

# The Awesome Cost of Salvation

## Passover

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I wonder if you ever took conscious thought that the three major events in Christ's life—all of which were spectacular events—weren't done in a corner. There is His birth. That's why that information is given in the early parts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. That star was something that was seen as far away (apparently) as modern Iran, and those men were following that star for up to two years. That thing was not done in a corner.

In addition to that we have His death, which was also spectacular. And His resurrection! Has there ever been anything more spectacular than the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Someone actually coming to life again, after death, three days later (not something that happened immediately after) and He came to life again, not as a human being, but very God. That's pretty spectacular.

It's interesting that the church of God is commanded only to celebrate the one—His death—while the world celebrates the other two in defiance of what God has said. It relegates His death—I wouldn't say to a minor affair—but certainly to something that is secondary compared to the observance of the other two.

What the result of this is that they miss one of Passover's major points. This is why God has us rehearse this thing every year so that it never gets very far from our minds. What it is that God wants us to mark at this time is going to be the subject of this sermon.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Abide meaning *continuing; remain in*. If you remain in My word, continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed. A disciple is a learner. He is telling us a person who begins down the road of Christianity is not really a disciple. A true disciple is one who not only begins, but also continues on the way and abides in it.

John 8:32 And [the result of this is the fact that they are going to continue in the way], you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Freedom is what Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are ultimately about. God's freeing Israel from bondage in Egypt is the object lesson for us to apply spiritually. Truth and freedom go hand and hand. This is one of the reasons why the Christian world is in the condition that it is in. They don't really mark the death of Jesus Christ in the way that God commanded us to observe. I don't mean that they aren't aware of it. They're very much aware of it and it's very

much a part of their teaching in that they understand that Christ died for our sins. But the full importance of it, the full impact of it is missed because they don't really continue in the way. They don't learn because they don't observe the Passover and thus the lesson is missed.

Truth and freedom go hand in hand, but truth will produce freedom only as it is used. That ought to be a statement that is self-evident. We can know something is true, but if we don't use it, what good is it? Its value is useless unless it can be used.

Freedom and truth come to those who press on. Freedom, the kind of freedom that God is involved in bringing us into, comes progressively, not all at once. These are lessons from the Days of Unleavened Bread. It took the Israelites seven days to get to and across the Red Sea. It took them another forty years to get into their own land, into the inheritance.

Their freedom was progressive. There was a time when it began, but if they had never continued on the way, they never would have had their own land; they never would have had their inheritance; they never would have been free. That's part of the object lesson. We have to continue. If we continue then we will truly be a disciple. We will understand the truth and we will become free.

The truth of God shows us the real values of life because it shows us what we are to give our life to. With that basis, let's go to a very familiar Passover scripture.

I Corinthians 11:25-29 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 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. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Notice back in verse 25, He says, "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood.*" The word 'cup' is a metonymy—it's figurative. The cup is put for what is in the cup. What was in the cup was wine. The wine symbolized or represented His blood. So He says that, "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood.*"

A covenant is an agreement, a contract; a pact; a treaty; a bargain between two parties. A covenant or a treaty or a bargain or a pact is a device that brings people into a relationship. This covenant is unusual in that it is in His blood.

Barclay, in his commentary, makes a very interesting comment in regard to this. He changes the words. He paraphrases it, but I think that the paraphrase is accurate because he really didn't do anything more than what is done with the word 'cup'—cup representing what was inside the cup.

What Barclay did is he changed the words into saying, "*This covenant cost Me My life.*" The agreement was made at the cost of the most precious, the most expensive life that has ever

lived on the face of the earth. It didn't come cheap.

That giving of the life, that covenant, establishes a relationship. This relationship (in a sense) is what Passover opens up to you and me. Brethren, I have been trying to impress upon us this very important fact: It is the relationship that is *THE MOST IMPORTANT* thing of all that Christ has done by dying. He has made a relationship possible that *IS* our salvation. We could have no salvation unless the relationship existed, because we were cut off, we were separated from God! He opened up the way so we could be in agreement with God and a relationship could be established. This relationship *MUST* be developed, it *MUST* be continued! "*If you continue you will become free!*" We are not free merely because the relationship is established! That's only part of the process. "*This cost His life's blood.*" That's a justifiable translation because the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:14).

The overall sense of I Corinthians 11:25-29 has to do with people not properly discriminating what the symbols represent. I think that you understand somewhat of the background as to why the Apostle Paul had to write these things. These people were making a mockery of the Passover service. They had a meal and during this some of these people were even getting drunk. Some of the people ate in a glutinous manner. Others hardly got anything at all to eat because others were hogging all the food. It hardly served to edify the body at all. Very little of the right kind of fellowship—and they were going in exactly the opposite direction of the way of God.

So the apostle was writing to correct a very corrupt situation. This is his point: in doing what they were doing, they didn't discern the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. If they had truly discerned it they wouldn't have done what they did. They weren't properly interpreting the meaning to their own lives. The application went awry. They were taking the Passover, but they were taking it without appreciating the reality that the symbols represented.

The word '*unworthy*' means, "*lacking in merit or worth.*" What these people were doing was they then took the Passover in an unworthy manner, that is, they really didn't appreciate what they were doing. They weren't discriminating. They weren't really judging the character of what it was they were doing. They didn't understand the act behind what they were doing. They really were profaning the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The word '*profane*' has its roots in a word that means "*far from the temple.*" In other words, these people were anything but spiritual in what they were doing. They were treating the bread and the wine as something common.

It really was just common unleavened bread and common wine. There's no doubt about it. They weren't looking beyond as to what these things represented—that they represented the broken body of the Creator of everything. They weren't looking at the most precious Life that has ever been lived; had shed its blood so that they could have a relationship with God so that the covenant might be made.

If they had understood, then **THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DONE WHAT THEY DID** to their brother. They would not have acted in a glutinous manner! They would not have gotten drunk! But they were treating in a profane manner the shed blood and broken body of Jesus Christ.

It is not thoroughly judging the Lord's body until it forms a conviction that profoundly affects conduct. This is what we want to aim for here. If we are not thoroughly judging, then we stand a chance of profaning the sacrifice and thus we then eat and drink condemnation on ourselves.

The whole point in observing Passover—and in one sense any of God's festivals—is that our attitude toward the sacrifice of Christ affects our approach to life in general. It's going to affect our relationships with one another, so we better pay a great deal of attention to this.

If there is anything that God wants to get across by this observance it is these two things: the awesomeness of the cost to get us free and how far Christ was willing to go—or we might say in the modern vernacular "to be pushed"—without sinning.

The first one, the awesomeness of the cost, was done to affect in us a profound sense of personal obligation to Christ! In other words, until we really grasp the fact that HE DIED FOR ME; that He took all of that pain; that He had His body ripped to shreds; and that He did it for ME, not just everybody in general, but He did it for ME, then we stand a very good chance of not really being convicted to the place where it's going to affect our personal conduct.

The second one, how far Christ was willing to go, Christ did as an example of what we should be striving for in our life, that is, to be sinless. We might say here the cost of staying free.

These two add up to what Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are all about: how much it cost to become free and to remain free, and the obligation this puts us under.

The price for salvation is far reaching. It's much greater than it appears on the surface, even when we are considering Christ's sacrifice. Undoubtedly, Christ's sacrifice is by far and away the most costly part of Passover, the most costly part of our liberty. But it does not stand alone. There are other factors that have to be considered in the cost to get us free and to keep us free.

We're going to tie together very quickly with little comment four scriptures that are closely related. The first one is in Ezekiel 18. What these scriptures are going to show is God's attitude toward the world. As we read these I want you to think of this in terms of the way the world is—I mean the reality of the way it is in contrast to what God's attitude is toward the world.

Ezekiel 18:23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?

God's attitude is that He doesn't take pleasure in all of the pangs and the bondage of death, but yet the reality of the world is it's out there. It's a painful world. People are dying by the thousands, the tens of thousands everyday, and some in agonizing situations. This has gone on for a long, long time, hasn't it? Yet God's attitude toward it is, "I don't like to see this. It doesn't give Me any pleasure to see this occurring."

I Timothy 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the

knowledge of the truth.

There's God's attitude, but that's not the way it is. What's going on? If God has this attitude, why is there such pain? Why is there such confusion? Why is there such ignorance? Why is there such oppression? Why is there such bondage everywhere that one looks?

II Peter 3:8-9 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Again, we see God's attitude. The real subject is the return of Jesus Christ. When Peter wrote this, there were undoubtedly stirrings within the church—in fact, I know for sure there were—that the second coming had already occurred.

We understand that the men (apostles) were looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ within their lifetimes, and they didn't understand it. The people had to be encouraged. Undoubtedly, people were getting discouraged because they felt that things were going awry in their own world. They were frightened. They were anxious. They were in pain and they were saying, *"How long 'O Lord."* Maybe some were getting discouraged to the place where they were leaving.

So Peter writes that the Lord is not slack. It is His intention and God does not lie. God will send His Son to this earth. But He is being very patient and that is the emphasis that Peter puts on this.

What kind of a plan could God devise that would bring forth the best and the most from Project Earth—the best qualitatively in terms of character and the most quantitatively in terms of the number of children born again into His family? How could God be merciful and forgiving without merely being indulgent? What could God use as points of reference that would motivate men to continue to strive toward the conclusion of God's purpose once they had been mercifully forgiven?

With that last verse that I read, "*that one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day,*" it gives us a pretty good indication that God does not look at time in the way we do. To us, time is very pressing because we realize we're only going to live about seventy years.

I know that as I get older, the fact of death becomes a clearer and clearer reality. When I was twenty, I don't know that I ever thought about it unless somebody died and then it would come to mind. But now that I'm sixty, I think about death more frequently. My body is running down. I don't have the zip, the vigor, the energy, the vim, the vitality or the strength that I used to have. All of us are aware of those things because we begin to feel those things slip away from us. It's very easy for us to become impatient because there are so many things that we want to do. There are so many things that we want to accomplish and time keeps going by. Mankind is impatient and it seems so frequently that all things continue as they were and nothing is changing except that things are getting worse.

We find here that time with God is not the same as it is with men. Just think for a minute: if a thousand years with God is as a day, how much is seventy years, the life of a human being? It's nothing but the blink of an eye to God. How many blinks of an eye die every day? Tens of thousands of them die every day on earth. Blink—they're gone, but their lives were lived. They were born. They went through childhood. They became adult men and women. They raised families. They did the kind of things you and I did. They went to school. They married. They watched their children grow up. They went through wars. They went through droughts and famines. They went through disease. They went through depressions. They hungered. They angered. They thirsted. They watched death approaching and they died. A blink of an eye to God.

I don't believe that we can begin to grasp the enormity of what God is doing until we begin to think of the scope of the thousands of years that have already gone by and the billions of lives that have ever been lived—until we begin to look at this in its much bigger picture and yet still retain the vision of looking at time and life the way a man does—understanding that there is a God to whom time means almost nothing because He has power over life and death. Vast and awesome is the scope of what God is working out, but we have got to look at what's going on through an understanding that has been given to us of God.

Ephesians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

He didn't choose us as individuals before the foundation of the world, but He did choose that He would have a church; that there would be a group; that there would be people impregnated by His Spirit; that there would be a unique family of His who would be in the image of His Son. The word 'choose' indicates taking a smaller number out of a larger. The larger is the population of the earth. The smaller number is that tiny remnant that God has been working with—His church, His group, and His family. The word 'holy' implies the choosing had a moral aim in view. In other words, God was choosing a small number out of a large number and the reason He was choosing this small number is that He wanted to make this small number holy—holy like He is holy. He had a moral purpose in mind.

The apostle is saying you have been called, you have been elected, and you've become a part of this small group with a definite purpose in mind—that you should become holy.

In order for us to become holy, God had to reveal some things to us. The apostle gives these things as we go along here.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

This shows that what He is doing had nothing to do with the way we are. It had everything to do with HIS initiating and choosing us because He wanted us, not because of anything that we have done.

Ephesians 1:6-7 To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption [Redemption begins to get us focused here on Passover, once again. Redemption implies the payment of a ransom. We have been redeemed. We have been bought back.], through His blood [I Corinthians 11:25 *This covenant has cost Me My blood, My life*], the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

The word 'forgiveness' means, "to be loosened from some bondage." It is actually taken from the picture of somebody who is tied up by cords or ropes. Have we been loosened from a political unit called Egypt? No. From another human being? No. From sin. That is what has held us in bondage—sin. It's interesting that the word that is translated 'sins' is '*paraptoma*' and it indicates deviations from the right path. We have been held by bondage from deviations from the right path. All this was done according to His grace.

Ephesians 1:8 Which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

Here comes what gives us the picture of what is going on on earth and why we can look at what God is doing in a great, large scope; looking at it over thousands upon thousands of years of time, maybe we could even go to the extent of billions of years of time because it says in verse 4 that He did this before the foundation of the world. Some verses say before the foundation of the creation. I don't know which one is correct. I didn't check into it. But if we take the word to mean creation—how old is the earth? Scientist say 4 billion, 8 billion, 16 billion, 20 billion years—I don't know. That's beyond my thinking. But it shows that God, when He began to plan these things out, took into account the fact that mankind might sin and there was going to have to be something to redeem, to buy man back, from his character flaws, his bondage to sin.

God's been planning this a long time. HOW MUCH is 70 YEARS compared to billions? If the whole human life is nothing but the blink of an eye as compared to a thousand years, how much has God invested in terms of TIME? This is part of the cost that we need to consider regarding Passover. This is no little thing that God is working out. YOU ARE SO IMPORTANT IT IS BEYOND VALUE! We cannot compute it! God has BILLIONS of years invested in us! He's been thinking, planning, working things out so that He can bring us into His kingdom! It's *sawesome!*

Ephesians 1:9a Having made known to us the mystery of His will . . .

There it is. That's what He has revealed. Brethren, we have to adjust our thinking in regard to Passover to see it in the scope of everything that God is working out, not just a moment of time—a moment of time being 33½ years of the life of one Man (an important Man He was). But Passover is bigger even than that, because Passover is central to BILLIONS of years of investment. It is no little thing.

Ephesians 1:9b-10 . . . according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

That hasn't happened yet, brethren. Everything isn't gathered together yet in Christ. We might say NOTHING is gathered together yet and the first real gathering won't take place until that first resurrection. Then, part of the gathering into one will get rolling. That's where we're headed. Eventually, of course, we know that everybody who has ever lived will be gathered into one family, one kingdom—God's.

Now how important is Passover in the light of that? It is so important that it is beyond measure. Can you begin to see your importance in this thing? Why, in one sense, we are just a speck in a moment of time. That's all it is. Yet you have to see this thing in relation to yourself because even though you are just a speck in a moment of time, as compared to billions of years that God has been planning and working this thing out you are so important that the most important Human Being that has ever lived has given His life for you.

If that doesn't profoundly affect you, I don't know what can, because what He did was done personally for you. It wasn't done just in a general way at all. Yes, it was done for all of mankind, but it doesn't mean a thing until we begin to see it personally, because He would have done it for you if you had been the only one who ever sinned, because the provision was made for that. Don't EVER underestimate your worth.

Ephesians 1:11-12 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will [Look at that verse—"*who works ALL THINGS according to the counsel of His will.*"], that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

In this plan that God is working out, God determined that it would be historical. There would be a historical witness in that God would allow men to record their experiences over a vast period of time (6,000 years—vast in relation to a single human life), to the end, to the purpose that man would be confronted with his own record and with the record of other nations, that nobody in all of history was able to produce by any system a way that produced a lasting, prosperous, peaceful environment in which to live.

Here we are at the close of the ages allotted to man before the return of Jesus Christ. We can look back on 6,000 years of history. We can look at the history of Babylon. We can look at the history of Rome. We can look at the history of Japan, of China, of Russia, of Germany, of Scotland, of England, of Norway. We can look on American history, Indian history. It doesn't matter where we look. Nobody, but nobody has produced a good environment in which to live because everybody has attempted to do this apart from God.

This witness would also be personal in that each person, when called by God and confronted with the truth, regardless of whether it is in this period before the return of Jesus Christ, or

whether it's during the Millennium or whether it's during the Great White Throne—whenever it is when they are confronted with the truth they are going to be forced to admit that their own life was nothing but sheer vanity—a striving after wind; a striving after things that they could never quite grasp.

God is making a point. Mankind decided in the person of Adam and Eve that they would go this way instead of that way—that they would go their own way or Satan's way, instead of God's way. So God made a judgment as Romans 5 begins to show us, that as Adam and Eve have done so would all the rest of mankind because they were the model, they were the prototype. Indeed, God's judgment was accurate and true because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God! EVERYBODY has sinned! Everybody has done what Adam and Eve have done.

But you see, everybody has to learn the lesson, the same lesson—that nobody has been able to produce what mankind wants, whether as a nation or as an individual. It cannot be done apart from God.

Does that stagger your mind considering the immensity of God's thinking—that God would be willing to spend 6,000 years to make a point! He's done it and He has allowed billions of people to go through this.

There's a very interesting scripture in Hebrews. This is one of the verses that lays the foundation that gives us understanding of why these men and women (who are mentioned here beginning in verse 4) of why they lived the way that they lived.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

We have, in the past, been taught untrue things about this verse, because the common interpretation of this verse is that the world was created out of spirit energy. Now I truly believe that is what has happened. However, that's not what the verse is talking about at all. Let's look at it a little bit more closely.

There are three words that we need to understand here. One is the word 'worlds.' That word 'worlds' is the Greek '*aion*.' It means ages; periods of time, or dispensations. It is not talking about the created world at all. It is talking about periods of time. You've heard the phrase "eons and eons," meaning time after time.

The second word is 'framed.' That gives you the impression of somebody building something, but that's not what the word means. That same word appears in Hebrews 10:5 where it says, "*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared.*" That's a little bit different connotation.

Let's put that together. "*By faith we understand that the ages (periods of time) were prepared by the word.*" Here's the third word that we need to look into. When I say 'word' and I ask you to think of this in terms of Greek, you would probably immediately think of 'logos.' That's not the word here. It's the Greek word '*thema*' and that means "the revealed word."

Now let's put that all together. "*By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the revealed word of God.*" What this verse is telling you is that there is an UNSEEN HAND somewhere that is guiding the destiny of the periods of time in which mankind has lived! God is working out a purpose! People with faith look to God's purpose that He is working out, what He has revealed, and they see His hand guiding the destiny of nations, and guiding the destiny of people as well.

It is really an interesting, encouraging, faith-building concept because, you see, God is never very far from the thoughts of a person of faith. A person of faith, because he has had the mystery of God revealed, the purpose He is working out, begins to see God in everything that is going on because God is his companion. He has a relationship with God. He has a fellowship with God and he tries to look at everything through the eyes of God.

When God calls, one of the miracles He works in us by His Spirit is to give us insight into His movements in the history of men. The Christian begins to look and see God in his environment, the earth—that it is all under God's control.

We can look at scriptures then and we can see where God says, "*I raise up kings. I put down kings.*" Sometimes He said, "*I put the basest of men in there.*" We find out that all governments (in Romans 13) are ordained of God. At least, He permits them there and sometimes He directly puts them in.

God is guiding and controlling things. Mankind thinks that they're in control of what's going on and some people think Satan is in control. No, God is in control. God is working out a purpose, and Satan is subject to God and can only do what God allows him to do.

Remember what the psalmist said about the ungodly, that God is not in all of his thoughts? Listen to this quote from Andre` Matisse. He was a French philosopher and writer. He said, "*The universe is indifferent. Who created it? Why are we here on this puny mud heap, spinning in an infinite space? I have not the slightest idea and I am quite convinced that no one has the least idea.*"

That's the way man looks at things, but you better not look at things like that or you won't operate by faith. If you are operating by faith you can begin to look at Passover in its fuller scope of how it fits, how important it is to the purpose that God is working out.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God could see—in His wisdom He knew—that man would sin. Because the wages of sin is death, how was God going to extricate man from this dilemma? How would He continue His purpose?

There's an interesting aspect to this when we consider the word 'wage' or 'wages.' The apostle used this term because back in his day they did things in much the same way as we do today. You do not work for a person for a lifetime and then receive your wages, but rather you work a specified period of time—one week, two weeks, three weeks, or whatever it happens to be—and you receive your wages on a regular basis. We will say every two weeks you receive your wages.

We put that back into this verse in order to give us better understanding. We then begin to understand that since a wage is something that we earn and the wages of sin is death, therefore what the apostle (and therefore God) is telling us is that we are going to be receiving these wages—in other words, the penalty of sin is NOT just something we receive at the end of our life. The penalty of sin is going to be something that is meted out on a daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly basis. Do you understand what I'm getting at here? In other words, we're going to be affected by sin all the time. It's what we're earning.

God looks at these things in a very interesting way. Considering this we begin to see the scope of what God is doing with Passover opening up a new avenue. Now we begin to see that salvation is NOT just something that we receive at the END of our life. Actually, it is something that BEGINS whenever we accept the blood of Jesus Christ. Whenever we begin—that is, having God's Spirit and begin on the process of salvation—to go into freedom, we begin to receive salvation on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. In other words, our liberty, our freedom is progressive. It doesn't come all at once.

It's not that we're going to earn it. Please don't misunderstand that at all. We're not going to earn it. Remember Christ said, "*I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.*" God wants us to begin to receive His salvation even right here and now by living the abundant life. It's a wonderful concept.

This is not earned. It's something given. It's a gift of God, this grace, and grace is not something that only happens once. It's happening constantly. God is always giving. That's His nature. That's His way. He is giving us of His life constantly.

We need to begin to expand our scope in regard to Passover because the solution to this whole thing that God is involved in with us begins immediately upon accepting the blood of Jesus Christ. It is much bigger in scope and does not just involve the end of the process.

Let's go to another scripture or two that bears on this bondage.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Let's tie this with what I said in regards to Ephesians 1. The picture here is of a slave being purchased from the horrible system of slavery. Redemption, remember, implies the buying back of something, the paying of a ransom. Paul is using that here—it is the same kind of picture—that we have been bought from slavery. Our slavery has been to sin. That's what we have done with our life.

What we have received is the most expensive gift that has ever been given for the purchase of a mere slave—you and me. We are bought with a price. The price is the life of the Creator. Paul is undoubtedly using this illustration in order to bring something home to you and me, and that is, that because we have been purchased; we are under obligation to the One who purchased us. See, *You are bought with a price, THEREFORE* (here comes the obligation) *glorify God in your*

*body and in your spirit, which are Gods.*" He is saying, in other words, become holy. He is pointing to our moral responsibilities.

To what purpose, to what reason? Here is an indication. Let's begin to tie this together right in I Corinthians.

I Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things . . .

What things? He's talking about the object lessons that happened to the children of Israel as they were in the wilderness coming out of their bondage to Egypt—all those things that God caused to be recorded. God has allowed mankind to record their history, but God made sure that mankind would have an accurate record of history, and so He recorded what the Israelites went through. We have an accurate record from HIS point of view as to what was going on. Several of these are recorded by the apostle in I Corinthians 10, which was written to the church just prior to the Days of Unleavened Bread—the day of Passover.

I Corinthians 10:11. . . happened to them as examples [object lessons], and they were written for our admonition [to teach you and me], *upon whom the ends of the ages* [aion] have come.

God caused these things to be recorded and then written so we would have instruction—especially us upon whom the ends of the ages have come—so that we would have the right kind of instruction as to WHAT IN THE WORLD is going on; so that our lives would be filled with confidence—conviction—about the right things, about the right way to go. The word 'ends' means GOALS; it means the purposes, the reasons for everything and the conclusion of what is going on.

When we look at it in a slightly different perspective and we can see it in terms of the ages that God has marked out, we know that this age, this aion, this period of time is going to end at the return of Jesus Christ. When it says here "*upon whom the ends of the ages have come,*" it means the end of one thing and the beginning of another. As one age ends another is going to begin.

We can begin to understand that God is preparing you and me for what is to come. He has made it possible for these things to be recorded so we would be fully equipped to be able to conduct our life in the right way. Oh brethren, the scope of what God is working out here!! It's awesome! This has to be figured into, considered, if we are going to rightly discern Passover. We won't be able to do it properly unless we can see this thing in its big sense.

What a moment of time that was on that Passover in 31 A.D. God must have been filled with excitement about what was taking place. It was an awesome step toward what He is working out with you and me.

We have to consider what it says in I Corinthians 10:11, in light of the historical witness that God is making in our lives. Brethren, how many people have lived and died in the vast sweep of history of each nation to prove a very important point—that there is NO WAY but God's way that

will produce the environment that man wants! Think about that before you take this next Passover, because it's important to your thinking that you look at things from God's point of view.

I don't think that it's necessary to recount everything, but from Abraham on, how many Israelites have lived and died without EVER BEING OFFERED SALVATION? Just the Israelites! The numbers begin to be staggering when we begin to expand out. How many people lost their lives in the flood? How many people were obliterated from existence at Sodom and Gomorrah? How many people died in Egypt—not just the killing of the first-born? That land was so devastated it never fully recovered! In the days of Jeremiah God said that Egypt would be the basest of nations until the millennium and then God is going to raise it up until they're going to be one of three with Israel and Assyria. They must have been an awesome nation, a wonderful people, with plenty of ability. But God JUST DESTROYED THEM AND OBLITERATED THEM in an object lesson for you and me! He can do that. He's God. He didn't have to do it, but He did it. He did that so you would understand Passover. God thinks BIG! It's beyond our comprehension, I think.

We can look over into the Orient and we see a billion people in China, a hundred or so million in Japan, five or six hundred million in India—all those people crowded together there. Are their lives being lived in vain? No, they aren't. Who knows what God is recording for those people. When they wake up in that resurrection and they learn the history of their peoples and they think of the personal witness to them, and they begin to look back on Passover—that Passover that happened in 31 A.D.—they're going to appreciate it—maybe in a way that we can't understand because of the deprivations that you and I have not experienced. I don't know. But God thinks big.

When you take the Passover, you need to think about these things so that they make the right impression on your mind. The cost of Passover doesn't end here. It goes on. We could go into other areas, which I will just touch on briefly.

Hebrews 10:1-4 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. *For it is not possible* that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

This is another part of the cost. Perhaps you might think of this as being a rather minor affair, but God shows that He had, and we must have, respect for the life of an animal. God, in the instructions regarding the regular sacrifices, said not to eat the blood! He did that out of respect for the animal because the life was in the blood. The blood had to be drained on the ground and not imbibed by a human being.

I think we all understand that animals have at least a low level of feeling. I have seen animals experience fear. Situations can frighten them. And who will say that their pet, their dog or their

cat doesn't have a special relationship or special feeling for them? Certainly they do.

Can we extend that out, that a bullock, a goat, a sheep, a kid of the goats, or a lamb might have feelings too? Not human feelings, but there was a life there and they symbolized—every single one of them—the life of Jesus Christ. How many animals had to give their lives in order to make a witness, in order to make an example of that? WE WILL NEVER KNOW, but just to give you some sort of an idea, Josephus recorded that when he lived, the Romans one year took a census of all of the lambs that were killed in just one city, in Jerusalem, and there were 256,000 lambs that were killed on Passover alone—256,000 lambs, one Passover, to make a lesson.

Perhaps it would help us to understand why God told the Israelites in Exodus 12 that the keeping of Passover was supposed to be a family affair. It was not done at the Temple. It was not done at the Tabernacle. God made sure that everybody killed their own lamb—every family. He wanted to make the point to everybody that THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE for the death of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ!

Now consider this: when you think of those Israelite families—they weren't very rich. Most of them had very small herds and flocks with just a few sheep and just a few lambs. They were not wealthy. They lived, in most cases, with their animals and whenever they put a lamb to death on Passover it was very likely the family pet! Consider that. They killed something that was very close to them—something that felt like part of the family—an object lesson. Millions of them!

You see; nothing is too great a price to pay for you. But there is another price that needs to be considered.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice . . .

See that? What am I getting at? Part of the cost is *you*. Passover has with it the cost of the life of Jesus Christ. That is the first and the greatest part of the cost and worth all the costs put together, and a great deal more besides. It certainly is the one we need to focus on in order to get the right perspective. In order to get the right perspective, we need to see this in terms of its larger picture in the whole purpose that God is working out.

First we have the life of Jesus Christ the Creator. The second part is the tremendous number of animal sacrifices that had to take place over roughly 1,400 years of time. In addition to that, the innumerable multitudes of human lives in the vast sweep of history who have made a witness for us in the histories they've written and in the writing of the Bible.

Last, but not least, is the cost of our own lives. When you take Passover, I want you to think of the great cost that has made it possible for you and me to be brought into a relationship with God, to be able to make this covenant with God, and to be able to look forward to sharing in eternal life with God. I think that if you can do that, you can take the Passover with a kind of appreciation, with a kind of discernment, with a kind of understanding that will SOBER YOU in regard to your own life. You can begin to see yourself in terms of your value to God and if can see your value, then the value of every other human being as well. It's not small.

Also, if we can see the tremendous cost of what it takes, not just to get free but to remain free,

because—in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—He was willing to go all the way to the death, willing to undergo a terrible torture, and He never once even lost His temper, never once held an offense against those who were inflicting all those pains on Him. He never lost His cool. He never lost control. He never gave in to resentment, or bitterness, or anything that might lead Him to sin.

It teaches us that sin is not a light matter with God at all. Baptism gets us off the starting block for a marathon that is also, at the same time, an obstacle course.

Let us consider these things before Passover so that we can take it with due appreciation of its cost.