

“Christ, Our Passover Lamb Has Been Sacrificed For Us.



*So Let Us
Celebrate
the Festival”*

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

by Robert Curry

Examine Ourselves Before Passover

... How?

The Bible directs God's people to examine ourselves all year long, but especially before the Passover service: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). How do we do that?

Note that the examination should not be a scary proposition that makes us think we're so wicked and worthless that we're unfit to take the Passover. Paul said the examination should lead us to be aligned more fully with God the Father and with Jesus Christ, our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:8), so that we are spiritually ready to eat and drink of the powerful symbols of the New Covenant at that special annual memorial service. With appropriate examination we will not eat in "an unworthy manner" (11:27).

Passover is not about us. It's all about Christ our Passover lamb! He makes us worthy—dying for our sins and then living in us (Romans 5:10). There's nothing we can do to make ourselves worthy. But make no mistake, God and the Bible give us things to do.

Paul wrote "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Our examination should prod us to greater living faith—the faith of Christ and the other fruits of the Spirit living in us—so that we know our relationship with the Father and Christ is solid and settled.

How do we do this?

- Jesus said His disciples would fast after He went away (Matthew 6:16, 9:15), and preparing for Passover is a great time to do it. Jesus said some spiritual results require fasting and prayer (Matthew 17:21), and properly examining ourselves definitely calls for such a zealous response.

What better action can we take than to seriously seek God by humbling ourselves—especially when it’s practically certain that we still have too much pride. This was the most common stated cause of the downfall of so many Bible personalities. The longer we are pursuing God’s ways, and becoming more sensitive to His urgings and corrections, we probably see that we have more pride than ever!

- During this fast, as well as the days before and after it, we should focus on asking God to correct us and help us to see what we especially need to change to be more pleasing in His sight. He just might have something else in mind ... like deceitfulness (Jeremiah 10:23)!

David wrote, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. *Point out anything in me that offends you*, and lead me along the path of everlasting life” (Psalm 139:23-24, New Living Translation, emphasis mine throughout).

The author of Hebrews tells us to “not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives ... Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained

by it” (Hebrews 12:5-6, 11).

- Here’s a huge key to successful examination: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). We should be especially listening alertly when we are studying God’s Scripture. But not just hearing ... doing (James 1:22)! Lest we stockpile more deceitfulness!
- Another likely place to receive some helpful correction is from other people, especially converted ones. “Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness” (Psalm 141:5).

I feel like David put it: “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression” (Psalm 19:20).

And ready to take the Passover!

At His last Passover, Jesus Christ sanctified three actions for us to do: foot washing, eating a small piece of unleavened bread, and drinking a small cup of wine.

Foot Washing Goes Beyond Humble Service

Foot washing will take place during a Church of God Passover service. It would be difficult to find a better way to teach humble service, but foot washing actually teaches many other lessons.

Jesus didn't specifically mention humble service that night, though it certainly reminds us of what he taught about servant leadership in Matthew 20:25-28.



Jesus told Peter, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this” (John 13:8). The disciples couldn't really comprehend spiritual teachings until they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost in Acts. 2.

Even those of us who've had years of doing the foot washing ceremony can still learn more about what we're doing!

Bible culture

It will probably surprise you like it did me to learn that the custom throughout the Bible was to hand guests some water to wash their own feet—not to do it for them. See for yourself in your own Bible: Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Luke 7:44.

It's interesting that when the Word who later became Jesus,

along with two angels, appeared to Abram, not even He got His feet washed! It never occurred to the Father of the Faithful to wash the Word's feet. Because nobody expected it! But I wonder if it might have given the Word an "Aha! Now I know what I should institute on My last Passover! That will shock 'em into humble service!" Of course, He was the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) and probably had already planned out the evening's to-do's.



Holnam Bible Dictionary says foot washing was "so lowly a task that it could not be required of a Hebrew slave." Apparently, in the days of the Gospels only the rich might have Gentile slaves perform the dirty task.

This is why it was so shocking for the woman in Luke 7:38 to stand "at [Jesus'] feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil."

1 Corinthians 12 talks about cherishing the lowliest parts of the body as an analogy regarding the Church of God being Christ's Body, and the feet are certainly the lowest. Years ago *Reader's Digest* ran an article called "I Am Joe's Feet," showcasing this amazing creation that enables us to stand, balance and walk. And if you want to hear a part of the body screaming for attention as the most vital part, just stub your big toe!

Loved them to the utmost

Before washing the disciples' feet, John 13:1 says that Jesus "loved them to the end." This can also be translated "to the utmost."

Psalm 113:6 marvels that God stoops down to behold us on the earth. And Jesus kneels down! He had His ultimate purpose in mind. Joy was set before Him so He could endure what was coming (Hebrews 12:2) and redeem His wayward children back to the Father.

We have the God who washes feet! Even Judas' feet. And we follow His humble example so we can become children of God and servant leaders in His eternal family.

- **Foot washing pictures the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** Jesus "laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself" (John 13:4). Afterwards he put his outer garments back on (verse 12). This pointed toward His crucifixion the next day and then His resurrection. The Greek words *tithemi* for "laid aside" and *lambano* for "take it again" are the same words as in John 10:17-18: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). This should remind us of Hebrews 12:1—"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for *the joy that was set before Him* endured the cross ..." The Passover is a somber occasion because of "proclaim[ing] the Lord's death till He comes" but great joy comes from understanding the great depth of spiritual meaning.

Continuing in John 15:12: "This is My commandment, [new

commandment, John 13:34] that you love one another as I have loved you.” That’s what was new about it! “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus came down from the highest exalted position to as low as He could possibly go.

During the foot washing portion of Passover, I take off my suit jacket, gird my towel about my waist, and then put the jacket back on. I want to follow Jesus’ example even in this physical way.

- **Pictures the washing away of our sins in the blood of Christ’s sacrifice.** We are washed in the blood! Jesus died when a soldier “pierced His side with a spear, and immediately *blood and water* came out” (John 19:34).
- **Pictures our being completely clean through our baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit and eventually the first resurrection.** “We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:4-5). We are forgiven and reconciled by Christ’s death; we are saved by his life” (Romans 5:10).

We should not put off baptism because our sins are forgiven at baptism (Acts 2:38, 22:16). We are immersed totally under the watery grave, and when we come up, we are clean and blameless through God’s imputed grace. Oh, our old man is a good swimmer! We will sin occasionally but hopefully less and less

frequently through the power of the resurrected Christ living in us to become a new man or woman. We must still ask for God's cleansing daily as we figuratively walk the dusty, dirty roads of life in open-toed sandals. This is why Jesus said "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean, and you are clean ..." (John 13:10). Clean feet = forgiven sins!

Jesus cleanses us (and our conscience—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, *cleanse your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14). Too many Christians struggle to forgive themselves when God has removed their sins as far as the east is from the west! (Psalm 103:12).

We can't do it ourselves. We can't earn salvation by any works or good deeds. God the Father and our Elder Brother live in us through Their Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said Jesus would "baptize you with *the Holy Spirit and fire*." On Pentecost the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire. And Peter told us, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13).

It's not correct to think we need to come to Passover to have our sins forgiven during the ceremony. We live under imputed grace. We can't be more clean than completely!

- **Requires basin and feet.** Peter resisted Jesus: "You shall never wash my feet!"

Nobody can wash feet unless somebody else sticks out their feet. Surely it takes more humility to let somebody wash yours than to do theirs. The Church is not experiencing hospitality as fully as it should because even brethren with fine homes will think

they can't offer because they don't have a good enough bedroom and private bathroom. Some won't come stay, even though they can't afford a hotel, because it means having to cooperate with a host instead of doing as you please. What a shame because sharing hospitality is a wonderful way to really get to know brethren better than you can in church. Paul said, "When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13, NLT).

Washing feet shows it's not "just you and me, Lord." Though we wash the feet of only one person in the foot washing ceremony, we should be willing to wash anybody's feet there and not try to position ourselves in a particular chair so we get the person we want or, worse, so we don't get those we don't!

Receiving the Holy Spirit puts us into the Body of Christ, the Church of God. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor ..." (1 Corinthians 12:21-23).

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

We should not even be at Passover without first reconciling with our brothers and sisters (Matthew 5:23-24). Actually, we have to love even our enemies. When the new heaven and new earth arrive, the only beings left will be resurrected brothers and sisters in Christ—Gods in the Family! Why would God the Father and Jesus our Elder Brother want us in Their eternal Kingdom if we can't get along with others now?

Is Foot Washing Optional?

When Peter defiantly said to Jesus, “You shall never wash my feet!”, Jesus corrected him: “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me” (John 13:8).

That figuratively knocked the sandals right off of Peter! And surely all of us. Of course we want to have a part with Jesus!-- and a relationship with Him.

Notice what else Jesus said to His disciples that crucial night just before He would be beaten, brutalized, rejected and crucified. After washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus added: “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For *I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*” (verses 12-17).

Of course, God expects us to live our lives in humble service to others all the time. So some will argue that they can be a humble servant leader all year long without doing an annual “ritual.”

But it’s clear from John 13, Luke 22 and 1 Corinthians 11 that Jesus Christ introduced foot washing along with eating unleavened bread and drinking a little wine as three actions for His followers to do “in remembrance of Me” and “on the night when He was betrayed.”

Does it matter when?

Some sincere people will wash feet on Maundy Thursday, believing that this is the day before Christ died on Good Friday

and was resurrected on Easter Sunday. They mean well, but this scenario is totally wrong. Completely unbiblical. Jesus' only sign of being in the grave three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40) disproves it all by itself. Please be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who proved for themselves whether these things be so.

When I was young and sincerely obeying God by tithing as my mother taught me, yet giving God's money to the wrong place, He still fulfilled His amazing promises for tithing. He still blessed me in my ignorance. After He showed me the right place when I was 19, He continued to bless me because *now I changed* to sending it to His Church that was fulfilling His Great Commission (Matthew 24:14, 28:18-20). Similarly, I'm sure our God who is so merciful will bless you for obeying even though you are unknowingly doing it at the wrong time. Yes, but as Paul put it so well, "These times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

We can't just do the foot washing ceremony whenever we feel like it! God makes it crystal clear that He expects us to keep the Passover and its foot washing:

- **The Passover service leads off the Holy Festivals that Jesus Christ as the Word in the Old Testament specified as commanded assemblies/appointments.**

(Leviticus 23:2). Jesus expects us to show up! Jesus kept and taught them when He came to earth as one of us. The Holy Days teach God's plan of salvation. If we do not keep them, we do not rightly understand (Psalm 111:10). Jesus instituted the practice of foot washing on the evening of His last Passover and said for His people to follow His example or they'd have no part with Him. The spiritual Church of God will be keeping the Bible's commanded Passover service each year, which includes foot washing.

- **In the Old Testament Passover, an Israelite or foreigner had to be physically circumcised** (Exodus 12:48-49)—the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:9-14). In the New Testament and New Covenant Passover, we must be spiritually circumcised in the heart. *To keep the Passover, we must be baptized* and have hands laid on us and received the Holy Spirit. To be a true Christian, we must have the Holy Spirit and be led by it (Romans 8:9, 14).

Remember how foot washing pictures our baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit to be clean and walk in newness of life (Mark 16:16)

People ask if their baptism was valid. Not if you weren't totally immersed, and not if you didn't have hands laid on you by a true minister of God and received the Holy Spirit. Remember how Jesus told Nicodemus, "unless one is born of *water and the Spirit*, one cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

We've seen in the Bible that water, blood, Holy Spirit and fire are all involved in salvation and pictured by foot washing.

I hope God the Father is calling you (John 6:44) and opening your eyes to understand that for a straight path to the resurrection at Jesus' return you need to prove God exists, the Bible is His inspired truth, and where His true Church is. After this new understanding, you should normally be rebaptized. We should make becoming properly baptized the top priority in our life. Receiving the Holy Spirit puts us into the Church of God and enables us ready to keep the Passover with its foot washing.

After teaching about the foot washing and doing it for the disciples, Jesus said what applies to us today: "If you know these things, blessed [happy in the King James Bible] are you if you do them" (John 13:17).

Christ Our Passover: A Complete Sacrifice

The Passover service is the first of God’s seven annual festivals, commemorating the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us.

The unleavened bread and the wine represent Christ’s complete sacrifice for us *spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally*. Both remember Christ’s suffering and death. With utmost gratitude, we renew our total commitment to God the Father and Jesus Christ in the Passover ceremony.



The lamb’s blood, placed at the first Passover around the Israelites’ doorways, enabled the people to be “passed over” (physically spared) when God slew the firstborn males of Egypt. The lives of Israelite firstborn were thus redeemed (bought back or ransomed) by the blood of the lamb.

The Passover pictured redemption in Egypt, while the seven Days of Unleavened Bread pictured deliverance from Egyptian slavery in the Exodus. The Old Testament Passover prefigured a much greater redemption—by a much greater sacrifice.

The New Testament Passover pictures redemption and reconciliation to God, while the Days of Unleavened Bread show we are actually saved by Christ’s life in us (Romans 5:10).

Only Christ makes us worthy to take the Passover. We should not beat ourselves up.

“Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). We should give thanks for the bread and wine—and Christ’s supreme sacrifice.

Jesus said that unless we symbolically eat His flesh and drink His blood, we have no life in us (John 6:53).

“Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 1 Peter 3:18). Passover teaches us the magnitude of sin. It should powerfully motivate us to strive to never sin again.

Jesus Christ is the focal point of Christianity. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

He offered His body and blood to cover our sins and remove the death penalty.

- He took my place.
- Through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God the Father.
- Reconciliation grants us access to the Father and we can come boldly before His throne (Hebrews 4:16).
- Christ’s body and blood represent the gift of eternal life (John 6:54-56).

- Redemption will be complete in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:15-16).
- While the “body” and “blood” of Christ—represented by eating a small piece of unleavened bread and sipping a little wine—refer to the same sacrifice, there is a clear distinction in the meaning attached to each of the two parts of the service.

“And So Let Him Eat”

“ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:27-28).

Unleavened Bread—Representative of Christ’s Body

- Leaven pictures being puffed up with pride and vanity—“malice and wickedness.” Unleavened pictures “sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).
- The bread is unleavened because Jesus Christ *did no sin* and did *not deserve to suffer and die* in my place. Jesus was not blemished by sin [The Old Testament Passover lamb had to be “without blemish” (Exodus 12:5)]. He would have had to die for me if I were the only human because of my sins. He was *treated as if a sinner*—in my place!
- The bread pictures Jesus’ body—does not become it (transubstantiation) (Mark 14:22).
- His intense suffering began the night before His death: “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death” (Matthew 26:37-38).
- The bread pictures the Church of God, which Christ is the Head of. “For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17).
- Jesus Christ is *the unleavened bread of life* (John 6:53-54).

- He lives (abides) in us. “...My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ... I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6: 32-35). The bread symbolizes living a new way of life through Jesus Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).
- We show our willingness to *live by every Word of God* (Matthew 4:4).
- “We have been sanctified [set apart] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). “In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight, if indeed you continue in the faith” (Colossians 1:22-23).
- We show our *unity with Christ and with each member of the Body of Christ, the Church* (1 Corinthians 10:16). The Church is to “come together” to “eat this bread and drink this cup.” Communion of the “blood of Christ” and the “body of Christ” refers to the Church members sharing in the Passover service.
- “*By His stripes we are healed*” (1 Peter 2:4). Jesus was scourged (Matthew 27:26) and stripped; soldiers jammed a twisted crown of thorns on His head, spit on Him and mocked Him. He was carved with a whip. He could count all his bones and they were all out of joint, but none was broken (John 19:31-33; Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20).

“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But

when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 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” (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Many are “not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:29-30). Paul corrected the Corinthian brethren because they did not understand the significance of the Passover or its real meaning. They were in danger of being “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” and if they failed to properly judge themselves they would be “eat[ing] and drink[ing] judgment” to themselves.

- “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was *wounded for our transgressions*, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has *laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:4-6).
- Jesus was tortured for hours before He died and suffered intensely for each of us. His face was “marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14).
- Jesus experienced rejection, ridicule and betrayal. He felt dread—knew what was coming before the foundation of the world. In the garden He knew why the lights were coming!

Wine—Representative of Christ's Blood

- “But one of the soldiers [had] pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out” (John 19:34).
- We are “*redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 1:7). “According to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Life is in the blood (Genesis 9:4).
- “This is *My blood of the new covenant*” (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24)—Jesus is *Mediator of the new covenant*” (Hebrews 12:24). At Passover we renew our baptismal covenant with God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to *enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus* by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, *through the veil, that is, His flesh*” (Hebrews 10:19-20). “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is *our peace*” (Ephesians 2:13-14).
- His blood was “poured out for many *for the forgiveness of sins* (Matthew 26:28). “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
- His sacrificial death would *pay for sin's penalty of death* (Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:15). The death of the Creator is worth more than all of the humans created.
- Christ's shed blood should *free our conscience from guilt*. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the

ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:12-14). Too many Christians suffer from feelings of guilt after they have repented and asked for forgiveness. Taking the Passover wine should remind us that we are totally blameless and clean before God thanks to God’s imputed grace.

- Taking the wine is a type of *wedding proposal* to His people (Revelation 19:7-9).

Time to Again Say “I Do!”

- W**hat does taking the wine at the Passover service mean to you? It symbolizes amazing truths like:
- Having our sins forgiven
 - Being redeemed from sin’s penalty of death
 - Being reconciled to God the Father so we can have a relationship with Him and 24/7 access to His throne
 - Receiving the promise of eternal life.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians all give the main description of the wine as “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” Surprisingly, none of the main passages about the New Testament Passover mention it as a marriage covenant, so it’s easy to overlook this key aspect of the Passover service.

God and His Bible are amazingly consistent

In the Old Covenant at Sinai, Moses “took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.’” The people said “I do!” “And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words’” (Exodus 24:6-8).

Nothing is said there about it being a marriage covenant, but the preincarnate Jesus said, “I am married to you” (Jeremiah 3:14). “I was a husband to them” (31:32). Thirty-four other scriptures relate to this being a marriage covenant which Israel failed miserably to uphold. The death of Jesus annulled this covenant and marriage.

The New Covenant is also a marriage covenant

with Jesus Christ that we were baptized into—to become one with the Father, Jesus and each other. Each year we recommit to our baptismal marriage covenant at the Passover service.

“Christ’s presentation of wine as symbolic of His blood of the New Covenant was, in further symbolism, *a type of wedding proposal* to His people—looking forward to the “marriage of the Lamb” (Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God, “Passover,” p. 33).

Key scriptures show that this New Covenant is also a marriage covenant.

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and *His wife has made herself ready*.

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Revelation 19:7-8). Are we ready? I’ll always remember how radiant my wife Mary looked in her white gown. Are we examining ourselves to see how we are spiritually dressed?



Isaiah 54 prophesies about Israel being restored to the wife of the Lord. Verse 5: “For your Creator will be your husband” (NLT).

“For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” Paul’s comment in 2 Corinthians 11:2 brings to mind Jewish wedding customs:

Betrothal is a legal contract to marry over a shared cup of wine, with the groom committing to completely provide for his

betrothed from then on. Then usually about a year later the marriage takes place over a cup of wine that the rabbi blesses. Then the groom and bride both are given to sip from the cup, the bride following the groom and signaling her willingness to marry him.

Being the bride of Christ will bring wonderful blessings!

“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9).

- This is a major reason why the first resurrection will be “a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:29). The firstfruits—the Church of God—are resurrected to be the Bride of Jesus Christ. After that, it seems that those converted in the millennium and Great White Judgment will become children of Jesus and the Bride.
- The Bride will be given the top positions in the Kingdom of God, right under her Husband: Abraham and Sarah as Father and Mother of the Faithful; David over the 12 Tribes of Israel; an Apostle over each Tribe; Paul probably over the Gentiles; the firstfruit saints as kings, priests, judges, teachers and mayors. Those converted later will serve under them.

What a destiny! But we’d better watch out!

Remember how the disciples quarreling often and even on Passover night over who’d have the best positions in Christ’s Kingdom! They had already forgotten the lessons of the foot washing! We must not seek position to selfishly lord it over others; we must be humble servant leaders. When the firstborn get a double portion (Deuteronomy 20:17), it’s so they can responsibly serve the younger ones. Remember how Reuben tried to keep his brothers from killing Joseph (Genesis 37:21).

- Revelation 21:2 gives another reason to be part of the Bride: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Notice verses 9-10: “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he ... showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” The New Jerusalem is personified as the Bride. The Bride will get to live in it!

As in the Jewish wedding customs, Jesus the Bridegroom went back to the Father to prepare a place for His Bride, and the New Jerusalem on the new earth will be quite a place: 12,000 furlongs cubed is about 1,400 miles long, wide and high. This is about the driving miles between San Diego, California and Rapid City, South Dakota! Mt. Everest is only about 5.5 miles high. This city is 12 times higher than the space station. Perfect for those who love high ceilings!

The Holy of Holies in Solomon’s temple was patterned after the heavenly—cubed, 20 cubits (about 30 feet), twice the tabernacle dimensions.

We are eagerly looking forward to the Passover service where we will renew our baptismal marriage covenant with our husband Jesus Christ

We are betrothed now, and it is a serious agreement because this is our day of salvation (1 Peter 4:17).

Hopefully we are examining ourselves and finding ourselves in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). I remember how much examining and preparing I did before my wedding 33 years ago. How much I wanted to be married! And this is to the perfect mate Christ!

Let’s examine ourselves and prepare to again say “I do!”



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