



# United Church of God *an International Association*

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Dearest brethren of Christ's Body,

In less than a month, we will observe the New Testament Passover based on Christ's example. Many of you have observed it multiple times. Some will take part for the *very first time* as newly baptized members of the Body of Christ. Together we will observe this sobering, yet awe-inspiring, ceremony consisting of the foot washing, the taking in faith of the New Covenant symbols of the bread and wine, and the Scripture reading from the book of John. This annual festival provides us with the opportunity to reflect in faith what Jesus did for us individually and for all humanity.

What actually *did* Jesus do for you and me? His incredible sacrifice makes possible the very plan of God for humanity. The opening of the book of John eloquently and powerfully provides important background for comprehending the magnitude of this annual festival. John explains to you and me that Jesus Christ is both *no less* than God (John 1:1-2) and that He eternally *pre-existed* with the One whom we now have the amazing privilege of a calling (John 6:44)—God the Father. The eternally existing Word, as Jesus is described here, *emptied His divinity* in order to become a human.

Let's look and consider what this means for each of us. As we approach the Passover festival, Paul instructs us to examine ourselves (1 Corinthians 11:28-30) and appropriately discern the Lord's body.

What does it mean to "discern the Lord's body"? This year, as we individually prepare ourselves to observe this all-important festival, let's focus on and appreciate *the full dimension of Who* Jesus is and exactly *what* He did for each and every one of us.

The apostle Paul illustrated that dimension when he wrote to the disciples of Jesus living in Ephesus. He powerfully told the Ephesians that he *fervently* prayed to God the Father that God would "grant you to be *strengthened with power* through his Spirit in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16, English Standard Version, emphasis added throughout).

What would be the outcome of being "strengthened with power?" Paul writes plainly: "That Christ may  *dwell in your hearts* through faith" and that the disciples—including *us today*—would have the spiritual ability to *fully discern and understand* the "breadth and length and height and depth"—the full dimension—of the love that Jesus Christ has for each one of us and, further, what the full application of that means for us.

As we approach the Passover, it is good to reflect on the fact that Jesus Christ is God and is to be *worshipped* as God. The Gospel writers provide us with many examples of this. One of many such incidences comes after Jesus amazed the disciples by walking on water: "Those who were in the boat *worshiped Him*, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Matthew 14:33).

## The Lamb of God

When John the Baptist introduced Jesus Christ, he cried out: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). His role as the Lamb of God was known in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when Paul openly declared to a Gentile church in Greece that, “Christ, *our Passover lamb*, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7, ESV). In Revelation, the capstone book of the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the “Lamb of God” no less than 28 times! As recorded in the book of Revelation, the Word—Jesus Christ in His pre-human existence—was known to be “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

The book of Revelation links us with connectivity from the prehistory to the future. We read here the accounts of victory in what was accomplished by the blood of the Lamb—the victory that God wants to share with us. Consider the events taking place at the very throne of God:

“And I looked, and behold, in *the midst of the throne* and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, *stood a Lamb as though it had been slain*” (Revelation 5:6). A powerful song breaks out within the heavenly throne room of God: “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).

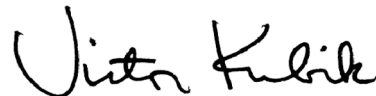
A major part of our worshipping the Son of God is to *be in a renewed and refreshed spirit of repentance* before, during and after the Passover service. Personal sins that have not been examined obstruct the way to God the Father. I earnestly invite you to think on this: some of our sins are obvious to us and others around us. But some are known only to you and God. And, secret and presumptuous sins may be known by others, but you may be clueless. The solution? Use this time of Passover preparation to ask God to grant you repentance and *lead you to change*.

There is, of course, much more I could write to encourage you to redeem this time before the Passover. Please review my current article on the “lessons of the Passover Bread” in the current issue of *Beyond Today*.

The coming Passover should be a time of spiritual alignment, a time of syncing with God the Father as Jesus revealed Him to us, and a time of recommitment to our older sibling Jesus Christ—whom we adore and worship as well. Let us prepare to observe the Passover in a worthy manner!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ’s service,



Victor Kubik