

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME (PASSOVER)

Morgan County Correctional Complex Chapel, April 4, 2009

[Opening Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:17-26: ¶Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

23 ¶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: 24 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. 25 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 ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.]

Good Morning my friends. We're going to be reflecting today on the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We're going to look at the sacrifice the Creator made in order to make salvation possible for us. We're going to remember the price that was paid – the life that was laid down so we could have opportunity to live forever – that we might become the Sons of God. We're going to look at the example Christ provided as our High Priest, our King and the Lamb of God.

As you can see I've pulled back the cloth on our baptismal pool so you can read the title of today's message, "In remembrance of Me." If you would, please open your Bibles to the book of John, Chapter 18 – John 18. We'll be using John's account as our main guide today following the flow of events surrounding the death of Jesus Christ.

The year is AD 31, Jesus and His disciples have just finished an early Passover meal, the Last Supper, in an upper room some 24 hours before the Jews would begin their observance.

Christ had shown and taught His followers many things this evening. He taught them about leadership and service in His Kingdom, as He humbled Himself and washed their feet. He warned them of His impending death and instituted new symbols of bread and wine, illustrating His soon-to-be broken body and shed blood. He prophesied about the

future, about the persecution His followers would endure and the Comforter they would receive upon His final departure ... He informed them of a trader in their midst.

Yet, despite all Jesus taught His disciples this evening, and the preceding three and a half years of His earthly ministry, it would be another four days and five nights before the fullness of God's plan became apparent to them. It would take still another 40 days of teaching and 10 days of waiting before their conversions would be complete at the feast of Pentecost.

But this night these men couldn't see much further than their own mortality, and after supper they retreated with their Lord over the brook Kidron, to the base of the Mount of Olives and the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus pled there with His Father to spare Him the trial at hand and after receiving the answer to His prayer, one of the 12 disciples who had left the group earlier, returned. John 18, verse 3:

[John 18:3-8, 12-14, 19-24: Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: ... 12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 ¶And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. ... 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.]

Now, I want to pause here and bring in an account recorded in both the books of Matthew and Mark of Jesus' appearance before Caiaphas. Mark 14, verse 55 reads: "And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together" (vv. 55-56).

Even Jesus advocated in Matthew 18:16 the Law's proscription "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word ... be established" – a direct reference to Scripture in Deuteronomy and Numbers (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Numbers 35:30). And Caiaphas, knowing the Law, saw his problem in that "at the mouth of [any] one witness [Jesus should] not be put to death," or at least *not by the law from which the high priest derived his authority*. The account continues:

[Mark 14:57-64: *And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither so did their witness agree together. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.*]

Now Caiaphas had solidified his committee in charging Jesus with the capital crime of blasphemy. Yet this council, which was created in the time between the testaments, could not exact a death sentence but were forced to defer their action to the Roman authority. And further still, in his zeal Caiaphas had violated the very law he hoped to have the Romans enforce, not only in his blasphemy against Christ, the Son of God, but by transgressing the confines of the very office in which he held.

You see the Jews recognized Joseph Caiaphas as the high priest of Israel, God's chosen people, and that office was dictated by ordinance of the ceremonial law. Notice what Moses cautioned Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 10:6, "Uncover not your heads, **neither rend your clothes**; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon **all the people...**" The ordinance is repeated in 21:10. Bullinger's Companion Bible reaffirms that "this [act of Caiaphas ripping his clothing] was strictly forbidden." The Cornerstone Encyclopedia points out that "If the high priest sinned, he brought guilt upon the whole people," Leviticus 4:3.

Now why does all this even matter? Well, for me, I have a hard time relating to Jesus Christ as my high priest. I don't know any high priest in the flesh, and we're two thousand years removed from worshiping in a temple made of stone. Yet the Apostle Peter tells us, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

Put a mark in John and please turn with me to the book of Hebrews, chapter 2, Hebrews 2. We believe it was Paul who wrote this epistle to the dispersed Jews and relates for

them the ministry of Christ in terms they can understand, and they're terms we need to understand as those destined to be "kings and priest" of the Most High God (Revelation 1:6).

Verse 17 reads, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" [ch. 2:17-3:1].

The subheading in my Bible for chapter three reads: "Christ superior to Moses." Now Moses is identified in Scripture as a prophet and after speaking to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, One who identified Himself as "I AM" sends Moses to call the children of Israel out of Egypt. The New Testament relates Egypt to the bondage of sin.

Now Moses, though capable of speaking to God, considered himself *incapable of speaking for God*. So our Lord, through Moses, drafted Aaron the Levite into service. God tells his prophet in Exodus 4:16, "And (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."

This is an interesting dynamic. Aaron the high priest is to be, through Moses, God's spokesman to the people. The book of Hebrews opens with, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). The book of John opens with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

The "Word" here is translated from the Greek *Logos* – we recognize that root in the English word logo – it is a representative of something else. Strong's says the Divine Expression. Christ told His followers He came to reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27). He was thereby fulfilling the same role He always had as the Divine Spokesman for the Family of God.

Now, being made "like unto his brethren," He has become our Spokesman as well, our Representative to the Father, our High Priest. Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" [vv. 15-16].

We'll see in a minute the physical manifestation of God opening the holy of holies in the temple at Jerusalem, the earthly representation of His throne, at the death of Christ. The book of Hebrews goes on to explain how Jesus' priesthood predates that of the Levites in the order of Melchisedec, to whom Abraham paid tithes. You see we are partakers of a New Covenant, but the Contract Writer is the same.

Now getting back to Caiaphas and the Levitical priesthood. In this dispensation of time, Joseph Caiaphas is the authority in the worship of the true God. Jesus taught His followers during His earthly ministry to be subject to the scribes and the Pharisees because they sat "in Moses' seat" (Matthew 23:2). In his official capacity, Caiaphas speaks for God's chosen people. This nation of Jew is represented in the embodiment of their high priest, and in his act of blasphemy and the polluting of his office, Caiaphas disqualifies himself and brings his sin on the people and the temple. What we're witnessing is the beginning of the end of the Old Covenant system of worship – a system that was developed for the Israelites **after** they first violated their agreement with God.

Originally the Covenant God of Israel told the people, "ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," Exodus 19:6. But the people feared the manifestation of God – the thundering and the lightening and the smoke and the voice from heaven. So they sent Moses up Sinai – ***you go speak to God, come back and tell us what He said***. But before Moses could even get back down the mount with God's Law codified in tablets of stone – the people had transgressed the covenant they made and were found dancing naked in the sand around a golden calf.

After a cleansing of the camp, the covenant **was** renewed, but rather than becoming a kingdom of priest, they became a nation *subject to* priest. And a system of animal sacrifices was set-up that culminated each year at the Day of Atonement – when the high priest, as the people's representative, would enter the holy of holies and offer atonement for his sins and the sins of the nation.

Caiaphas being disqualified and the ceremonial system ended at the cross, this year the Atonement would have to be made at God's actual throne, by our true High Priest – One whose office and authority predates that of the Levitical priesthood. One who has never defiled His office – One whose dominion would be over a new nation, one called out of this present evil world, out of sin, out of bondage – a spiritual family, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). Picking up again in John, chapter 18, verse 28. John 18:28.

[John 18:28-32: ¶Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were

not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.]

Jesus told His followers repeatedly of His coming crucifixion, but they seemed not to understand ... The physician and historian Luke tells us of Jesus' trip to see Herod Antipas, the puppet-king the Romans installed over the region of Galilee and how he dressed our Lord in a gorgeous robe, mocking His Kingship.

[John 18:33-19:2: Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.]

John 19:1 ¶Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,]

Perhaps the same robe He received from Herod. And verse 6.

[John 19:6-14: When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he

brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!]

This was between 5 and 6 a.m. the day before a yearly Sabbath. The Bible calls it a high day Sabbath. It was the preparation day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. John is the only gospel writer to use the Roman reckoning of time. The other three gospels use Jewish reckoning, which starts from the rising and setting of the sun. If that had been the case with John, it would have been around noon, but that would be inconsistent with the other gospels. The Jews also reckoned days from sunset to sunset, and months by the cycle of the new moon. Now the date of this day, by the Biblical calendar, was the 14th of the first month of the year:

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 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 a house” (Exodus 12:1-3).

It is widely held to have been the 10th of the month when Judas made his deal with the chief priest to sell-out Jesus ... the same day the Passover lambs were being marketed in Jerusalem and sold in the temple court.

Verse 5: “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening” (vv. 5-6).

We’ve already seen how Caiaphas was representative of the Jewish people. Now, what I want you to see is the astonishing typology that’s taking place at this Passover sacrifice in 31 AD. Jesus was nailed to the Roman stake, Mark tells us, between 8 and 9 a.m. Matthew and Luke account the sky going dark from the sixth hour, between 11 a.m. and noon, until the ninth hour, between 2 and 3 p.m. This is the last hourly time reference the gospel writers give us. To get a better relation to our day, you can move everything up an hour to account for “daylight savings.”

Now notice: we have Jesus on the cross, in the late afternoon, at the very time Caiaphas would begin slaughtering the first of the Passover lambs. ... John 19, verse 28.

[John 19:28-30: After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.]

Mark tells us at the moment of Jesus' death, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to the bottom" (v. 15:38). This veil had hid the holy of holies from the people, but now Christ, by His sacrifice, had again made access to the Father open to mankind. Peter tells us we're redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot..." The writer of Hebrews says, "by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (9:12) and "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace!..." (4:15) Verse 31.

[John 19:31-36: ¶The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.]

The prophecy John refers to is recorded in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it." John the Baptist introduced his half cousin, the Christ, to his own disciples saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). In the Revelation, Christ is referred to 28 times by the title of the "Lamb." Jesus' role as our Passover sacrifice is unmistakable. If you will, please turn to the book of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5.

As we head into the Passion Week, I implore you each to compare the Old and New Testament Passover accounts. Consider how each precedes a covenant by 50 days – the Old Covenant with the Law written in stone by the finger of God on Mt. Sinai, and the New Covenant with the same Law written on our hearts by the Spirit poured out from Jerusalem at Pentecost. Look at the symbolism and prophecy contained in the Passover lamb and fulfilled by the Lamb of God. Look at the symbolism of the bread and the wine: the broken body of Christ, with the unbroken bones of the lamb – the shed blood that brings **spiritual** Israel salvation, with the shed blood that brought **physical** Israel salvation.

And as we study these symbols and prophecies and promises, let's not forget Paul's admonition recorded in verses 7 and 8 – that we remove sin from our lives and do what's right in honor of the price that was paid for our former lives of lawlessness:

1 Corinthians 5:7 “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” (vv. 7-8)

I’ve prepared some information for you from my own personal notes and a Church publication that will further explain, fill-in details and cover subjects we didn’t have time to get to today. [Distribute notes on calculating time: days (and hours), weeks, months/years, notes on resurrection week of 31 AD, and UCG booklet excerpt on Passover and Unleavened Bread, pages 10-23, *God’s Holy Day Plan, The Promise of Hope for all Mankind*, © 2001.]

[*Editor’s note: access to God’s throne: Hebrews 9:11-12, 24; 10:19-22; New Covenant: Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 10:16-17; Spiritual Israel – Romans 9:6; Galatians 6:16. **High (from on, most) Highly** – 3. megas 3173, “great” is translated “high” in John 19:31, of the Sabbath day at Passover season; here the meaning is virtually equivalent to “holy” SEE GREAT – Vine’s Dictionary.*]