

# Faith Is Action

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## THE LAST SUPPER

### THE BODY & THE BLOOD

PART ONE





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PART ONE

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### The Body & the Blood

*“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1Cor.11:23-26).*

As an orthodox Jew, Apostle Paul understood Passover. But only after becoming a born-again Christian, did he understand what Jesus instituted at His final Passover on the night He was betrayed. Paul was not there, of course. He was an enemy of Jesus Christ and His fol-

lowers. But after his conversion, Jesus appeared unto him, and one of the revelations He gave him was the significance of that *Last Supper*.

Jesus and His 12 disciples observed Passover that night just as His Jewish people had done for over 2000 years. He would have observed this annual feast from a little kid during His life on earth as Jesus of Nazareth, and this was probably His 30<sup>th</sup> time. But at this last Passover of His life on earth, He transformed it from the *Jewish Passover* to the seal of the *New Covenant*. His disciples did not comprehend the significance of what was taking place as they lifted the bread and cup to their mouths. It was years later that Paul — the apostle to the Gentiles—was given the significance and revelation and meaning of what Jesus did and said that night.

*“This bread is my body, broken for you.”* Isaiah prophesied how Messiah would suffer: *“He was*

wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa.53:5). These Hebrew terms speak of brutal beating, bruising and crushing His body.

“*This cup is the new testament in my blood.*” God had said that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. Under the old covenant, an innocent animal had to be slain. Jesus was to become the Lamb of God whose blood only needed to be shed once for all. A *testament* is the written will of a person and does not go into effect until the *testator* dies. Jesus is the *Testator*; and the New Testament did not go into effect until He died. It was activated and sealed by His blood that He shed at Pilate’s whipping post and on the cross.

The Jewish *Passover* commemorated the extraordinary event of the blood of the lamb upon the doorpost, which kept the death Angel away when he passed over their homes at midnight in the land of Goshen. *The Last Supper* commemorates the shedding of the blood of God’s perfect Lamb on the cross—Communion is all about His body and His blood. This is what Paul understood by direct revelation from Jesus Himself.

## Christ Our Passover

“*Purge out therefore the old*

*leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*” (1Cor.5:7-8).

In Scripture *leaven* symbolizes *sin*, so if you are saved, you are *unleavened*. We read here that leaven stands for *malice and wickedness*, which denote motive and deeds. This is why we must *purge out the old leaven*. (If you’re unsure what leaven is, it is *yeast* used in baking.). When Paul said, “*You are unleavened,*” he meant “*You are free from sin, because Christ is sacrificed for us as our Passover.*” In other words, as *Christians we keep Passover*—Don’t get nervous—I’ll explain.

We don’t keep it in the same way the Israelites did when they sacrificed a lamb out of the flock, which had to be repeated yearly. Christ, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed once for all (Heb.10:10-12), and He commanded us to observe the *Lord’s Supper* aka *Communion*—whatever you call it—as our Passover. Jesus said, “*Do this in remembrance of me... For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death until he comes*” (1Cor.11:24-26). It’s great to celebrate the beautiful, wonderful holidays of Easter and Christmas, but Jesus *commanded* us to observe only one: the Lord’s Supper, because He is our Passover.

*Passover* is an interesting Hebrew word—**PASCHAL**—literally means *to spare*. It originated during the tenth plague, when God spared Israel's firstborn while all of the firstborn of Egypt were slain at midnight—the death Angel *spared them—passed over* their homes that were marked with the lambs' blood. It evolved to refer to *the meal itself*, and then to *the lamb served at the meal*. Just like we associate eating turkey at Thanksgiving, on Passover Jews eat lamb. The difference between the Jews who lived before the destruction of the Temple in 70A.D. and today: They can no longer sacrifice the lamb upon the altar, because they have no temple and no priestly line. God made it clear to them: *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul”* (Lev.17:11). *“...And without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Heb.9:22). The Lamb of God had to be slain before the destruction of the Temple with its altar and priesthood, and Jesus the Jewish Messiah, was crucified over 30 years before.

When Paul said, *“Christ is our Passover,”* he meant *Christ is our Lamb*. In fact, this was the first title attributed to Jesus when He began His ministry. He was walking on the banks of the Jordan when John the Baptist saw Him and proclaimed, *“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”* (Jn.1:29). Isaiah prophesied: *“He is brought as a lamb to the*

*slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth”* (53:7).

When we partake of the New Covenant version of Communion, we are partaking of the body and blood of Jesus our Passover, because He is our Lamb. In order to get the full import of what this means, we need to understand where it all began, when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, recorded in the book of Exodus.

### The 10 Plagues

The Israelites had been in bondage in Egypt for over 400 years when God sent Moses to go before Pharaoh with his brother Aaron and the miracle rod God had made out of Moses' staff. God sent nine terrible plagues upon the land, and it's a shame all the people in Egypt had to suffer, because Pharaoh had a hard heart. When the person in charge is rebellious, they make everybody under them suffer along with them. This is what happened to the Egyptians.

God told Moses at the burning bush to tell Pharaoh: *“Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn. And I say unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me, and if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn”* (Ex.4:22-23). This is up front, before any of the plagues, God made His intentions clear. God claimed Israel, the seed of Abraham, as His firstborn from among the nations, and He demanded Pharaoh to let them go free.

But Pharaoh hardened his heart, and the plagues started coming. First, the water of the sacred Nile River turned into blood; then frogs were everywhere, even in their houses; then lice, then flies; then their animals were dying of terrible disease, and rotting carcasses were everywhere. After this came swarms of locust devouring their crops, followed by hail mixed with fire (which has happened in modern times). Then God sent three days of darkness that is so dense, it feels like it's grabbing onto you, and you can see absolutely nothing.

Just as miraculous as these plagues, was the extraordinary fact that not one of them occurred in the land of Goshen where the enslaved Hebrews lived in their ghetto. It's like they had an invisible force field around them. God protected them from these plagues which were designed specifically against the gods of Egypt. In all nine plagues Jehovah was executing judgment on one of their gods. They worshipped the god of the Nile, and God turned it into blood. They had a god for each plague, so I think God was being ironic, saying, "This is how I judge your gods." Still, Pharaoh hardened his heart.

Then God sent Moses with the warning that if he would not let the people go, the final judgment of the firstborn was next. Since God had performed every one of the previous plagues just as He had predicted—if nine straight plagues came to pass, wouldn't you think there's a very good chance the tenth one will too? And it

was getting scarier, because this time God was talking about *death!* All the other plagues were miserably tormenting, but there is no mention that besides the cattle, anyone died from them. Now God has said: "*I'm going to take the life of every firstborn.*" In a dynasty like Pharaoh's, the firstborn was next in line to the throne. You would think Pharaoh would've heeded this warning, but he did not.

While God had protected the Hebrews from the nine plagues, this one would be different. In order for them to escape the death Angel, they had to do something.

### A Lamb for A House

*"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb"* (Ex.12:3-4).

Every household had to have a lamb, and if they didn't have enough people in the house to eat the whole lamb in one night, they were to go in with their neighbors in the same situation, because the whole lamb had to be eaten before they left Egypt

The next verse is important, because it tells what kind of lamb would be acceptable: "*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first*

*year: ye shall take it out from the sheep...*" (v.5). It had to be in the prime of life and healthy, without blemish inside and out. At age 33, Jesus was killed in the prime of life, and Isaiah prophesied that He was sinless, and there was no deceit in his mouth (Isa.53:9), and Peter stated: *"Who did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth"* (1Pet.2:22). This is why He qualified to be the Lamb of

*with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.... And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover."* Notice, it is the **LORD'S PASSOVER**—not the Jews!

*"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both*



God to take away the sins of the world, because sin cannot atone for sin.

God further instructed Moses that they were to keep the lamb for four days and kill it on the fourth day: *"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast*

*man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt"* (Ex.12:7-13).

## When I See the Blood

God was giving them a warning. He warned Pharaoh, and he didn't listen. Now he told Moses to warn His people. They had a few days to prepare, and the only preparation that would save them from the death Angel was *the blood of a pure lamb without blemish, in the prime of his life—a perfect lamb*. They had to slay the lamb and take its blood and strike it on the header above the door and on both sides. They had to *strike the blood*. There is a tone of violence here and makes me think of Jesus being *struck on His back with the whip* at Pilate's whipping post, and the blood ran out for our healing!

It's also interesting that Jesus said in John 10:9, "*I am the door of the sheep*." He was saying, "I protect the sheep, and no one's going to enter in and get to My sheep." He went on to say, "*Neither shall any man can pluck them out of my hand*" (v.28). He is the door, and His blood is the seal on the door that Satan cannot trespass. I love Romans 5:8-9: "*But God commended 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 through him*." Whenever you see *much more* or *how much more* in Scripture, you need to pay attention, because it's going to be good. *How much more shall we be saved from wrath to come?* Let me put it this way: If the blood of a lamb out of a natural flock could keep the plague of death from touching them, *how much more*

*will the blood of Christ save you and me from wrath to come!*

## The Case of the Firstborn

For the first nine plagues they were spared because God divinely protected them. But not this time—if they did not obey and put the blood of the lamb over the door, they would not have been spared—the firstborn in every house would have died. My personal opinion is, not only would all the firstborn have died, *but they all would have died*. Remember, God had told Moses to tell Pharaoh, "*Israel is my firstborn*." There are other verses in the OT where God calls Israel His firstborn. God sees Israel as His firstborn out of the nations (Ref. Deut.32:8-9). And to make it more interesting, Hebrews 12:23 states that we the believers are "*the church of the firstborn*." God looks at us as His firstborn, because we are in Christ, and He is God's firstborn Son (Rom.8:29).

In any case, it drives home the point, *you better be under the blood*. Get saved and get under the blood, and *stay under the blood*. If you are under the blood when the death Angel comes, and he doesn't have permission, he can't touch you. When evil comes, when the devil sends demonic forces against you, God said that he will pass over you!

They had to have the blood of protection on the door, and that wasn't all: they had to eat the lamb roasted with fire, and it had to be eaten with two things—*unleavened bread and*

*bitter herbs*. The bitter herbs were to remind them of the bitterness of their 430 years of servitude in Egypt. When Jews today have their Seder service at Passover, they eat a bitter herb like horseradish which is to remind them of how terribly their fathers suffered in the land of Egypt. The second thing they had to eat was *unleavened bread*. We read how they would not have time to wait for the bread to rise; they were leaving in a hurry! They were to have their shoes and coats on, their staves in hand, ready to go, and they took their unleavened dough with them, “*bound up in their clothes on their shoulders*” (v.34). (Maybe that’s where we get the saying, “*Eat on the run.*”) God’s intent was clear: *Leave the leaven in Egypt!*

### Did I Say “No Leaven”?

This was not a one-time meal. It was ordained by God to be an annual observance: “*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.... Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: (not only can’t you eat it, it can’t be in your houses) for whosoever eats that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a*

*stranger* (a non-Israelite living among Israelites), *or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread*” (Ex.12:14, 19-20).

I think God is making a point here! Four times in six verses He said: “*No leaven! No leaven! No leaven! And no leaven!*” In chapter 13, He repeated it three more times. In Leviticus 23 & Deuteronomy 16, He repeated it three more times. I found *10 times* where God said, “**Do not eat leaven!**” So, what’s up with this leaven thing? What is the big deal about leaven?

To prepare wheat to make bread, you must let it set over time. It is not known how or who started making bread to rise. Maybe somebody found out accidentally: He started on the dough and then was distracted and put it on the side; forgot about it, and came back two weeks later, and it was all puffed up, so he decided to go ahead and bake it to see what would happen. Once it came out of the oven, he decided he liked it.

*A brief summary of the process of fermentation:* Wheat has within itself carbohydrates, starches, and sugars integral to wheat, but there is also a fungus in the grain. The fungus begins to eat the sugars in the natural wheat, and as it eats, it secretes gases. The gases make bubbles which fill up with air, and this makes the dough puff-up. One of these gases is *alcohol*, and it’s why some people think when fresh bread is being baked, it smells like beer. It’s the same basic fermentation



process to make beer or to make bread.

God wanted His people to have only *unfermented bread*—no leaven, no yeast, no fungus, no alcohol—just plain bread. He was very emphatic about it as we have seen. And lest anyone think this is strictly an OT prohibition, we started in the NT where Paul said, “*Let us keep the feast of unleavened bread.*” This got me to thinking about the debate of whether Jesus and the disciples would have drunk *fermented wine* at the *Last Supper*.

## Wine Or Grape Juice?

While preparing this message, we received a letter from someone asking if we should use real wine or grape juice for Communion. This person only drinks grape juice, but other people were saying that they use wine. He wanted to know if it was okay. I have done much research on this subject, and I am not going to answer all of the issues here, however, this is what I saw about leaven as I studied this message:

God said that they could not have even a crumb of leaven in the house the whole week of Passover. Today, when Jewish people prepare for Passover, for a whole week they clean their houses from stem to stern—maybe that’s how *spring house cleaning* got started. The kitchen is scrubbed spic and span, and a set of dishes only used for Passover are freshly washed. After they have thoroughly cleaned the whole house, they go around with lit-

tle crumb brushes and symbolically brush crumbs, as if to say, “*There’s not a crumb of leaven in my house!*”

Because they have to get rid of all the leaven in their houses, it means emptying their cabinets and pantries of all flour, cake mixes, baked goods, cookies—*Little Debbie’s*—anything containing yeast. They don’t want to throw it in the trash, so it’s a practice of some to go to their Gentile neighbors and sell it to them for a dollar or so, and say, “I’ll come and buy it back next week.” Here’s the point: *They take it seriously—no leaven in the house!*

So if God said, “*You shall not eat leavened bread—fermented bread,*” do you really think He wants you to drink *fermented grape juice—alcoholic wine?*

## The Fruit of the Vine

The Passover meal consisted of *four cups* which were drunk at specific points in the meal. Matthew records when Jesus took the cup—would have been the final cup—He blessed it and said: “*This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom*” (Matt.26:28-29).

We know *leaven* is symbolic of *sin* and only *unleavened—unfermented bread* can be served at Communion, so it would be preposterous to think it would be okay to serve *fermented grape juice—alcoholic wine*.

The blood of the sinless Lamb of God would not be symbolized by corrupted, fermented wine. Furthermore, Jesus called it “*fruit of the vine*” which refers to *fresh grape juice* and not fermented wine. Jesus refused to drink fermented wine even when He was hanging on the cross and cried: “*I thirst!*” They gave Him “*wine mingled with myrrh,*” but when He tasted it, He refused to drink it (Matt.27:34, Mk.15:22).

There are two kinds of wine, *fermented* and *unfermented*; just as there are sweet cider and hard cider. In OT Hebrew, writers used several words to distinguish between fermented and unfermented wine. In the NT only one Greek word is used to describe both, but by understanding the context, it is easy to determine which is meant. For instance, Jesus said in Mark 2:22: “*And no one puts new wine into old bottles (animal skins); or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, and the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.*” Clearly, *new wine* refers to fresh, unfermented wine. This is supported by Haggai 1:11: “*I called for drought upon the corn and the new wine.*” Obviously, this refers to growing grapes. If the wine were in the wineskins, the drought would have no effect upon it.

## The Midnight Miracle

“*And it came to pass, that at midnight, the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto*

*the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead*” (v.29).

You talk about a cry at midnight when the death Angel came. How many families were impacted? We are talking about hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of people, and there was not a house in Egypt where at least one person died: rich, poor, educated, uneducated; it didn’t matter. The wailing of mamas and daddies when they realized their beloved children were dead filled the night with terror. When Pharaoh realized his beloved son was dead, he rose up with all of his ministers and called for Moses to come at once. When Moses came, he said, “Take your people and your cattle, and get out of Egypt NOW!” The Egyptian people wanted them out, and they pressed them to go, lamenting: “*We all be dead men!*” They probably thought, *How do we know we won’t be next? Pharaoh has ticked their God off to the point we don’t know what He might do!*

They not only told them to go, they started giving them silver and gold, taking off their gold earrings and jewelry and giving it to them. God was paying them for their 400 years of slavery!

“*And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out*

*from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations”* (vv.41-42).

Think about it—this should encourage somebody—after 430 long years, *God moved in one night!* Suddenly, God moved and brought them out. When things in your life seem like they’re delayed and a long time coming, and you feel like it’s never going to happen, keep your eyes on the horizon. You see nothing, and then out of nowhere—boom—God moves and opens the door wide, and everything begins to fall in place. I’ve seen this in my personal life. You can never give up, because if God be for you, who can be against you? It doesn’t matter about Pharaoh, and how mighty and strong he was, that he was the king of the greatest civilization of that time; if God is for you, He can move at midnight and turn everything around. Some of God’s best work and greatest blessings in the Scriptures happened at midnight. Paul and Silas were in jail, their backs bleeding from a beating, and at midnight as they sang and praised God, an earthquake rocked the jail, the doors opened, and their shackles fell off. *God can give you a midnight miracle!*

## Passover Prerequisites

They were to keep this Passover meal forever. It was only for those in covenant with God. No stranger, non-Israelite, no hired servant could eat the

Passover unless he was first circumcised. Why did God say this? Circumcision was the sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant, and why every Jewish boy on day eight is circumcised, and if he is not, he is cut off from the Jewish nation and from all the Jewish blessings, according to the covenant God gave to Abraham. It is a sign they are in a covenant relationship with God. What does this say to us? It says, *Sinners cannot take Communion—Communion is for believers*—those who are in a covenant relationship with God

This is why my dad, (R.G. Hardy) would get upset when he thought about people who carelessly and casually go once a month, every first Sunday or whatever, and take Communion, when they were not right with God. It can become so common to them, because anything that’s familiar, after a while loses its value and its specialness. After a while, people may not be as mindful and reverent as we ought to be. Some people think, *Well, I took Communion and nothing happened to me*, and don’t realize they are bringing on themselves the wrath of God (which we will discuss next month).

The precedent was set: They had to be in a covenant relationship with God in order to partake of the Passover meal. It was a miracle meal. We could call it “*the meal that heals!*”

## Next Month:

Part Two: *The Meal That Heals*