

Faith Is Action

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Psalms 105-107 chronicle the journeys of the nation of Israel in a poetic form, making it very easy and enjoyable to read. Psalm 105 particularly chronicles the Exodus, and verse 37 says: “*He brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there was not feeble person among their tribes.*” Now, that’s what I call a miracle! Over a million people *and not one feeble—not one diseased* person among them!

We know Moses was 80, Aaron was 83, and Mariam was 90, and there were a lot more old people with achy bones, arthritis in their joints, and other ailments from hardship and age that had taken a toll on their bodies; especially considering they were slaves, working like dogs. Do you think they had a health plan? Did they go to the doctor’s office regularly and get their blood pressure checked? No, if anything, their lives were shortened because of the abusive treat-

ment they had been subjected to. But when they left Egypt, there was not one frail, weak, or sick person among them, because they obeyed God and *ate the lamb*.

As we showed in Part One (March issue), *we have a Lamb!* The Passover lamb of the Israelites was just a shadow of the true Lamb of God. In the Book of Hebrews we are told that the things in the OT that pertain to Moses, the law, and the sacrifices, were *a shadow of that which was to come*. The Passover lamb was a shadow, *but Jesus was casting the shadow, because He is the Lamb of God*.

It always amazes me, in the book of Revelation, when John sees somebody sitting on the throne, he describes Him: “*a Lamb as it has been slain*” (5:6). The meaning in the Greek is *freshly slain*. Even in the Millennium, when we are in Heaven, Jesus will still be the Lamb of God! We are going to sing a new song: “*Worthy*

is the Lamb! For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood!” (v.9)

Healing in the Lamb

The Passover lamb they ate on the night of their Exodus was so powerful it healed everyone. After their escape to the wilderness, God told Moses to give them His healing covenant: *“If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that heals thee”* (Ex.15:26). This is God’s declaration of His Name—**JEHOVAH RAPHA**—*the Lord our Healer.*” (Hebrew: **ANI ADONAI RAPHEKA**: *I am the Lord that heals thee.*) The condition was to keep His ordinances. In Part One, we discussed these ordinances, and number one was *to keep the feast of Passover every year*. And apostle Paul said that we are to *keep this feast of unleavened bread, because Christ our Passover is slain for us* (1Cor.5:7-8).

“And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” (Ex.23:25). God proved it that night when over a million people walked out of Egypt, and there was not one on a cane, or a crutch, or a gurney, or a wheelchair; nobody was feeble or hobbling along. *He removed sickness*

from the midst of them. And this is what God will do for you and me, because Hebrews 7:22 states, *“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”*

“But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb.8:6). I ask you: If healing was guaranteed in the old covenant, and the new covenant is better, *than isn’t healing guaranteed in the new?*

Of course! But we too must *serve the Lord*—obey His Word. We saw that if they would obey God and eat the Passover lamb and unleavened bread—every year, God would keep them in good health. We discussed in Part One, Paul’s revelation that *Christ is our Passover sacrificed for us,*” and how he received directly from the Lord that the unleavened bread and grape juice at the *Last Supper* represented His broken body and shed blood, and transformed the *Jewish Passover* of the Old Covenant to the seal of the New Covenant.

Healing in the Bread

During Jesus’ ministry, a Syrophenician woman, a Gentile, came to Him asking Him to deliver her daughter who was at home, grievously vexed of the devil. She addressed Him, *“O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me...”* (Mat.15:22). This is significant because it was a Messianic title—a covenantal title. She recognized what many Jews did not: Jesus’ heir-

ship to the throne of David. But as a non-Jew, she had no claim to Jewish blessings. John 1:17 says, “*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*” This account took place in the small intertestamental period in Jesus’ ministry before He went to the cross. On the cross, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down (Eph.2:13), and the door was flung wide open to “*whosoever.*”

Jesus ignored her, but she continued to cry after Him until it got on the disciples’ nerves. They said to Jesus: “*Send her away!*” They misinterpreted His lack of response for apathy; that He didn’t care. But Jesus answered: “*I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*” (vv.23-24). He was telling her that she did not qualify. But what she did next is precious: “*Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me*” (v.25).

Jesus replied: “*It is not meet (proper) to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs*” (v.26). (Dogs referred to Gentiles.) Jesus was saying, “*Healing is the children’s bread,*” and He meant *the Jews*, because He was the Jewish Messiah. But she did not get offended—she actually agreed! She said, “*Truth, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters’ tables.*” Then Jesus said, “*O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto you as you will—Go home— your daughter is healed!*” (vv.27-28). When she got home, she found her daughter completely whole.

She had been healed that very hour!

All she asked for was *a crumb!* She was saying, “*I know I’m not worthy of the children’s bread—I get that—I am a Gentile, but You could have mercy and give me a crumb, because even dogs get to eat crumbs, and all my daughter needs is a crumb.*”

I say to you: If a crumb from the children’s bread could heal her daughter who was grievously vexed of the devil, *and you are a child*, and can have more than crumbs—you can have a whole slice; you can have a whole loaf—*how much more will the bread of Jesus’ body heal you?* Are you a child of God? Is Christ your Passover Lamb? Is Jesus your Healing bread?

When you come to the Lord’s Table, and partake of the bread, remember He said, “*This is My body broken for you.*” Remember, His back was broken, the flesh ripped open until even His inwards could be seen, and every stripe was for *the healing of your body*. Before He bore our sins in His body to the tree, He wore the stripes for our healing in His back at Pilate’s whipping post. Peter, looking back at the cross, said, “*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.... By whose stripes you were healed*” (1Pet.2:24). Healing is just as much a part of the new covenant as salvation, and it belongs to you as a child of God.

The True Bread of Heaven

The only miracle of Jesus record-

ed by all four Gospel writers took place right before the feast of Passover: The feeding of the 5000 with two fish and five loaves of bread, *not counting women and children* (Jn.6:1-14). If we attach a wife and kids to these men, because they were family-oriented and had big families, we can imagine it could have been 20,000-25,000 people. Jesus took a young lad's lunch of two fish and five loaves of bread and blessed it, multiplying it, and gave it to the disciples to distribute. He had them make the people sit down in groups of 50s and feed them. When everyone had eaten, and all were full and satisfied, there were 12 baskets left over.

If you had been there and seen that miracle, I think it would have blown your mind. I think you would have been thinking and talking about it for days, if not weeks. *But what we are about to read happened the very next day!* Jesus was talking to the Jewish leaders, and incredibly, *they asked Him to give them a sign so they could believe on Him!* (Jn.6:30). Somebody should have gotten one of those leftovers baskets and poured it over their heads! They had just seen or heard about this supernatural creative miracle. This goes to show, if you don't want to believe, God could send an angel, a trumpet blast, lightning bolts, and you still wouldn't believe.

They said to Him, *"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat"* (v.31). They were saying that *Moses gave their fathers a*

sign when he gave them the bread from Heaven. Oh, they shouldn't have said that! I would have been upset when they said, *"Show us a sign,"* yet Jesus let it go by. But when they said that it was Moses who gave their fathers manna, He wasn't going to overlook that. He corrected them: *"Truly, truly, I say unto you, Moses did not give you that bread from Heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread. For the bread of God is he which comes down from Heaven and gives life unto the world* (vv.32-33).

The bread of life is not *a thing*—the bread of life is *a person*—the bread of life is *"the Word of God who was made flesh and dwelt among us"* (Jn.1:14).

They answered Him: *"Lord, evermore give us this bread"* (v.34). I believe they thought He was going to rain down manna from Heaven like it rained down on their fathers in the wilderness. I think they were expecting Him to do this; after all, they saw Him multiply bread the day before. But Jesus replied, *"I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst"* (v.35). In the old covenant, God dealt with man through his outer man, but in the new covenant, He deals with us in our inner man. This is why you must be born again, because the natural man receives not the things of God; for they are foolishness to him (1Cor.2:14). What He was about to reveal about His body being the bread went right over their heads.

Jesus replied, “Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and they are dead.... If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread I will give is my flesh...” When they heard this, they said, “How can He give us His flesh to eat?”(vv.50-52).

blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day” (vv.53-54). He was talking about eating the bread and drinking the juice of the Passover meal, because after the cross, they would represent His body and blood. Moreover, Jesus was clear that unless



Were they thinking *cannibalism*, maybe? They actually argued among themselves saying: “How can we eat his flesh?” How, indeed?

Jesus pressed in, “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my

you partake of this meal, you have no spiritual life in you.

There may be some who are thinking this is a foolish message, but those who are spiritual understand what the bread of life is. Jesus repeated three times: “I am the bread of life; I am the true bread come down from

Heaven.” We are being told something extremely important, because it is directly related to *Passover* aka *the Last Supper* aka *Communion*. And this is the one observance Jesus specifically mandated His Church to keep (1Cor.11:23-26). (The other is water baptism.) So it is important we understand what we are doing when we partake of Communion.

The Matzoh Bread

On the night of His betrayal, at *the Last Supper* with His disciples, the Lord took the bread and blessed it. He would have prayed, “*Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.*” When you look at a piece of MATZOH—*unleavened bread*, it’s flatter than a pancake with stripes and little holes. These stripes resemble what Isaiah 53:5 described: “*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.*” And He was *pierced*. They pierced His hands and His feet, and they pierced His head with thorns.

MATZOH is made from flour and water and nothing else. First the rolls of dough are repeatedly *beaten* by men. Then the roll is flattened out and rolled over with a large metal roller that has rows of sharp metal pins that pierce the dough with holes. You can see the stripes and piercings in the MATZOH served at the Jews’ SEDER meal at Passover, and they don’t even realize what they mean.

The Psalmist and the prophets spoke of Messiah being pierced hundreds of years before the Romans’ use of execution by crucifixion: “*They pierced my hands and my feet*” (Ps.22:16). Zechariah’s prophecies are specific: “*And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son...*” (Zech.12:10). John referenced this exact verse in his account of Jesus’ crucifixion in his Gospel (Jn.19:37). Zechariah further described: “*And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends*” (Zech.13:6).

In the opening of his great Revelation, John recorded of the second return of the risen Lord of glory: “*Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of him*” (Rev.1:7). On that day, His Jewish brethren shall behold Him and realize He is there Messiah.

Jesus was also pierced in His forehead by the crown of thorns. Thorns are symbolic of the curse that came upon the Earth when Adam and Eve sinned. And God said: “*Cursed is the ground for your sake.... Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you*” (Gen.3:17-18). A crown symbolizes authority of one who reigns. When the soldiers placed a crown of thorns upon Jesus’ head, they unwittingly crowned Him King of the curse. Jesus bore the cursed thorns upon His brow to free

us from the curse. He also became a curse by hanging on the tree (Deut.21:23), as Paul stated in Galatians 3:13: “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.*”

This Is My Body

After Jesus blessed the bread, He broke it and said, “*Take eat: This is my body broken for you...*” (v.24). When you break a piece of MATZOH, it makes a snapping sound. It would have made an impression on the disciples. Later, they would look back at what Isaiah had looked forward to: “*Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.... by whose stripes ye were healed*” (Isa. 53:5, Mt. 5:17, 1Pet.2:24).

Another PASSOVER ritual the Jews observe is the **AFIKOMEN**: At the beginning of the meal, a plate of three pieces of MATZOH, piled one on top of the other, is lifted up. Then the *middle* piece is removed and broken in two. The broken MATZOH is then wrapped in a linen table napkin and hidden. No one knows why it is *three pieces of MATZOH* or why *the middle* piece is selected. Near the end of the meal, they have the children go look for it, and the one who finds it, gets a prize. They don’t realize when they do this, they are symbolizing the pierced, striped, broken body of Jesus, wrapped it in a linen cloth, hiding it just like He was hidden in the tomb for three days. Then on

the third day, He arose, guaranteeing us the prize of eternal life! They have no idea the **AFIKOMEN** ritual symbolizes the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of **JESUS MESSIAH**—the second member of the *Trinity*!

After Jesus ate the bread, He took the cup of juice and blessed it: “*Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth the fruit of the vine. This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do in remembrance of me*” (v.25). This is the revelation Jesus gave to apostle Paul, when He explained: “*For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death until he come*” (v.26). Whenever we do this, and we must do it at least once a year, we are showing the Lord’s death until He comes. God instituted this to be observed at least once a year to honor the death of His Son. It was a great miracle when He brought them out of Egypt, but it was a greater miracle when He brought you and me out of the wilderness of sin into the Promise Land of eternal life, and that is something to celebrate.

The Proper Reverence

There is one more thing Paul wrote—a warning not to take Communion lightly, casually, or irreverently: “*Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that*

cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (a euphemism for death) (vv.27-30).

Paul was saying, "Don't come *unworthily to the Lord's Supper*, or God will find you guilty of offending the broken body and shed blood of His Son." He will not tolerate irreverence to the sacrifice of His Son, and if He was your son, you wouldn't either. The Greek word *unworthily* simply means *improperly*; doing something without the proper manner corresponding to the nature of the event. We should understand this is a solemn event. It is not a party. Do not come disrespectfully to *the Lord's Table*, because when you do, God said that He is offended, because *you have not discerned the Lord's body*.

Let's clear something up: *Unworthily does not mean you're not worthy*, because, Folks, *nobody is worthy*. It is understood Paul was talking to Christians; to believers—not sinners. We've already established (Part One) sinners do not take Communion. Sinners are ineligible.

If the blood of God's Lamb has been applied to your life, you are worthy; you can't get any more worthy than this. One of my favorite scriptures is Hebrews 2:11, "*For both he that sanctifies* (that would be Jesus) *and they who are sanctified* (that would be us) *are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them*

brethren." If He sanctified you, then in God's sight, *you are as sanctified as Jesus is*. In fact, Paul said in 1Cor. 6:30, He has become our redemption and our sanctification. If your sins are under the blood, *they are as far as the east is from the west*, so get over it when the devil whispers that you are unworthy! I say this, because there are some Christians who let the devil beat them up forever. You can't go back and change what happened in the past—it's over, and living with regrets will only make you one miserable person and those around you. What's under the blood, let's put it behind us, "*forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forward to the rapture-resurrection*" (Phil.3:13).

So *what* does it mean to partake of Communion improperly? If we don't understand what we are doing, it's very serious—we are eating damnation to ourselves. In other words, not only will you not get a blessing, you will be eating damnation. We often ask the question, *If there is healing in the stripes of Jesus, and the gifts of healing in the Church, why are some people sick?* I'm not saying that this is the reason for every sickness, but I will repeat what Paul said: Some are sick, and some have even died from their sickness, because they have not discerned the Lord's body. I want to know what this means, because I sure don't want to do it. I believe it breaks down to three things:

Number one we have discussed: *This is not just juice and matzoh bread*. As far as God's concerned, *it's*

the flesh and blood of His Son. When Jesus told the Jews that they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood, or they would not have spiritual life and be resurrected, they thought He meant cannibalism, but He meant this meal. Don't come joking and laughing like it's a party; it's sacred to God. Paul also admonished not to come hungry like it's a meal; rather eat at home (v.34).

Number two: *Not discerning brothers and sisters in Christ who are the Lord's body.* Paul said in Eph. 5:30: "*For we are members of his flesh and of his bone and of his body,*" and in 1Cor. 12:27, "*Now are ye the body of Christ and members in particular; that there should be no schisms in the body, and members should have the same care one for another.*"

This means no divisions, no separations. When we understand our brothers and sisters in Christ are the Lord's body, we won't talk to them just any kind of way. Sometimes I'm shocked at the way some Christians *talk to* other Christians, flipping off with their mouths, and *about* others, running them down. If someone has done wrong, you have a right to correct him or her; you have a right to air it out; to go to him/her discreetly and say, "We need to talk about this," but you do not have a right to talk to them in an ugly, hateful way. The Bible calls this the *sin of malice*. We read that we must eat *the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth and not the leavened bread of malice and wickedness* (1Cor.5:7)

If you harbor something in your heart against someone, have a grudge, a long standing offense, you should make it right before you take Communion. You do not have a right to go to someone else about them either: "*Debate your cause with your neighbor himself and discover not your secret to another*" (Pro.25:9). Proverbs 6 states there are seven interpersonal things that are an abomination to the Lord, and one of them is "*sowing discord among brethren*" (v.19). If there are some people you just don't mesh well with, you don't have to be their best buddy and go out to dinner with them, and go shopping with them. If your personalities rub each other the wrong way, you don't have to hang out with them, but you can't talk hateful to them. Realize that when we wound a brother or sister in the Lord's body, we are wounding Jesus.

Husbands and Wives: If you are always screaming at one another, shouting at one another and calling each other names; yelling at the kids and calling them names; saying things like "*You're stupid!*" and worse, make it right before you partake of this holy meal. We must clear these matters up beforehand, because when we mistreat others in the body of Christ, we're not discerning *they too are the Lord's body*. Maybe you never understood this before, but you do now. We need to be sure there's nothing between us and the Lord. In order for there to be nothing between us and the Lord, there can't be anything between us and anyone else in the body of Christ.

Number three: *Your body is the Lord's body: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"* (1Cor.3:16-17).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Cor. 6:19-20).

Your body is the Lord's body, and He bought you at great price—the price of the shed blood of Jesus, which we drink symbolically in the juice of Communion. Sin defiles the body. If you are living in sin, or falling habitually into sin, you are defiling the temple of the living God. We know the whole category of sins; there's a bunch of them, but Paul specified in this same passage, *"The body is for the Lord and not for fornication"* (1Cor.6:13). The body is not for sexual sin, and Paul said that every sin that a person does, he will be judged for, but when a person sins sexually, *"he sins against his own body,"* because he defiles the temple of the living God (1Cor.6:18). Things that defile the temple of the Lord: smoking, drinking, taking illicit drugs, sleeping around, and if you keep falling into these, you need your temple *"cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit"* (2Cor.7:1).

The Remedy

Paul said, *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup"* (v.28). I love the Lord—He is so gracious. *He doesn't want to shame us or embarrass us.* If we will go to the Lord whenever we're convicted by the Holy Spirit, it can remain between us and God. If we continue to let it go, after a while God may have to uncover it, so He can help us. Sometimes, our leaders need to get involved, and that's better than going on in our sin and being *"condemned and judged with the world."* But first He allows us to examine our own selves and judge ourselves with an honest heart: *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world"* (vv.31-32).

Today, people are quick to cry *"Foul ball!"* at the mention of *judgment and condemnation* as though it is an unbiblical and unchristian teaching—let alone *chastening of the Lord.* Here Paul has clearly stated that taking Communion unworthily has consequences. But we can avoid these by examining ourselves in the light of Scripture and making things right where we fall short.

Paul exhorted: *"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another"* (v.33). The term *tarry* in Greek means *to abide, to remain.* In other words, in the corporate Communion service, we are to come together as one body, because

we are one body—the body of Christ. When we come together in unity, without divisions (which were prevalent in the church of Corinth), the atmosphere is tuned for healing: physical, emotional, spiritual, for the individual, as well as that local church body.

He concluded: *“And the rest will I set in order when I come”* (v.34). Apparently, there were other matters regarding the *Lord’s Supper* at Corinth that needed to be addressed but could wait till his next visit. But these he wrote of were too important to wait, and so we should take them to heart.

The Remembrance

The thing that excites me—if there are negative consequences for taking Communion irreverently—it stands to reason that there are comparatively greater positive blessings for taking it in reverence and good faith! Instead of “damnation, weakness, sickness, and death”—we can receive *blessing, strength, healing, and life!* Jesus commanded us: *“Remember”*—*Remember what the bread and cup mean every time you take Communion.* As we put the bread in our mouths, let us claim the promises:

“Lord, I remember, You gave Your body to be broken for my healing, and by Your stripes I was healed! I remember You are the Bread of Life, and healing is the children’s bread, and now as I take this bread of Communion, I receive the life that is in You.”

As we drink the cup that symbolizes the shed blood of the Lamb,

“Lord, I remember that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and Your pure, sinless, sickless blood is a divine transfusion to carry life to every cell, fiber, tissue, and organ in my body. The same resurrection power that raised You from the dead is quickening my mortal body, and everything that is not compatible with the life that is in You must be cast out.”

The saints in Revelation triumph over the adversary, Satan: *“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony”* (12:11). No matter what opposition of the evil one you are facing, you are an overcomer by the blood of Jesus and His Word which you remember and declare. When I partake of the Lord’s Table, I testify: *“I am healed by the stripes of Jesus and by blood of the Lamb.”*