

Love of God and Passover

Fred Coulter—March 26, 2011

Since I have covered about four or five sermons leading up to the Passover, we're going to look at the Passover a little differently and look at the aspect as to the most important feature and ramification of the Passover, which is: Why did God do it? What is our relationship between us and God concerning the Passover?

The New Testament New Covenant Christian Passover is the most important of all the covenants in the Bible with the exception of the one that's going to be mailed out this coming week, which has *The Covenant Between God the Father and Jesus Christ*. That was the most important one. Next to that is the *covenant for eternal life*.

1. The covenant between God the Father and Jesus Christ
2. The covenant with Abraham
3. The New Testament covenant of eternal life

Let's see even a prophecy of it here in Psalm 50:1: "The mighty God, God, the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth.... [it's looking to the completion of God's plan here] ...Our God shall come, and He shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him" (vs 1-3).

Notice it comes to the resurrection, v 5: "Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Our covenant is made through Christ and He is our sacrifice. But we also have our sacrifice. Our sacrifice is baptism. And in baptism we are joined to the death of Christ. Actually the Greek is we are 'conjoined'—*made part of* the sacrifice of Christ.

Why does God do what He does in the first place? We find both in the Old Testament and New Testament concerning the very love of God. That begins right after the sin of Adam and Eve. The first thing that He told them was the prophecy of the coming Savior, which then would be Himself, God manifested in the flesh.

Let's come here to the book of Deuteronomy. Actually, the name means *the second giving of the Law*, but the book of Deuteronomy is also a very spiritual book, quite a bit different though there are similarities and so forth. Here is why God has called us. Let's see

- what God gave them
- what He wanted from them
- what He was going to do for them

After giving the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5) He says, Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged" (vs 1-2).

This is what God wants. We look at it today and see what's happening in the world, and we see just the opposite—don't we? All the lawlessness and all the death, it's almost like the world is going insane this past month. I've said how many times, where it talks about the roaring of the nations like the roaring of the waves. Instead of the tide going out, it seems to be coming in.

But here's what God wanted, v 3: "Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you... [That's another thing that God wants. He doesn't want people to have troubles. That's why He gave His laws and His commandments and statutes and judgments.] ...and that you may greatly multiply..." Not like one recent e-mail that was sent to me where there was man who had 39 wives and 236 children. It showed one massive photo of it and it looked like a school photo. He lived in India. We're not talking about that kind of multiplication here. But for all that God was giving them, He required something back from them.

Verse 4: "Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.... [That's what God wants first, because that is the lasting connection with God; that is the whole basis of why God does everything.] ...And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart. And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (vs 4-8)—so that every good thing would come to them.

Verse 10: "And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers...and houses full of every good *thing* which you did not fill, and wells which are dug, which you did not dig; vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be full... [then He gives a warning]: ...*then* beware

lest you forget the LORD Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage” (vs 10-12). So here again is a great principle, lesson that we learn. Whenever human beings have everything that they need, and you’d have to say in this society today we have everything that we need and more—what happens? *We take everything for granted!* Look what’s happening right now today in the United Kingdom when they had to slash the budget and cut everything back. They’re all out in the streets rioting, looting, burning, spoiled brats. No, God wanted us to have this relationship with Him according to the goodness of His mercy and His love.

Come over here to Deut. 7; here’s something we need to keep in mind. As we’re going through all of this, not only the love of God—because that’s the very reason why Christ came and died—but also to realize that in God we live and move and have our being. ***Everything that we have and everything that there is comes from God!*** Therefore, we can be grateful to Him. Notice *why He has called us* and *why Christ died for us*.

Deuteronomy 7:6: “For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a special people to Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” And that’s exactly true with those who are in the Church of God, have the Spirit of God, and even more so. We are called the ‘ecclesia’—which means *the called out assembly*. What did Jesus say about a calling? *Many are called, but few are chosen!* The reason few are chosen is because few repent.

Verse 7: “The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you *were* the fewest of all people. But because the LORD loved you and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (vs 7-8).

As we go through this, let’s also keep in mind, Egypt is the type of false religion, those things of Satan the devil. That whole society and everything in it, is coupled with Babylon, the foundation of everything that is evil and wrong in the world today. When we’re called into the Church of God, when we are called *to repentance*, He calls us *because He loves us*, He has chosen us, and also to be called, and *to be converted is also a mighty hand*.

Verse 9: “Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with those that love Him and

keep His commandments, to a thousand generations.” Keep that in mind. Also, let’s see here in the book of Deuteronomy how many times God talks about *love*, how many times God talks about *loving Him*.

Deuteronomy 10:12: “And now, Israel... [When we go through and we read the name Israel, think about it as your name.] ...what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... [That is quite a deal for eternal life—right? Think about it!] ...to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens... [out in the furthest reaches of the universe] ...*belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it... [everything that God has made] ...Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today” (vs 12-15). ***So the love of God is there and important in everything that we do and we’re to respond back to God!***

Deuteronomy 11:1: “Therefore, you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge and His statutes and His judgments and His commandments always.” We’re going to see the very reason God does everything that He does is based upon His love and we are to respond back to Him with love.

Verse 13: “And it will be, if you will hearken diligently to My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” How many times does He say this? *Over and over again!*

Now think about it, how unfair it is to the Bible, and unfair to God, to say that the God of the Old Testament was mean and cruel and harsh. What you ought to do is study what’s going to happen to those who reject Christ. It’s mean, it’s cruel, and it’s harsh because they don’t love God.

Verse 32: “And you shall be careful to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.”

Psalms 18:1: “I love You, O LORD, my strength.” There’s one thing that God always does: ***If you love Him, He loves you back!*** But He first loved us so we *could* love Him. And even though things in our lives may turn very bad, He is still always there; that if there’s repentance and there is yieldedness to Him, there is forgiveness, there’s the love of God, which He gives to everyone.

This is quite a Psalm, v 2: “The LORD is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.... [The high tower is to get away from all the mess around here.] ...I will call on the LORD...” (vs 2-3).

Now, that’s what to do when there is trouble. How many people are going to be turning to God with all the difficulties that are taking place now? It was not Rahm Emanuel, who was the first one to come up with, ‘Don’t waste a good crisis.’ *God is!* Because when there are crises and problems, the very reason that they come is so that we will turn to God, so that we will repent. So all of that is to work together for good in everything.

Verse 3: “...I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.” What is your greatest enemy?

- Satan the devil
- the carnal self
- other people that would lead you into sin

God will save us from all of those. What is the last enemy to be destroyed? *Death!* So He will save us from that. That’s the whole purpose of it.

Let’s come here to Romans 3 and let’s see our relationship with God and how that is effectuated in our love. Of course, the whole book of Romans—and oh, by the way, we just got all the transcripts for the series of Romans done; 335 pages, verse-by-verse all the way through. The first eight chapters are this: We start out of with God and you look at the world how evil it is and then the second chapter talks about the choices set before you—eternal life or death. Then the last part of it he talks about the Jews who should have been teaching, but weren’t. Then the third chapter is really quite a fantastic chapter, so let’s look at what God does for us in the forgiveness of our sins.

What is the one verse we don’t need to turn to that everyone and even all the Protestants know: ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have everlasting life’ (John 3:16).’ That’s the whole basis:

- for the New Testament
- for our covenant
- for the Passover

Here’s how sin is forgiven. There has to be:

1. *recognition* of it
2. *sorrow* for it
3. *repentance* over it

Then you come to God and God forgives your sins. Now let’s understand something: ***He doesn’t forgive***

sins in advance! Romans 3:23_[corrected]: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Everyone has sinned.

When I was up in Seattle, I gave a sermon on *What Was Job’s Sin?* Elihu said that you added rebellion to your sin. What was his sin? When everything he did was what God commanded. I’ll tell you what his sin was. *He didn’t ascribe it to God, but to himself!*

Verse 24: “*But* are being justified freely... [Justification means *put in right standing with God*. Isn’t that nice to know? You can be in right standing with God. You don’t want to be in wrong standing with God—do you? Suffer all the difficulties and problems? All the laws of God operate automatic just like the law of gravity.] ...justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus.... [Christ died for our sins, and the sins of all mankind eventually, as it is applied to the whole world through God’s plan.] ...Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past” (vs 24-25).

In the Greek, the word *righteousness* and *justification* are nearly identical. So in this particular section of Romans when it’s talking about *righteousness*, it is to declare his justification; it talks about justified by faith.

Verse 26: “Through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness... [which then leads to justification] ...in the present time, that He might be just and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus. Therefore, where is boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith” (vs 26-27). And what is that law of faith?

- repent
- believe
- be baptized
- receive the Holy Spirit
- believe in the sacrifice of Christ.

Verse 28: “Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith, separate from works of law.” So, when we keep the laws and commandments of God, we’re not keeping works of law. Works of law have to do with either ritual or the laws of Judaism. Whenever we keep the commandments of God,

- we are walking in *His* way
- those are *His* laws
- we are doing *His* works

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [by His sacrifice] ...Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which

we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.... [This does something for us that you can't find in the world, because of the Spirit of God.] ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [We've all had our share of them—haven't we? What do we do with them? *We look back and learn the lesson and realize that those are things that led us to repentance.*] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 1-5). That's the whole reason for the Passover.

We already covered what Jesus went through in the crucifixion and how He suffered, but let's understand this: ***He did it because He Himself loves us!*** Not only does the Father love you, but Christ loves you.

John 10:14, Jesus said: "I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and **I lay down My life for the sheep**" (vs 14-15). Now this was hard for the disciples to understand. He told them on numerous occasions He was going to die, be crucified, and be raised from the dead and it didn't sink in.

Verse 16: "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock and *one* Shepherd. On account of this, the Father loves Me: because **I lay down My life**, that I may receive it back again.... [This He did willingly, as difficult as it was. You go through and read the accounts of what it took for Him.] ...No one takes it from Me, but **I lay it down of Myself**. I have authority to lay it down and authority to receive it back again. This commandment I received from My Father" (vs 16-18).

What then, *in laying down His life*, does Jesus want from us in our relationship with Jesus? We know in the New Testament Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and your neighbor as yourself; and on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.' We know that. So let's see some of the very words on the Passover night which then are part of the words of the New Covenant. So on the Passover night we're going to go through these words. We're going to see the very thing that God wants us to do. First of all we will see it's based on ***belief***. Belief then is the same as faithing.

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.... [We've

got a promise here for us—don't we?] (And that promise is): ..In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you" (vs 1-2). What is that place going to be like? *That's got to be part of New Jerusalem!* I've often wondered, when we see New Jerusalem come down from heaven, then an angel comes over and says, 'Okay, I'm going to escort you to where you're going to live in New Jerusalem.' As we walk in the gates, the big pearl opens up and we look and see there are streets paved with gold. Everything made out of spirit and all the saints. God is going to make it; it's going to be perfect.

Think about this just for a minute. If, in our bodies—which is true—every cell is like a mini-universe, think what God is doing to prepare for us *because He loves us!* That's why we are to love God back.

Then He guarantees it, He says, v 3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also. And where I am going you know, and the way you know.' Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going; how then can we know the way? I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me'" (vs 3-6).

Let's see some other promises that He's given right here in this chapter. Let me tell you something about prayer: ***When you have a lack of belief in your prayers, the way that you increase that belief is to claim the promises of God!*** Remember the man who brought his demon-possessed boy to have the demon cast out. The disciples couldn't do it. When Jesus got there, He did it and the disciples said, 'Why couldn't we do it?' He said, 'This kind comes out by nothing but by prayer and fasting.' So then you add that to it.

Verse 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Let me also say something else concerning prayer. There are things that are called *vain repetitions*, but that's just repeating the same prayer in a monotonous ritual way; that's a vain repetition. However, we are to *pray repeatedly* concerning certain problems until there is an answer. Sometimes that may take years, but then you'll look back and you'll see, yes, God answered those prayers. But He may have taken you a little different course, or maybe a much different course than you figured to answer that prayer.

Verse 14: "If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*." We need to let that sink in! ***He will!*** Some things require lots of prayer. Some things we need to be very persistent in. Other things we have it

where that it says that He's able to do 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' Have you ever had a thought and then somewhere down the road that thought is answered? That's part of it. In response to that, *because of this promise*, we have something that we are to do, just like we read in the book of Deuteronomy.

Verse 15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments.... [With this one then, we receive the promise of the Spirit.] ...And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age... [however long it is until He returns] ...*Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive... [Why can't the world receive the Spirit of Truth? *Because it loves its lies! Because it loves its little cheatings and big cheatings!*] ...because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you" (vs 15-17).

That's the whole goal in this physical life. The Spirit of God in us that we then grow in grace and knowledge and prepare for eternal life. That is possible through the sacrifice of Christ. So this is why He is telling them these things on the Passover night.

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." How does God do that without being seen by other people? And yet, you don't see Him—do you? How does He manifest Himself to you?

- through *answered prayer*
 - through *removal of your sins* when you repent
 - through *intervention* in your life
 - through the *giving* of the Holy Spirit
- and that's how He manifests Himself to you.

"Judas (not Iscariot)..." (v 22) didn't understand that, v 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him'" Through the Spirit of God the Father is dwelling in us and Christ is dwelling in us. Now, you can't have God more manifest than that—right? Unless He's standing right in front of you and you can see Him.

"The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (v 24). Then He says He's going to send the Holy Spirit.

John 15 is perhaps one of the most significant chapters that we have in this series of

chapters from John 14-17. John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.... [John shows we have to remain in Christ] ...He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit" (vs 1-2).

We've got a little old lemon tree that we rescued from wherever it was. It was just about ready to throw away and we pruned that thing back last year. Now it's got lots of leaves and branches and we're going to have some lemons. We also have an orange tree that last year didn't bring forth very many oranges. So what we did, we had them all picked and the tree pruned and guess what's all over the tree? *Oranges!* Now, we hope with our grapefruit tree to do the same thing, but so far that's been a disappointment; the grapefruit's only about the size of an orange.

He cleanses everyone, v 3: "You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you." Remember I gave those three sermons on the *Washing of the Water By the Word?*

- that's why we study
- that's why we pray
- that's why we come to Sabbath services
 - ✓to learn of God
 - ✓to learn of His way
 - ✓to understand
 - ✓to have our minds converted and changed

Verse 4: "Dwell in Me, and I in you..." That's why He said when He broke the bread, 'Take eat, this is My body which is broken for you.' And that's why He said when He poured the wine, 'All of you drink of this, for this is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for the remission of sins of many.'

"Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine... [Christ is the Head. This is why every minister and teacher needs to pay attention to v 5. You're a servant, I'm a servant, and we have to serve the brethren. We have to remain in Christ.] ...*and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast them into a fire, and they are burned.... [But on the other hand]: ...If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you... [notice how this comes together] ...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (vs 4-7).

That's a promise! So we hold God to His promise. Then God holds us to our promise, because when we were baptized we said,

- Yes, Jesus is My Lord
- Yes, I will obey
- Yes, I want eternal life

“...ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you” (v 7). What is the greatest desire we need to have? *Eternal life!* Nothing else in this life is worth it. It talks about where Peter said the whole earth and the heavens around the earth are going to be burned up. So much for all the fortunes, all the money, all the power.

“In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (v 8). Now then, He talks about *how* we are to love Him and we love Him, and *how* we are to live our lives. I don’t know about you, but to be perfected in love, I have a long way to go; I don’t know about the rest of you. But the more you understand about the love of God, the more you realize you need it. The more that you love God, the more that you see yourself as you are and are carnal and miserable you are and how much you need God. So it is a constant continuous thing that is going on.

“As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **live in My love**.... [What was His greatest love? How do we do that?] ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love.... [There’s the answer right there. And what is His commandment? *To love God, to believe God, to follow Him!*] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you” (vs 9-12).

That is the goal! That’s the whole purpose of the Passover. Everything we’ve talked about with ***the love of God is the whole basis and foundation for the Passover***. So when we keep the Passover we read these words.

(go to the next track)

John 15:9—we’ll repeat here because this leads up to something that’s very important. “As the Father has loved Me... [there can’t be any greater love than between the Father and the Son] ...I also have loved you...” And that was expressed in His life, in His teachings, the fact that He was the Creator God manifested in the flesh. And to have that pure love that comes from God to love Them, which also means to love us. So you can read it this way. ‘This is how Jesus also loved me and died for me and gave Himself willingly that I can have my sins forgiven, that I can receive the Holy Spirit, that I can grow in grace and knowledge, look forward to eternal life.’ That is fantastic love!

“...live in My love.... [Let this be the thing that motivates you. We’re going to have difficulties and problems that will sidetrack us as we come along, but you always come back to this:] ...If you keep My commandments...” (vs 9-10). This is how you are going to know you are living in His love.

- Do you desire to?
- Do you long to?
- Do you want to?
- Do you go over the Word of God

—so you can understand it more and more?] “If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love...” (v 10).

If you’re feeling lonely and depressed and hard to really be encouraged, turn here and just start reading some of these verses while you’re on your knees and praying. And say, ‘Oh, God, help me. I feel cut off. I feel...’ whatever you feel and ‘help me in it.’ And He will, because He says: “...just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love” (v 10).

Here’s something that’s very encouraging. On this last Passover, Jesus knew what was going to happen because He gave all the prophecies of everything that would take place. And this was the appointed day for Him to die.

John 17:4: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glory Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed” (vs 4-5). That gave Him a lot of strength and hope, because what He was going to go through; all eternity hinged on what He was going to do. All of this is based on the love of God. But I just imagine that was a very motivating thing for Him to do as we saw there in Heb. 12. That ‘for the joy that lay ahead, He willingly endured the crucifixion, despising the shame.’ He loved the Father and He looked forward to the glory. He had something to really look forward to. As human beings, we are looking forward to the glory, but we have not had the experience of having had it once already as Jesus did. So this was really a motivating factor for Him.

John 15:11: “These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you” (vs 11-12).

Let me just say this: The Church of God is a perfect place to practice that, because you’re always going to meet people that you wouldn’t meet otherwise. You can always love your friends, love your relatives, but it’s hard to meet people you have never known and then really learn to love them. Then also to love them as Christ loves you. This

gives us a whole big challenge or goal in learning to love.

Verse 13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.” Whenever someone comes to repentance and baptism, it is a personal thing. God leads you to repentance so you see what has happened in your life, that your life and all the sins that you have done have caused this great mess that you find yourself in. Generally all of us, when we come to repentance, are pretty much of a big mess—spiritually, physically, mentally, whatever. God is there to redeem us. But because of His love, **He laid His life down and laid it down for His friends**. Have you ever thought of this? You need to think about this! You get lonely and say, ‘No one is around me.’

Christ is in you!
He is your friend!
He loves you!

What’s that hymn, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus? That’s true!*

“You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father” (vs 14-15).

Do we understand the plan of God? *Yes, we do!* How many people know that? How did we know it? *We learned it!* That’s what it is here; it is made known to us. This goes right back where we started in Deut.—doesn’t it?

Verse 16: “You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you.”

Another promise! Notice how many promises we’ve had—four promises of answered prayer—right? Let me just suggest this: If you have some prayers that haven’t been answered and you still have to be patient, but go ahead and take these verses and use these verses of the promise of answered prayer and ask God to intervene. That is called *supplication*. That is *earnest entreaty* of God. ‘Oh, God, You are God Who cannot lie. You have given this promise to us. Please intervene! Please help! Please answer!’

Verse 17: “These things I command you, that you love one another.” Let’s see how we do this; let’s see a little more about this love of God. 1-Peter 1 is kind of like one run-on sentence. In the Greek that’s good grammar, but in English it’s not.

1-Peter 1:14: “As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the former lusts... [Which helps answer that question—right? *Yes!*] ...*as you did* in your ignorance.... [Don’t go back to the way you were.] ...But according as He Who has called you *is* holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all your conduct; for it is written, ‘You be Holy because I am Holy.’.... [How’s that possible? *With the Holy Spirit of God, that’s how it’s possible!*] ...And if you call upon the Father, Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of God; knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from your forefathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (vs 14-19). That’s talking about the very act of the Passover right there.

Verse 20: “Who truly was foreknown before the foundation of *the* world, but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes... [When you read these things: *for you; for your sakes*—take it directly to you, because that’s true.] ...*even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God” (vs 20-21). That’s why you don’t want it in men, you don’t want it in things, you don’t want it in buildings; *you want it in God!*

Verse 22: “Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit... [That’s how we love one another. That love is perfected through the different things that we go through.] ...love one another fervently with a pure heart.... [Not a double heart, not two-faced, not the way that the world does. *No!* The way that God wants us to do it.] ...*For* you have been begotten again, not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible *seed*, by *the* living Word of God, *which* remains forever” (vs 22-23). This gives us some guides on how we’re going to grow in love. Here’s one thing we need to do: Not only grow in grace and knowledge and grow in love, but ***we have to keep ourselves in the love of God!***

2-Thessalonians 3:1: “As for the rest, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and may be glorified, in the same way that *it has been* with you; and that we may be delivered from perverse and wicked men, for all *are* not of the faith.... [Yeah, Paul was chased around an awful lot.] ...But the Lord is faithful, Who will establish you...” (vs 1-3). Notice these people were recent converts. So God will establish us. How does He do that?

- with His love
- with His *faith*
- with His *Truth*

- with *study*

And now we have all the tools right with us with the whole Word of God. "...and keep *you* from the evil one" (v 3). And that's what Jesus prayed in His last prayer in John 17. He said, 'Father, I pray that you keep them from the evil one.' We have our part. We've got to resist in faith—don't we? *Yes!*

Verse 4: "Now concerning you, we trust in the Lord that you both practice and will be practicing the things that we command you. And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into *the* endurance of Christ" (vs 4-5). See how all that fits in with the other Scriptures we've covered already.

The one thing that encroaches upon the love of God is the world, and today we've got a world that is so powerful, so glitzy, so automatic, so gadgetized, electronicized, and so many—what should I say—things, pleasures, everything. And Satan is there as the 'prince of the power of the air' and he's got all kinds of helpers out there with him.

I was flipping through the channels. I don't know how many channels you have on your television, one television that Dolores watches most of the time, that has the most channels. She's got a western channel that when everything else is so bad, she turns to the western channel. You look at it, old Gene Autry was pretty good, way back when. I was flipping through the channels and here comes an ad for a Joel Osteen tour. It's supposed to be a big revival where everyone's out there like a big rock concert going back and forth and the lights are going. You know what those lights do? *They hypnotize you!*

Then they have the music so loud that you don't hear it. It goes *through* you. Just like these people that drive around with their car windows down and they've got the bass going—Boom! Boom! Some of them having it going to loud, the house vibrates. All the houses are vibrating as they're going down the street and he's got the windows down. 'Is anybody watching me?' kind of thing. I was watching that ad and I thought, a lot of people are going to run out there. A lot of people are going to say—because he preaches self-improvement. 'Oh, I want to be better. I want God on my side.' But he doesn't tell them really, *you've got to get on God's side!*

Here's a safeguard, what not to love, 1-John 2:1: "Do not love the world... [Only God can do that because He's God.] ...nor the things *that are* in the world... [We can use all of those things and not be captivated by them.] ...If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." So maybe this helps answer some of the questions we've discussed:

- When is a person really converted?
- How does that take place?
- Have they really forsaken the world?

"Because everything that is in the world..." (v 16). Now what I want you to do is take your remote, if you got 200 channels, go through all 200. You watch the news; the world's going to hell in a hand basket, falling apart. But every commercial comes on—happy, *happy*, good, *good*. Everybody's smiling.

I went through—because all the commercials are on at the same time on all stations, so one station can't snatch you away from another, so I was going through watching the commercials, and yes, everybody's smiling. Then I turned back on the news and here's the grim reality in Japan and the grim reality in all of the Muslim countries. There are too many now, you can't even name them. They're all up in the air. Then comes on another commercial. 'Oh, take this thing, this is such a wonderful thing. You'll be happy and enjoy it and especially this medicine, but be careful, you may have suicidal tendencies or you want to strangle your wife or beat up your kids. If so, you better consult your doctor.' Maybe you'll run in the office and choke him, 'Why did you give this to me?'

"...—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes... [Television sure has got that. They had all of that in their world. They had public pornography carved in stone.] ...and the pretentious pride of physical life—... [There's one ad with national cars. 'How great you are, you are great, you are marvelous, you are wonderful, you deserve this. Now you can pay the lowest price and you can get the biggest car.' Or 'I'm the greatest,' or whatever with the sports, or whatever.] ...is not from the Father, but is from the world" (v 16).

So here's a safeguard for us, so that we don't get led astray and we're not taken down by our lusts and by sin and things like this. "And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (v 17). *A promise!*

Here's another thing that can get you down. When you sin—notice I didn't say *if*—you get a guilty conscience—don't you? Sometimes people let that guilty conscience continue on and on and they don't repent. When you sin, repent in your mind, right there on the spot. Don't wait! You can pray about it on your knees a little later, too. Because what we're told here is how then this leads up to love being perfected in us, and part of the way that love is perfected in us, is by having our sins forgiven continually. That's part of the grace of God, like a big umbrella under which we are dwelling.

1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not

practicing the Truth.... [Don't believe your own little lies because the human mind wants to deceive itself. 'It's okay, it's not as bad as it really looks. I know other people who have done worse than this.' Whatever your excuse is.] ...However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ... [through the Passover, The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world] ...through Jesus Christ, His own Son, **cleanses us from all sin.**" (vs 6-7).

Again, what did Jesus say? 'The words that I've spoken to you, you are clean through that.' Again, the washing of the water by the Word. I'm going to give a fourth sermon on *The Washing of the Water By the Word*, and I'm going to entitle it, *What Controls Your Mind?* Do you? or Does something else? Whatever your mind is preoccupied with, that's controlling your mind. Now sometimes it can be temporary, like some stupid jingle on an ad that you hear and it runs through your mind over and over again, like it's a broken record. You have to pray and say, 'Oh, God, cleanse that out of my mind.' It may take a day or two, but get rid of it.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.... [That's self-explanatory there, but it's a big problem with Protestants.] ...If we confess our own sins..." (vs 8-9). Who do we confess them to? *God!* Christ is

our Intercessor
our Mediator
our sacrifice
the Head of the Church.

"If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins... [Right back where we started in Rom. 3—correct? That's an ongoing thing.] ...and to cleanse... [again, *cleansing*] ...from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (vs 9-10).

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin... [notice how that is phrased: *may not sin*] ...And yet, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; and He is *the* propitiation for our sins... [What does propitiation mean? *It means continual mercy through the atoning blood of Christ!*] ...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (vs 1-2).

Then of course, that's *in God's time*. He hasn't forgiven the world now. Now is not the world's time for salvation. That's not going to come until we are raised from the dead or changed at the return of Christ and come back and take over the

world. Then the world's opportunity is going to come. Then their day will come.

1-John 5:14, again concerning prayer. "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." Now think about that when you confess your sins, which we just talked about.

- Does He hear us? *Yes!*
- Does He forgive us? *Yes!*
- Is He faithful to forgive us? *Yes!*

"And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him. **If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin that is not unto death...**" (vs 15-16). What is a sin not unto death? *A sin not unto death is a sin that can be repented of!* So, if you see someone sinning, you don't run up to them and say, 'Oh, you've sinned, you've done this, you've done that.' *No!* If it's a sin not unto death, you pray for them, ask God to help them, ask God to lead them to repentance.

"...he shall ask, and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that sin, I do not say that he should make *any* supplication *to God*. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death" (vs 16-17). That is a sin you can repent of.

- Can you repent of lying? *Yes!*
- Can you repent of being obnoxious? *Yes!*

Sometimes you have to do that a lot. I've been known for that, too. Hopefully I'm making some improvement along the line. But whatever it may be. Then you have, what if you've sinned really grievously, can God forgive you for that? *Yes!* Remember the prodigal son! But in that case, you've got to come to yourself, like it says. When he was out there feeding the swine, all the things he wanted to eat and for a Jewish kid out there standing in the manure and muck and mud and feeding the swine, you couldn't have a dirtier job. And if you've ever been out where swine are feeding, you better be careful, your leg may become part of their dinner real quickly. And he was told, 'You can't eat any of that corn. That's to make these pigs fat so I can get them on the market.'

So he said, 'I was a fool. I spent everything I had.' *He came to himself* and he said, 'I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to go back to my father and I'm going to tell him, you've got many servants here that have lots of food and I'm starving to death, just let me be one of your servants.' And the father saw him a long way off. And he was rehearsing in his mind as he was going. 'I'm going to say, father, I've sinned against you and sinned against heaven. Just make me one of your servants.' And the father

saw him, brought him in, cleaned him up, gave him new clothes, had a party, and rejoiced.

So if you're a prodigal son or daughter, God will receive you back. Don't slip up on that one when you get back with that. Then if that happens, all of those of you who are faithful and stayed in the church, don't say, 'Well, look at this guy or this gal who's back.' Can God forgive? *Of course!* Do you want God to forgive you? *Yes!*

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard*..." This is interesting in the Greek, because the two words *by this*, in the Greek is

- 'en'—*by*
- 'tontos'—*this*

But it doesn't tell you what *this* is. And it's all the way through here—by this, by this, in 1-John. So you have to fill in the words. So I filled in the word 'standard,' because I thought 'by this we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments,' what is that? *That's the standard*—right? That's how you know.

"...by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments.... [Here's what John does a lot. He looks at it the opposite way.] ...The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in Him" (vs 3-5).

- Do you believe in God? *Yes!*
- Do you believe the Word of God is true? *Yes!*
- Do you think you know Him?

"The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar... [That's not very kind—is it? That's not politically acceptable—is it? *No! But it's in the Bible!*] ...and the Truth is not in him.... [notice the contrast]: ...On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [this expands out to the whole Word of God] ...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected... [the love of God is perfected by *growing and overcoming*] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him" (vs 4-5).

Verse 6 becomes the challenge. This is a good one to remember for Sunday-keeping Christians. "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked."

- How did Jesus walk when He was on the earth?
- What did He keep?
- What did He do?
- How was His relationship with God?
- What do you do?

You say you're a Christian. *You're obligating yourself to walk even as He walked.* That's quite a standard—isn't it?

Come over here to 1-John 4, because this ties together the love of God and the sacrifice of Christ. 1-John 4:4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them... [That is, the evil in the world.] ...because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world.... [Greater than Satan, greater than the evil people, and so forth.] ...They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them" (vs 4-5). That's exactly what you will experience if you start talking to them. They think that *politically* they can solve spiritual problems, but they can't. They might be able to modify them a bit, but they can't solve them.

"We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6). There's a dividing line that God has between His people and the world, and between His Spirit and the spirit of the world—the spirit of deception. That's why I've called Washington, D.C.—Washington, D.L.C., 'District of Liars and Corruption.' It's in the grips of denial and lies. Now there are some few trying valiantly to do some things, but those in power don't want to do it.

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God.... [That's what we need to grow in—being perfected in love.] ...The one who does not love does not know God because God is love. In this *way*... [let's notice how this love was manifest to us]: ...In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him" (vs 7-9). That goes right back to John 15 that we read. 'Live in My love. You are My friends. I have called you.'

"In this *act* is **the** love... [Now this is in the Greek is 'en toutoo,' in this is the love, literal translation—*the* love.] (So he explains what it is): ...—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins.... [**God loved us first!** Part of God's love is to lead us to repentance.] ...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another" (vs 10-11).

And isn't that what Jesus said on the Passover night, John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same that I have loved you..." We are duty-bound to love one another.

Then he talks about in 1-John 4:12: “No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.”

- growing in grace
- growing in love
- growing in knowledge
- growing in understanding
- continually reaching out

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God” (vs 14-15).

If you carefully analyze most of the Christian-professing denominations beginning with the Catholics, they don’t believe that Jesus was really a human being. They believe that Jesus was possessed by the one Who was Christ, possessed the body of Jesus. And they still believe it to this day.

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love...” And that’s what the Passover is all about:

- the love of God
- our love to God
- our commitment to Christ
- Christ’s commitment to us
- the commitment of the Father

And it’s in a covenant pledge bound by the death of Christ, bound by our symbolic death in the watery grave of baptism joined to His crucifixion. That’s why it says we are to crucify the flesh.

“...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, **the love of God is perfected within us...** [a process; that’s what conversion is] ...is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.... [notice what the love of God does in relationship to God]: ...There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment....” (vs 16-18).

If you have a lot of fear, go to God and say, ‘God, help me overcome the fear.’ There are a lot of fearful things that are taking place in the world. A lot of things we worry about that can happen, especially women with their children as they’re growing up and even after they’re grown up—worry about them. Remember, worry never solved a thing because *worry brings on fear*. Put it in God’s hands.

“...perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.... [See how this is all together. There it is.] ...We love Him because He

loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this is the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 18-21).

So that’s another view of the Passover!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 50:1-3, 5
- 2) Deuteronomy 6:1-8, 10-12
- 3) Deuteronomy 7:6-9
- 4) Deuteronomy 10:12-15
- 5) Deuteronomy 11:1, 13, 32
- 6) Psalm 18:1-3
- 7) Romans 3:23-28
- 8) Romans 5:1-5
- 9) John 10:14-18
- 10) John 14:1-6, 13-17, 21, 23-24
- 11) John 15:1-12, 9-10
- 12) John 17:4-5
- 13) John 15:11-17
- 14) 1-Peter 1:14-23
- 15) 2-Thessalonians 3:1-5
- 16) 1-John 2:15-17
- 17) 1-John 1:6-10
- 18) 1-John 2:1-2
- 19) 1-John 5:14-17
- 20) 1-John 2:3-6
- 21) 1-John 4:4-11
- 22) John 13:34
- 23) 1-John 4:12, 14-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 5
- John 3:16
- John 14:22
- Hebrews 12

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *The Covenant Between God the Father and Jesus Christ*
- What Was Job’s Sin?

Sermon Series:

- *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*
- *Washing of the Water By the Word*

FRC:lp
 Transcribed:4-4-11
 Formatted: 4-6-11