus Christ chose ancient Israel for a special mission they have *failed* to perform. Israel was a *carnal* nation. They didn't have any promise of receiving the Holy Spirit at that time (John 7:38-39). Therefore, they did *not comprehend* God's great purpose for mankind or the true spiritual significance of the *steps* within God's plan as pictured by the Holy Days.

God did not reveal this spiritual understanding to them (Eph. 3:4-5) because it was not yet His time to give the Holy Spirit to "whosoever will." He *knew* they did not have the spiritual ability—"the heart" (Deut. 5:29)—within them to believe and obey.

Then why did Christ give His laws and HOLY DAYS to ancient Israel? The Bible tells us that the "oracles" — the Old Testament Scriptures which include God's weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days, besides the knowledge of the Sacred Calendar—were committed to Israel to be PASSED ON from generation to generation. The Israelites "who received the lively oracles TO *give unto* US [TODAY]" (Acts 7:38).

But the house of Israel went into captivity, beginning 721 B.C., losing their identity and their knowledge of God. They *did not preserve* the BIBLE or God's Sacred CALENDAR for us.

Then *who* did? The Jews!

The house of Judah—the Jews—which had split away from the nation Israel after the death of Solomon, went into captivity beginning 604 B.C. They returned 70 years later. Judah *retained* the knowledge of her identity and her God. Recognizing the fact that she had gone into captivity for breaking the Sabbath, Judah became very *strict* in its observance. The Jews, therefore, *FAITHFULLY RETAINED* the TRUE CALENDAR FOR US TO THIS VERY DAY!

Notice what Paul, under inspiration of God, asks: "What *advantage* then hath the Jew?" Then he answers in part, "much every way: chiefly, because that unto *them were committed* the ORACLES of God" (Rom. 3:1, 2). The Jews alone were left to preserve *the Scriptures*, the

weekly *Sabbath*, the *Holy Days* and the CALENDAR by which we may know *exactly when* to keep these days each year! Of all the tribes of Israel, God entrusted the Jews to be the *carriers* of His revealed will for the New Testament spirit-begotten Church!

Now, let's learn about the *beginning* of God's Plan of salvation for mankind—the sacrifice of "Christ our Passover"! We need to be *sure* we know exactly why Christ DIED for us.

What the Death of Christ Means

You often hear people say, "Christ *died* to SAVE sinners." Many suppose that is a Bible quotation — but it isn't! Many firmly believe that Christ's DEATH—His shed blood—is what actually *saves* us—imparts—everlasting LIFE!

You may be surprised to learn that the Bible says NO SUCH THING! What a self-contradictory, totally unscientific thing the Bible would be stating, if you could find that in God's Word!

There is no more basic and firmly established law known to science than the law of Biogenesis—that only LIFE can beget life! *Death* has no power to impart *life*. Life cannot spring from dead matter—or shed blood. The *living* does not come from the NON-LIVING. God Almighty created that law!

Why, then, was it necessary that Christ DIE for us—that He *shed His blood?* Let's understand.

GOD SAYS: "ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). *That involves* YOU! Your TRANSGRESSION OF GOD'S LAWS has *cut you off* from all contact with your Creator. The PENALTY now hanging over you IS DEATH—ETERNAL DEATH—for the wages of sin is DEATH (Rom. 6:23). That ETERNAL-DEATH PENALTY MUST BE *REMOVED* BEFORE we CAN HAVE ANY HOPE OF RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE!

What is the only way God says that penalty can be removed? Notice Romans 5:8-10: "But GOD commendeth His LOVE toward US, IN THAT, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST DIED *FOR* US. Much more, then, *being now* JUSTIFIED by His *blood*, we shall be SAVED *from wrath* [the death penalty] through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled to God by the* DEATH of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved* BY HIS LIFE."

Do you see that we are *forgiven*, JUSTIFIED *of past guilt*, reconciled to the Father, by the DEATH OF CHRIST—but that we shall be *saved*, not by His death, but by His LIFE. By His resurrection!

So the *blood* of Christ does *not finally* SAVE you! It only means that Christ has PAID IN FULL the PENALTY of YOUR *PAST* SINS for YOU! The barrier that has stood between you and God has now been removed and you are now, by Christ's sacrifice, allowed contact with God—reconciled to Him!

In I Corinthians 5:7-8, God inspired the apostle Paul to lay down this commandment for the Church: "Christ, OUR PASSOVER, is sacrificed for us; THEREFORE, let us KEEP THE *FEAST*"!

The original true Church which *Jesus* built kept ANNUALLY the PASSOVER, and the *Feast* of Unleavened Bread—NOT Easter. The New Testament Passover is the MEMORIAL of the *death* of Christ, observed on its anniversary, picturing FORGIVENESS of our past sins and being reconciled to God.

Passover--First Step in God's Plan

The Bible clearly reveals that the DEATH of Jesus Christ is the very FIRST EVENT, *or step*, in God's GREAT PLAN for man's spiritual creation! The Passover, the *first* of God's annual festivals, pictures that event. Jesus commanded that it be observed YEAR BY YEAR, with new symbols so that we would never forget His sacrifice (Luke 22:19-20).

The world—because of its rebellion against God, its observance of counterfeit pagan holidays—has *lost* sight of the real meaning of Christ's sacrifice. It has, instead, substituted Easter, supposedly in honor of His resurrection—an event the Bible commands us nowhere to celebrate. And the world even has the resurrection on the wrong day—Sunday!

God's true Church—the church Jesus built and promised to *preserve* — has retained the precious knowledge of His truth FOR YOU! Today, God's True Church—composed of truly converted, spirit-begotten children of God—is *faithfully observing* ALL of God's festivals. Yes, God's scattered true Church has kept these Holy Days down through the centuries from the original twelve apostles *until now!*

Despite the Devil's efforts to suppress the truth of God's plan for mankind, God has *commissioned* His True Church to begin *revealing* His MASTER PLAN *to you*, in this Course, *today!*

You are about to begin a fascinating and revealing series of lessons that will thoroughly explain God's seven annual festivals which picture His great Plan of spiritual creation.

Study these lessons *carefully* in your Bible, for YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY DEPENDS ON a THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING AND *PERSONAL APPLICATION* OF the MEANING OF THESE DAYS IN *YOUR LIFE*—NOW!

Let's begin studying, from God's inspired Holy Word, the details of the *first step* in His Master Plan for your spiritual creation, and *your* PERSONAL *part in it*—the solemn PASSOVER day.

LESSON 33

Passover Lamb Prophetic of Christ's Sacrifice

God's annual Holy Days really *make sense!* They are given to *teach* us the knowledge of the seven STEPS in God's plan for our salvation.

God first began to reveal His Holy Days to ancient Israel while they were in Egyptian captivity. It was then that God gave the Passover —the *first step* in God's Master Plan—to His people.

Catholics, Protestants — the majority of *all* people calling themselves "Christian"—*understand* that this first PASSOVER SERVICE God gave OLD TESTAMENT Israel was LOOKING FORWARD TO the NECESSITY FOR A SAVIOUR! But what they *do not* understand is the deep spiritual significance of the Passover for US TODAY.

The original Passover marked the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt, the land of *sin* (Heb. 11:25-26). God had been pouring out His plagues upon Egypt to induce Pharaoh to release the Israelites so they could worship Him in the wilderness. We find the story of THE FIRST PASSOVER recorded in the 12th chapter of Exodus.

1. As God began to deliver His people from Egypt (sin), did He have to straighten Israel out as to time—as to *when* the year should begin? Ex. 12:1-2. What was the first month of the year called?

COMMENT: Since Israel had been IN EGYPTIAN BONDAGE for almost two-and-a-half centuries, they were not permitted to worship God as He had ordained. They were forced to work seven days a week. They had *lost sight* even of when God's calendar year was to begin. Therefore, God had to reveal that the month of Abib—the first month in the spring in God's Calendar—was to be the *beginning* of the sacred year.

2. What was EACH FAMILY to do on the tenth day of Abib? Ex. 12:3. Was the LAMB they SELECTED to be *without* any spots or imperfections? Verse 5. Is Jesus Christ called the "Lamb of God"? John 1:29. Was this perfect lamb PROPHETIC OF CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR "LAMB" WHO WAS *SINLESS*—without blemish or spot? I Pet. 1:19.

3. Until what date of the month was each family to keep the lamb they selected? Ex. 12:6. Were they to kill the lamb on this day? Same verse. Notice that they were to kill it "in the *evening*" of the FOURTEENTH day!

COMMENT: The literal Hebrew from which "in the evening" is translated is "*between* the TWO evenings." God reckons the *beginning* and *ending* of each day from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:32). From the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, we find that "between the two evenings" is the *twilight* period between the time the sun goes down over the horizon when the new day COMMENCES, and the darkness when the stars are out. In other words, this is the period of time called DUSK! So the lamb was KILLED just *after sunset* in the very BEGINNING of the *fourteenth* of Abib.

4. As soon as the lamb was killed, what were they to do with its SHED BLOOD, which pictured Christ's sacrifice to come? Ex. 12:7.

5. What was the final devastating plague God brought upon Egypt on that same night, to force Pharaoh to release Israel? Ex. 12:12, 29. Did God promise to *spare* — "pass-over" — the lives of the Israelites' firstborn? Verse 13. Then wasn't it the *shed blood* of the lamb they had sprinkled on their door posts that SAVED THEM FROM DEATH? Same Verse.

COMMENT: Israel's protection from the death angel *was by the* BLOOD *of the lamb!* The lamb's blood was a "TOKEN" or sign which showed that the house was under the protection OF the blood. So it is today that those who come *under the BLOOD* OF CHRIST "OUR PASSOVER" Lamb who was "sacrificed for US (I Cor. 5:7) are PROTECTED FROM the penalty of ETERNAL DEATH!

God had the nation ISRAEL ACT OUT, beforehand, the exact *type* of Christ, "the *Lamb* of God"—"Christ our Passover"—who would come 1,500 years later to give His life as a "bloody sacrifice" to pay the *penalty* of our transgressions of God's law!

6. Did God command Israel to continue keeping the Passover day as a *memorial, once YEARLY?* Ex. 13:10.

COMMENT: God commanded, before Sinai, that the Passover should be kept *forever*—not just until the cross, as so many falsely assume and teach today. The Passover became a yearly MEMORIAL—before Sinai—of the death angel's passing over Israel and sparing their blood-protected firstborn.

But the Passover also continually *looked forward* to the time when the TRUE PASSOVER SAVIOUR of the world would come to *shed* His blood for the remission of the sins of all mankind! The Passover plainly pictures the DEATH of Christ for the remission of our sins and passing over our past sins now covered by His shed blood.

Jesus Kept the Passover

1. WHILE JESUS was YET A CHILD, did He go to Jerusalem with His parents who kept the Passover *every year?* Luke 2:40-42.

2. When Jesus began His ministry, did He *continue* to observe the Passover which God had

originally given Israel approximately 1,500 years previously? John 2:13, 23.

COMMENT: Before and during His ministry, Jesus KEPT the annual spring festivals which God had originally given to Israel. The PASSOVER is one of the seven annual festivals which Jesus observed yearly. It is a memorial ordained *forever* (Ex. 12:14). For that reason, JESUS *obediently* observed it. Later He *INSTRUCTED* HIS DISCIPLES how IT should BE continuously OBSERVED ANNUALLY, *AFTER HIS DEATH*, by the New Testament Church in REMEMBRANCE of Himself who became our true Passover lamb!

3. Did Jesus observe the Passover with His disciples on the night before He was crucified? Mat. 26:17-21. Did they actually *eat* the Passover lamb? Verse 21 and Luke 22:14-16.

COMMENT: Jesus and His disciples *did eat* the meat of the Passover lamb as the Bible plainly states. But they were *not* eating a sin offering! The Passover lamb is nowhere called a sin offering in the Bible. The Bible plainly shows that sin offerings were not instituted until AFTER the Israelites had come out of Egypt—until AFTER the Ten Commandments were given (Jer. 7:22).

4. Had the unconverted Jews of Judaea in Jesus' day perverted the Passover? Were they holding it *one day* LATER than Jesus and His disciples from Galilee? John 18:28.

COMMENT: The Jews in Christ's day had become divided, confused after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Under Egyptian and Syrian influence in Palestine (described in Daniel 10), the Judaeans had neglected the proper observance of the Passover. The Galileans, however, remained faithful. After the Gentiles were driven from Jerusalem and Judaea, the Jews of Judaea still did not return to the proper time for the observance of Passover. They observed it one day late. And thereby they lost the knowledge of the coming Saviour. If they had kept the Passover, correctly, once a year—on the 14th of Nisan—they would have recognized that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!

Christ Institutes Ordinance of Humility

While Jesus and His disciples were taking the Old Testament PASSOVER for the very last time, on the very *eve* of His MURDER, JESUS gave some definite and SPECIFIC COMMANDS for His NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

In giving us the account of the institution of the New Testament passover or communion service—commonly misnamed the "Lord's Supper"—Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the taking of new symbols — unleavened BREAD AND WINE—in place of the Old Testament lamb. But John alone relates *another vital* PART of this New Testament ordinance.

1. Did Jesus wash His disciples' feet *during* this last Passover meal? John 13:1-5. Note in verse 2 that the words "and supper being ended" should properly be rendered "and *during* supper," according to the original inspired Greek.

COMMENT: Notice that this ceremony of washing the disciples' feet was no part of the Old Testament observance of the Passover, though it was occurring during the Passover meal.

This was something NEW, something DIFFERENT! It was being instituted for the *first time* by Jesus Christ Himself.

IF Jesus wanted to "nail to His cross" ALL laws, Holy Days, and everything that God ever gave, including footwashing, then WHY did He go to such great length and pains to show His disciples HOW to observe the New Testament Passover service from then on?

Surely Jesus ought to have been busily explaining to them that immediately after His crucifixion, there would be *no further obligation* for them to keep the Passover, had He intended to nail God's Holy Days to the cross! Instead, He was taking this *last-minute opportunity* to *institute* at the New Testament Passover a special observance which JESUS then COMMANDED HIS DISCIPLES TO KEEP and to teach!

2. Did Peter at first refuse to allow Jesus to wash his feet? John 13:6-8. Could Peter have any part with Jesus *unless* he allowed Christ to wash his feet? Verse 8.

COMMENT: Peter argued with Christ—saying he wasn't going to have Christ wash his feet. Men today argue the same thing. Jesus explained that unless Peter *entered into the footwashing ceremony*, he had NO PART with Christ! *Neither can we!*

3. Did Jesus explain *why* He instituted this new observance of footwashing during the Passover service? John 13:12-14, 16.

COMMENT: Jesus said anyone who acknowledges Him as "Master and Lord" ought to wash one another's feet! Footwashing in Jesus' time was a menial task which only *servants* performed when visitors entered a house, for open-toed sandals were the customary footwear of that time and the feet would become very dusty.

So JESUS was illustrating to His disciples that He had COME TO THIS EARTH TO *SERVE* MANKIND! And shortly afterward, He proved the *extent* of His extreme service for this world when He gave His very LIFE for the sins of all mankind! He suffered the MOST HUMILIATING and *EXCRUCIATINGLY PAINFUL* DEATH imaginable for you and me. Christ symbolically SHOWED just *HOW FAR* He was WILLING TO GO IN His SERVICE

TO MANKIND in order TO SAVE US ALL FROM ETERNAL DEATH!

Jesus explained that if He, being the Master, would serve mankind, then His disciples ought to *similarly serve the world*—"ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (Verse 14). The New Testament shows that they and the other apostles and disciples of Christ did *serve* in Christ's steps. And most of the original apostles did also *give* their lives while preaching the gospel of Christ!

4. Did Jesus plainly COMMAND His disciples to wash each other's feet in the future? John 13:14-15. Were they to teach the world to do likewise? Mat. 28:19-20.

COMMENT: Many today do not want to *humiliate* themselves by washing the feet of their church brethren. Some argue that Jesus commanded only His disciples to wash one another's feet. But Christ clearly shows that it is a COMMAND for all people—"all nations"!

5. Are those who *obey* Christ's words by partaking of this meaningful ceremony promised a special *blessing?* John 13:17 and 14:23.

Bread and Wine the New Emblems

Let's notice now what *else* Jesus commanded all Christians to do after He finished washing His disciples' feet and after the Passover meal was ended.

1. Did Jesus institute the New Testament Passover symbols of unleavened *BREAD* AND *WINE?* Luke 22:15-20 and Mat. 26:26-29.

2. Was the unleavened BREAD to represent *symbolically* Christ's BODY which was to be BRUTALLY BEATEN and cut open for mankind? Luke 22:19.

COMMENT: Jesus was using UNLEAVENED BREAD because the Old Testament Passover was always eaten with unleavened bread (Exodus 12:8).

3. Was the WINE to *symbolically* represent HIS BLOOD which was to be SHED FOR the forgiveness of past SINS? Mat. 26:28-29. How can we know "the fruit of the *vine*" Jesus used was wine and *not* grape juice?

COMMENT: We can know that the "fruit of the vine" which Jesus gave His disciples was truly *fermented* WINE, not unfermented *grape juice!* Grape juice could not at that time be preserved until spring. It either became wine, about 40 days following the harvest, or else the grape juice was made into a heavy syrup. This was not syrup! Any knowledge of the practices of the Jewish community during the days of Jesus will reveal that *fermented wine* was used *exclusively* at the Passover (*Hasting's Dictionary*, art. "Wine").

4. Did JESUS SPECIFICALLY COMMAND CHRISTIANS THROUGH *ALL AGES* TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE in taking unleavened BREAD and WINE at the PASSOVER? Luke 22:19 and Mat. 28:19-20.

5. Had Jesus previously told the Pharisees, by means of a parable, that UNLESS we DO *symbolically* partake of His *body* and *blood* we can have NO HOPE of receiving ETERNAL LIFE? John 6:48, 51-54.

6. Is the yearly partaking of the bread and wine on the Passover day a *memorial* of Christ's sacrifice for us? Luke 22:19. once a year

COMMENT: Jesus instituted this New Testament ordinance on the *eve* of His death. He set us the *example* so we might know HOW to keep the New Testament Passover after His death. At His last Passover, Jesus *changed* the emblems. Instead of shedding the blood of the lamb and eating its roasted body, today we use unleavened *bread* and *wine.*

JESUS DID NOT ABOLISH the PASSOVER—He MERELY CHANGED the EMBLEMS or symbols used. All the apostles of Christ, and true Christians of the FIRST-CENTURY TRUE CHURCH, OBSERVED it on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Sacred Calendar. It is a MEMORIAL of Christ's death, re-affirming, year by year on its anniversary "till He come," the true Christian's FAITH in the blood of "Christ our Passover" for the remission of sins. Eating the broken bread symbolizes our faith in the body of Christ broken for physical healing.

Jesus commanded: "This DO — in *remembrance* of me!"

The world is not WILLING to DO what Jesus said!

Are *you?*

How Christ Became "Our Passover"

In order to pay the PENALTY for your sins and mine, which is *death* (Rom. 6:23)—death for *all eternity* unless our sins are pardoned and washed away—it was necessary that Jesus Christ be more than just a flesh and blood human being!

It was absolutely necessary that CHRIST also be DIVINE—God in the flesh—that His LIFE be WORTH MORE THAN ALL OUR *HUMAN* LIVES put TOGETHER! UNLESS Jesus was GOD *made flesh,* and *unless* He actually DIED by *shedding His blood,* He is *NOT* our "Passover Saviour"!

1. Is Jesus Christ the "Word" or *Spokesman,* the Creator — the God who *made all things?* John 1:1-3 and Col. 1:16-17.

2. Did our very Creator BECOME a flesh and blood human being by being miraculously *conceived* of the Holy Spirit and then BORN of a human woman? John 1:14 and Mat. 1:20-23. Is Jesus Christ plainly called "God" and "our Saviour" in the Bible? Titus 2:13-14.

COMMENT: The penalty for sin is DEATH, but God is Spirit. Spirit cannot die! Therefore God

as the divine and supreme all-ruling Spirit could not have paid such a penalty! It was absolutely NECESSARY then, that one of the GOD Kingdom BE BORN IN *HUMAN* FLESH.

Therefore, when this member of the Godhead had VOLUNTARILY emptied Himself and been *CHANGED INTO* A MAN — had become a physical, air-breathing, water-drinking and food-eating human being, confined to this earth, and had been MADE flesh—there was then no second member of the Godhead in heaven!

Jesus, the second member, was on this earth as a *mortal human being.*

HIS one LIFE, since He was the very One who had been used to create *all* life, was WORTH FAR MORE THAN ALL the rest of our lives and the BILLIONS who have lived and died put TOGETHER! Had Jesus been ONLY a man and born of Joseph, His death could have paid the death penalty perhaps for *only* one other man! But Jesus was the person of *GOD*—IN THE FLESH!

Thus it is, that by *emptying* Himself, being made of low estate, and taking upon Himself the sins of the world, Christ became the perfect and complete sacrifice for all sins ever committed!

3. Was the apostle Paul inspired to write that Christ is our "Passover"—our Saviour—today? I Cor. 5:7.

COMMENT: Unless the original Passover lamb given to Old Testament Israel had been sacrificed or *slain*, had its own blood shed, the Israelites' firstborn would have been killed in Egypt and they could not have been delivered out of this land which was *typical of* SIN. So, UNLESS CHRIST *was* SACRIFICED— actually *shed His own* BLOOD—WE who are the firstfruits TODAY WOULD NOT HAVE A SAVIOUR!

4. Did Israel kill the Passover Lamb by *shedding* its blood? Ex. 12:6-7.

COMMENT: As Christ is our Passover—and as the lamb was a *type* of Christ, and had its own blood shed—so *Christ was to also shed His blood* to pay for our sins.

5. Exactly why was it *necessary* for Christ to shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins? Heb. 9:22.

COMMENT: God reveals in His perfect plan, that only by the *shedding of blood* is there remission of sins. And unless Jesus did shed His blood, He could never have become our Passover.

6. Did God foretell that Christ would die as a *lamb* led to the slaughter, and therefore shedding its blood? Isa. 53:7-8. Does the recorded conversation between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch plainly show us Isaiah was referring to Jesus Christ, who became our Passover? Acts 8:32, 34-35.

7. Did Isaiah prophesy Christ would DIE by *POURING OUT* HIS "SOUL"—His life-blood? Isa. 53:12. Does the "soul" or LIFE of all living flesh RESIDE IN the *BLOOD?* Lev. 17:11.

COMMENT: Any student of the Bible ought to know that it was Christ's *shed* blood that caused His death, not the "sentimental idea" of humans that Jesus died of a "broken heart"! Jesus became "our Passover" by giving His life —by *shedding His* LIFE-BLOOD for the sins of all mankind! He was speared in the side by His Roman tormentors. The blood gushed out and He screamed in agony. He died for the sins of the whole world. (Write for the booklet explaining how Jesus died. It's entitled "Did Jesus Die of a Broken Heart?")

Why Christ's Body Was Beaten

1. Previous to His crucifixion on the cross, and death by shedding His blood, was JESUS also *SCOURGED* by Pilate? Mat. 27:26. Was He so BRUTALLY BEATEN that He was *unrecognizable?* Isa. 52:14. Also read the entirety of Psalm 22 which prophetically and *vividly* described the horrible suffering Jesus was to experience.

COMMENT: Christ had to suffer a merciless *beating* which tore His flesh open, disfigured Him, caused Him to bleed from dozens and even *hundreds* of open gashes and cuts! He was beaten and whipped with a "scourge" which was a whip of many leather thongs with bits of metal tied in the ends of them.

Jesus was then LED LIKE a *dirty CRIMINAL*, made to carry His own stake, until He fell under the weight of it — and then was hauled up roughly and had to feel huge spikes being pounded mercilessly into the flesh, pinning His hands and feet to the wood.

After having to feel His own body weight ripping and tearing at the flesh where the nails had been driven through, without any relief in sight, Jesus had to feel a huge, sharp, metal spear *jamming* into His side, cutting the tissue and the organs, severing blood vessels and flesh! Christ DIED a HIDEOUS, merciless BRUTAL DEATH such as a normal man would not think of inflicting upon a rabid dog!

And JESUS *DID* THIS VOLUNTARILY! He did this FOR US — for the WHOLE WORLD!

2. Did Jesus suffer this excruciatingly painful torture of His body so we might receive physical HEALING of our bodies through faith in Him? Isa. 53:5; I Pet. 2:24 and Ps. 103:2-3.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ allowed His body to be literally *ripped open* in hundreds of places until He could not even be recognized! He suffered this torture so you and I, through faith in His broken body for us, may have the FORGIVENESS of our *physical sins*—the healing of our bodies when we are sick—as well as the FORGIVENESS of our *spiritual sins* by His shed blood!

That is why Jesus instituted the breaking of unleavened bread at His last Passover Supper. It is a *symbol* of His broken body given to the tormentors for our healing and a *reminder* to us that it is by "His *stripes* we are healed."

Just think of the tremendous PRICE that was paid that YOU might have your guilty past blotted out, and the slate wiped clean! God Himself, in the Person of Jesus Christ, paid the penalty! Can you grasp it? Can you comprehend that your very Creator—the One who gives you every breath of air you breathe, *DIED* FOR YOU?

What are *you* going to DO about it?

Kept by New Testament Church

1. After Jesus Christ had changed the symbols of the Passover to bread and wine, did JESUS COMMAND HIS DISCIPLES TO KEEP IT in memory of His death? Luke 22:19-20.

2. Did the New Testament Church of God continue to keep the Passover after Christ's crucifixion? Acts 12:4.

COMMENT: The word "Easter" here is a flagrant *mistranslation*. The original Greek word is "pascha" which means PASSOVER! It is the *same word* translated "Passover" in Matthew 26:2, 17-19. You should *strike out* the mistranslated word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 and write in its place the *true meaning*, "PASSOVER."

3. Did the apostle PAUL carefully TEACH NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS, who were baptized, TO KEEP the Passover—partaking of the new symbols of bread and wine—just as Jesus Christ had done? I Cor. 11:23-26.

COMMENT: Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Here is *absolute proof* that he taught the GENTILE CORINTHIANS, who were baptized, to *keep the Passover!*

4. *How long* were Christ's disciples to *continue keeping* the New Testament Passover? I Cor. 11:26.

COMMENT: CHRIST COMMANDED His disciples — true CHRISTIANS THROUGH THE AGES—to show, in symbol, "the Lord's death [by keeping the PASSOVER] *till He* COME!" And Christ has *not yet returned to this earth!* Therefore *true Christians* STILL *keep the Passover today!*

5. Did baptized Christians who followed after Paul continue to keep the Passover? Rev. 2:8-10.

COMMENT: The apostles who spent time in Asia Minor—among whom were Paul and John —appointed Polycarp over the Church of God in Smyrna. Notice what early Catholic historians admit about him.

"But Polycarp also was not only *instructed by the apostles*, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, *appointed* BISHOP *of the* CHURCH OF SMYRNA . . . He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus, bishop of Rome around 154 A.D., caused many to turn away from the . . .heretics to the *Church of God*, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles . . ."

While at Rome, Polycarp discussed with the Roman bishop the matter of the introduction of the pagan Easter in place of the Passover.

"For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it [the Passover] because he had *always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord*, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated. . . ." (Quoted from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Book V, Chap. 24, in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I—*emphasis ours*).

6. Were later true Christians *forced to defend* their practice of keeping God's Passover at the *correct time* and in the *correct way?* Rev. 2:9-10.

COMMENT: Within 35 years the Passover controversy broke out again. Victor, bishop of Rome, attempted to "CUT OFF WHOLE CHURCHES OF GOD who observed the tradition of an ancient custom"—the TRUE PASSOVER!

Polycrates, another Christian from Asia Minor, gave this forthright answer to Victor in *vindication of the truth* of God:

"As for us, then, we *scrupulously observe the exact day*, neither adding nor taking away. For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord . . . I speak of PHILIP, *one of the twelve apostles* . . . JOHN, moreover who reclined on the Lord's bosom . . . then there is *Polycarp* . . . THESE *ALL KEPT THE PASSOVER* ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOSPEL, *WITHOUT EVER DEVIATING* FROM IT, BUT KEEPING TO THE RULE OF FAITH!" (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 8, pp. 773-774—*emphasis ours*).

7. Wasn't it prophesied that the Church of God in the city of Smyrna (in Asia Minor) would suffer persecution? Rev. 2:10. Who was to perpetrate this persecution? Rev. 2:9.

COMMENT: "The Synagogue of Satan," composed of those who said "they are Jews and are not" is none other than the *Roman Catholic Church*. They *claimed* to be the true "spiritual Jews" — true Christians — but WERE NOT! They *claimed* to be the Church "founded upon Jesus Christ," but Almighty God calls them the "synagogue" or church of SATAN THE DEVIL! This GREAT FALSE CHURCH *actually persecuted* God's TRUE servants *for keeping* the Passover!

A Memorial Commanded ONCE A Year

1. Was the PASSOVER TO BE KEPT *ONCE A YEAR?* Ex. 13:10. Did Jesus and His disciples keep the Passover *once a year?*

Luke 2:42; 22:14. How *often* should baptized Christians *today* partake of the Passover? I Cor. 11:26.

COMMENT: Notice that the *time* of the Passover was *already determined* when Christ sat down with His disciples to partake of it for the last time. The Passover was eaten AT A SPECIFIC TIME—*a DEFINITE HOUR!* Christ taught by His own example that the Passover should be taken only by baptized Christians ONCE A YEAR—on the *fourteenth day of the first month, IN THE EVENING*, at dusk, just after the beginning of the day, *exactly as God's law stipulates!*

JESUS both *commanded* it and LEFT US *an EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW*—TO DO AS HE DID! "This *DO* IN REMEMBRANCE of me," said Jesus—in *memory* of His death. Christians today should also keep the Passover, not as *often as they please*—but AS OFTEN AS Christ and the apostles did—*not* four times a year, *not* monthly, *not* weekly or daily or twice daily—BUT ANNUALLY!

The Passover is a MEMORIAL—we keep it in remembrance of Christ's death. And memorials of momentous occasions *always are observed annually*—ONCE A YEAR—on the ANNIVERSARY of the event they commemorate. Therefore, TRUE CHRISTIANS TODAY should be OBSERVING the Passover AS CHRIST Himself COMMANDED on the eve of His death. It is the *most solemn* and *sacred occasion* of the year—especially when observed at this *correct Scriptural time!*

Any other time during the entire year IS NOT a memorial of Christ's death, but is merely an INVENTION OF MEN in contradiction to the *DIRECT COMMAND* OF JESUS CHRIST!

2. Did the early New Testament Church of God understand and follow Christ's example by observing the Passover annually? Acts 12:4 and I Cor. 11:23-26.

COMMENT: The true Church of God was still keeping the Passover as a MEMORIAL of Christ's death at the *correct time* and in the *correct manner* OVER 25 YEARS AFTER Christ ascended into heaven, according to your Bible. And we have seen that *recorded* Church History proves that for *better than 200 years* God's people *continued* in the faith delivered to the saints.

Today, God's TRUE CHURCH is *STILL KEEPING THE PASSOVER*—just AS JESUS CHRIST *COMMANDED!*

Do You STOP With the Passover?

God has begun to open to you the *deep understanding* of His wonderful Master-Plan for your salvation. Now you KNOW THE TRUTH about God's Passover and the *importance* of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for you!

This world sees only A *DEAD* CHRIST hanging on the cross—not *alive* at the right hand of the Father in heaven—guiding and controlling the WHOLE UNIVERSE! (Heb. 1:3).

The false religions of this world want you to believe that Christ's sacrifice COMPLETED the plan of salvation—that there is *nothing more for you to do but* BELIEVE! Nothing could be FURTHER from the truth! It is the *same lie* Satan the Devil has promulgated from the beginning! Christ's Passover sacrifice only BEGINS God's Master-Plan. (In future lessons of this Correspondence Course, you will learn each of the seven steps in God's *plan* for salvation in their entirety!)

Jesus Christ died for OUR *past* sins—that is something we cannot do. But merely "accepting Christ's sacrifice" is NOT ENOUGH! We can't afford to *stand still* after repenting and being forgiven by Christ's blood—we MUST FORSAKE SIN COMPLETELY! We must COME OUT OF this rotten, fithy, FOUL, evil WORLD! (Rev. 18:4.)

Christ's sacrifice only paid for our sins of the *past* (Rom. 3:24-25). It does NOT give us LICENSE to BREAK GOD'S *LAW with impunity* in the *future*. Because the world wants to believe in a twisted concept of "grace" that actually means "permissiveness" to DO EVIL—because they have *not kept* His Holy Days, they have LOST SIGHT of the great purpose in human existence. They do *not know* there is anything to DO!

Yes, the professing-Christian world may profess to "*accept*" Christ's sacrifice. But Christ has *NOT APPLIED HIS SACRIFICE* to them. They are sinners and *refuse to obey Him*—claiming His laws are done away! Christ is not the minister of sin. (Galatians 2:17) Not until they repent of sin and believe Christ can they be forgiven! They have a *dead faith* in Christ's shed blood. Therefore, the world hasn't really taken even the *first step* toward spiritual salvation.

CHRIST WILL APPLY HIS SACRIFICE ONLY TO THOSE who are IN A RIGHT ATTITUDE, who show by their actions that they are repentant — WHO sincerely TURN around AND FOLLOW GOD'S LAWS.

If you have really repented of your past sins, realizing that your sins have caused the death of your very Creator, Jesus Christ, and want to begin to *keep God's commandments* — begin *participating* in His wonderful Master-Plan—then you will want *more information* regarding baptism and how you can **keep** the New Testament **Passover,** as God commanded, **with others of like faith.**

If you are one of these, **write** to **Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong,** in care of your **regional office (California, Australia,** the **Philippines,** or **England)** and ask for information regarding the Passover. *Be sure to mention you have completed lesson 33 of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course!*