

# *Body of Christ*

By Warren Zehrung – Feb 12, 2005

As we approach and prepare for Passover we need to begin thinking about certain concepts.

What does Passover mean? It is not a Feast day that you just go into haphazardly. The scriptures talk about taking it worthily. It is talking about being in a right attitude, being in a right state of mind and understanding what it means and so forth.

One concept that we need to understand, think about, and know more about, at Passover time, is the "Body of Christ." What significance does it have? It is a phrase that can easily be taken too lightly. There is so much said about it in the Bible. One of the purposes today is to see what the Bible says about it, and the Apostle Paul is the one who expounds on this concept way more than anybody else does. Paul turns it into something that is very, very profitable for us.

I suppose that most people think, "I have a body, everybody has a body, and Jesus Christ had a body too. He was born a little baby boy, with a little baby boy body, and then He grew up to have a man's body, which was the "Body of Christ." Well that is right on the surface of what the body of Christ means. But then Paul builds on that.

We miss out on a great deal of Biblical significance and understanding if we only think of Jesus' physical body when we hear the phrase, "Body of Christ." We are going to go way beyond that.

I would like to begin today, by turning to the four places that the phrase, "Body of Christ" is used in the Bible.

One good thing about having these scriptures explain what the "Body of Christ" can mean to the church, and to us, is that we know that we are not expanding on the concept beyond what the Bible intends and allows, because we have Paul's inspired words. Some of the concepts that Paul reaches out to and says, 'This is what the Body of Christ is about', we would dare to say, "Well, I do not know that might be going a little bit too far, I do not know if it means that or if it does not". The good thing is that we have it coming out of the scriptures for us.

**Romans 7:4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the **body of Christ**; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

**I Corinthians 10:16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the **body of Christ**?

I did a sermon a few years ago, on "Discerning the Lord's Body." What we will be speaking about today is somewhat different, and it will tie in very well with that message.

**I Corinthians 12:27** Now you are the **body of Christ**, and members in particular.

**Ephesians 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the **body of Christ**:

Those are the four places that it appears in the scriptures exactly in that phraseology. We will see a lot more where it is expounded a little, for example "*body of Jesus Christ.*"

If you did a study what wealth of information would you expect to find in the Bible about a topic like the "Body of Christ?" You will be surprised as we go through the scriptures today, as the Bible says a great deal and uses metaphors, analogies and types, and takes the body of Christ and really builds it into something that is very, very big and important. It is important for us to grasp it, so that we will understand Passover better, and we can prepare for Passover better.

One of the things that I do when I am putting a message together like this is sometimes I go to other Bible helps, and even once and a while I will go to the Catholic encyclopedia, because I want to know what has the pagan world, the Protestant world, what have they understood? It was interesting, because for the "Body of Christ" they just totally skipped the concept until they get to the resurrection and then they put that into Easter, and the "Body of Christ" resurrected. They completely missed what Paul talked about, they completely missed the concept that we will be looking at in the scriptures today.

When we talk about somebody, or we say that Christ had a body, we do not usually separate, in our thinking, the person from their body.

For example we do not say, "Here comes Joe, and he has his body with him, the body of Joe". So, we say, the "Body of Christ," why do we not say Christ? We are saying the "Body of Christ," because there is a lot more there, and it has so much significance. We unitize the body and person, but with regards to Jesus Christ's body we are going to see that the "Body of Christ" takes on great meanings and significance that we need to readily understand.

What can we gather about the "Body of Christ?"

Personally, I like to make a list, in order to have the different meanings stand out.

I will refer to the list from time to time, as we go through the message.

1. As we have seen, first of all, the basic meaning of the "Body of Christ" was the physical body that Jesus Christ possessed. Maybe He was 5' 10" tall, and weighed 165 pounds, whatever size you like to think. That does not matter, perhaps we will find out in the resurrection.

We are talking about the "Body of Christ" with the holes in the hands, feet, and had the side pierced. The one that had the flesh was torn by a whip. The body that had the holes punched in the scalp from the crown of thorns. Christ's body took a tremendous flogging. He was punched in the mouth, and slapped on His face. They blindfolded Him and asked Him to prophesy who was hitting Him. That was Christ's physical body.

2. There was the "Body of Christ" that was killed. Jesus Christ was crucified on a stake. Jesus became dead in the true sense of the word.

3. The "Body of Christ" was eaten. *"Take, eat this is My body."*

This next point on the list we really need to develop well.

4. The "Body of Christ" is us.

We will talk about all of these points as we go through the sermon.

5. The "Body of Christ" was buried and resurrected from death, from the grave, and given life.

If Jesus was still dead, if He had been left dead, then we would have no hope of eternal life. Someone said to me that Jesus brought Himself back to life. Well if He did, He was not really dead was He, because when you are dead your thoughts perish and you cannot jumpstart yourself.

**Romans 6:4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

6. The "Body of Christ" is the Church of God. If this is not clear to us then it needs to become very clear. The world does not understand that point. It is similar to point number 4, but I want to be very specific, it is the Church.

I think, today, that we are finally starting to lock into this concept a little bit better. One of the big churches is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and in doing so I was thinking back to the days when we were going through the Apostasy and if a minister or somebody said, "Well, the church says, or I have checked with the church", he was talking about Pasadena and it was hard. I remember even in the early days of writing the "Countdown" I tried to stay away from the word 'church' because when you say 'the Church' people would say, "which one?" The word Church has a specific meaning, and I think that we are starting to come to understand that.

7. The "Body of Christ" became "sin." This is a rather complicated concept that we need to be familiar with, so that we can better understand how Jesus Christ is working out our salvation. That is a concept that a lot of people are not familiar with. The "Body of Christ" became sin. We need to look deeper into the meaning of these phrases and see what the scriptures reveal for us.

Jesus Christ has only ONE true Church. Let us get away from thinking that there are lots of churches. There are a lot of denominations, a lot of splits, a lot of scattered groups, but Jesus Christ has only ONE true Church. He said:

**Matthew 16:18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus said that He would build or construct His own 'ekklesia,' and it means an assembly, group, or congregation. It means, 'the people.' As we go through the sermon today, we will see that 'the people' are different from all the rest of the people in the world. Suffice it to say, Jesus said, "I will build My Church." That is singular, He only has one Church.

Today, we find ourselves in a world of religious confusion. There are all kinds of explanations as to what the Church should be. There are so many groups, different organizations, individuals, and churches and many, if not all of them, claim to represent Christ's true Church.

Brethren, we understand that the Church of God is not a physical building, but a spiritual entity. I had somebody ask me just this week, "Where is your church?" Meaning where is the building with the steeple on the top, the bell and the tower. They think that the church is on the corner. The Catholics would say the church is in Rome, where the Pope resides. When the world says church, they do not think of what Christ was talking about when He said, "I will build My Church." He was not talking about building a building. Probably a lot of people when they read that, they think that He was a carpenter and that He built His own church. That is what the pagan world does. They try to find out where the crucifixion took place, where the baptism took place, and they build a huge monument or edifice. When Jesus Christ said, "I will build My Church", He is talking about a spiritual organism, it is a spiritual entity and it cannot be seen with eyes, cannot be perceived with the five senses. Christ's Church will be an organization, an assembly of "called out" ones, called by God the Father. John 6:44 and John 6:65 talk about God the Father drawing us and then Christ takes us and starts the process of salvation. God grants us repentance, grants us faith, and so forth.

The true "Church of God" is the body (group) of true believers that God the Father has called to be a part of the "Body of Christ." Each one of us is only a part of the Body of Christ. In using that analogy, as we will see in the sermon, Christ will be the Head of that Body, and then we will be another part of the Body.

The true "Church of God" stretches over time and distance. It is not in a place, it is not in a given time.

The true Church of God is that body of true believers who make up the "Body of Christ."

They have the Spirit of God, and they are scattered all over the face of the earth. It might be nice for some to have a large congregation that they can get together with each Sabbath, and go to the Feast with. We are in a time right now where God's Church is greatly scattered over the face of the earth. We were a large number back in the days of Worldwide, if you want to call 160,000 or so going to the Feast one year. That is very small by the world's standards, and those who have hung on to the truth are very small today.

Here is a very clear definition of what a Christian is.

**Romans 8:14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

There is another term that is synonymous with the "Body of Christ." The 'sons of God' are the Body of Christ. If you change this around, and if you are not led by the Spirit of God, then you are not a part of the "Body of Christ," and you are not sons of God.

A Christian then is one who has been given, who has received God's Holy Spirit. We are not going to go into begotten and begetting, and so forth. But, the Christian has become a true child of God. As John wrote, *"Even now you are children of God, and does not yet appear what we will be..."*

A true Christian is one in whom God (in Spirit) lives.

I would just like to issue a warning, because we run across this more and more. There are so many heresies abounding in the world. And I do not like to say it, but there are heresies that have gained growth among the people of God, in the churches of God.

The first heresy is the 'Trinity.' It says that the Holy Spirit is a divine entity equal to the Father and Jesus. Books have been written about this false pagan concept and it pre-dates Christ and Christianity.

The second heresy, and one that still has quite a few adherents, is that of 'Arianism.' There was an Egyptian priest named Arius, and this is what his religion is called. But he denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. He taught that Jesus Christ was a creation of the Father, like you and I were created. We did not used to exist, and there was a time when we were not on this earth, and we did not possess any of our faculties. He teaches that Christ also came into existence.

The third heresy, and one that is gaining adherence in the Church of God is that of 'Oneness.' They say that there is only one God, the Father and Jesus Christ are the

same one. They may not like that kind of definition, but they try to explain it, and they say that Jesus Christ and His Father are one.

I will just show you a couple of problems with the 'Oneness" doctrine. We touched on one of them a little while ago. If there is only one, when Jesus was crucified and He was dead, and He was put into grave for three days and three nights. If He had the power Himself and the cognition to raise Himself from the dead, then He was not dead the way that we call dead, and the scriptures are clear that we are still in our sins, and we have no hope of salvation.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, [Logos, Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God.

That says that there are at least two, for the Word to be with God. If you only have one it cannot be with something else. Jesus Christ does have His divinity. It is not my purpose in today's message to explain the many places that show the relationship of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ says that the Father is greater than I am, and so forth. This is another scripture that denies the Trinity right there.

**Hosea 4:6** My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:

**John 14:23** Jesus said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we [the Father and Jesus] will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Jesus is talking about the fact that God, both the Father and Jesus, come and live in us. There are a number of scriptures that show that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and that is what this is talking about in John 14:23. God the Father and Jesus Christ come and live in our temple. We like to think that I will go to the temple of the Lord; I will abide in the Lord's temple. But this concept of spirit allows for God the Father and Jesus Christ to make Their abode with us.

At the point that we just saw, when God the Father and Jesus Christ come and live in an individual, that is when they become a part of the Body of Christ. It takes place at baptism, that is when hands are laid on us and we receive God's Spirit, and that is how God abides in us. At the point when God the Father and Jesus Christ make Their abode in us, that is when we become a part of the "Body of Christ."

**I Corinthians 12:12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

Paul here is talking about a regular physical body as we know it. Look at your body you have two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth. Joe's body is just one; there is just one of Joe. The body is one, it is unitized, it is compact, it is integrated, and everything works together; the heart pumps blood to all of the body, the nervous system goes to all of the body. Paul is drawing a picture for us. Paul is

not just talking about the physical body of Christ; he is speaking spiritually here and is going beyond the analogy of the physical human person with the fleshly body.

**I Corinthians 12:13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Just like Jesus speaking of the Father says, "My Father and I are one." In what way are they one? They agree on everything, They work for the same things, They have the same love, They are making the sacrifice to bring humanity into the family of God. We are baptized into one body. Paul uses the phraseology "*drink into one Spirit.*" It is interesting that he is saying that, because that ties it in more with Passover than when we think about baptism. How many of you when you were baptized drank out of whatever you were baptized in, whether it was the creek, the lake, or the trough. Analogies can be carried too far. We were made to drink into one Spirit means that we have the life of God, begotten right now. We are not born into the Kingdom of God, we are not born spiritual beings yet, but it is as real as a mother carrying her baby, to use that analogy.

**I Corinthians 12:14, 27** For the body is not one member, but many. "Now you are the Body of Christ, and members in particular."

We are still distinct members, but he says "you are the 'Body of Christ'". We see here both number four and number six. We are the "Body of Christ", and the "Body of Christ" is the church. It is very important for us to understand this and it is not understood well enough by many, many people.

Jesus is the Head of His Church, and converted Christians are individual parts of His body, the Church of God.

**Ephesians 1:17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Remember number six on our list; Jesus is the Head of the Church.

**Ephesians 1:22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

God the Father is the one who made Jesus Christ the Head of the Church.

**Ephesians 1:23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

You need to go back in your own Bible study time and read these in context and study them out. At best all that we can do is come up with a framework to show us what to build on. This very clearly establishes that Jesus Christ is the Head, and that He is the Head over the church which is His body.

**Ephesians 2:16-19** And that he [Jesus] might reconcile both [Gentiles and Jews] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

We used to be strangers and foreigners to the truth of God, to the "Body of Christ," to the Church of God. *"We are saints and of the household of God."* These sayings are interchangeable with the "Body of Christ", the "Church of God", the "saints", the "household of God", the "brethren", and so forth.

**Ephesians 3:6** That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

It is really easy to read over right there, but that is the "Body of Christ." Gentiles can come into the church and be a part of the body. We all have to be the children of Abraham.

The Gentiles if they are Christ's then they are Abraham's seed, and they are the children of Abraham and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Jesus Christ has only one body, and thus He has only one Church.

**Ephesians 4:4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

God has seen to it that we receive all the teaching and instruction required.

**Ephesians 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Edification should be edifying, and there should be peace, happiness, joy, and comfort among the people of God.

Now see the concept of the whole church:

**Ephesians 4:16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The "whole body" – that is the people that pray, that is the people that fast, that is the people who preach, that is the people that encourage and comfort. Every part of the body is important. Which vertebrae would you take out? Which bone would you take out of your leg or your arm? You start taking parts off the body and you start having someone that is lame, someone that is crippled and incapacitated. The church edifies itself, it should lift itself. Down through history when has the church risen to this high

level, this high standard that is explained here? We went through a time, in the Worldwide Church of God, when the church was growing, and we were putting the gospel out, and we were warning the world. But we were calling people in, and it was very hard for people to develop into this kind of fullness that we see here, with the church edifying itself in love. We had the same problems in the Church of God that we see Paul addressing at that first Passover after the New Testament church got started. Can you imagine what Passover must have been like? Today, when it is time for Passover we know that we are all going to meet right about sunset, and we know where the room is, and when we go in there we know what we are going to do. These people went to keep Passover, and keep in mind that they were not there at the Passover with Jesus Christ, the year before. That was Jesus Christ and the twelve disciples, who became the twelve Apostles. None of the brethren, the other people were there. They came along at Pentecost some seven or so weeks later. They received God's Holy Spirit. Now, three quarters of a year has passed and we come all the way to the time of Passover.

How would you like to have been the one standing at the door, you did not bring a basin or a towel. Who is in charge of bringing the matzos? We know what to expect, but these people in the early church did not. In fact, what they tried to do was to have this great big supper, and some of them were getting drunk. This showed you their lack of growth in those early days, and Paul had to address that.

The Church of God, when the apostasy set in, was not a whole lot better than that. There were a lot of politics and all kinds of sin in the church. But look at the way that beautiful verse ends: *"...maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."* Everybody working with the gifts that God has given them makes increase of the body and to the edifying of itself to love.

**Ephesians 5:30** For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

We could do a whole sermon on that verse right there. We know that we are going to marry Jesus Christ, and what does Christ say? The husband and the wife shall become one flesh. We see that concept here in Ephesians 5.

We are going to get an outline, a framework to build on this concept about the "Body of Christ." It is so much more than the physical body; it is the church. This helps us to understand verses **18, 21-22**: And he [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight..

That is you and I, we were alienated, we were worthy of death. It is nice to be cleaned up, and Passover will picture again our being cleaned up. We were baptized once, we received God's Holy Spirit, we received forgiveness. Each year we have our

feet washed, we become soiled, we are not perfect, we are yet sinners and we come short. So we go through the foot washing and it is a reminder, a reenactment of our actual baptism when we were cleaned all over, and became children of God.

Here we are going to see a definition of the Church of God, a definition of the saints, a definition of the "Body of Christ."

**Colossians 1:24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church...

Paul is talking about how he was suffering trying to take care of the needs of the church.

But notice, "*for his body's sake, which is the church.*" So we see again the definition that the "Body of Christ" is the church.

I know that I am skipping over and that may be disconcerting to some extent, but when we come back and study it sometimes these will not jump off the page at us. We do not see that Paul is explaining all of the things to the church in the context of us all being inseparable parts of the "Body of Christ."

**Colossians 2:13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses...

We were sinners, and we were dead. The way we would say it today is 'we were as good as dead'. Because, why? The penalty of sin is death, and so we all deserve to die, and that is all that we deserved. "...*Hath he quickened together with him,*" means that we have been made alive, or 'we are as good as being alive'.

**Colossians 2:14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

What was nailed to the cross? There is that old argument, and I do not how many people on the outside really care what we believe, but they would say that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross, and we do not have to keep them any more. A lot of the people that are in churches of God today, stayed around well after the Worldwide Church of God were saying, 'The Ten Commandments have been done away with', and that they had been nailed to the cross. That is heresy! What was nailed to the cross was Jesus Christ Himself. Then, three hours later, there was nothing left of Jesus Christ but a body. And that represented our sins.

Point number 7 that I gave was that the "Body of Christ" became sin. We need to explain that just a little.

**Colossians 2:16-17** Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

The end of this verse "*but the body is of Christ,*" goes with, "Let no man therefore judge you," but the body of Christ. There is no 'is' as it says in the King James version. They were trying to make sense of this verse, not understanding these things that you and I are blessed to receive. It says; 'Let no man judge you therefore, but the body of Christ'. That is the criteria to use to judge. If somebody in the "Body of Christ" comes along and says: 'You are going on Sunday, you have that wrong'. Or, 'you are doing some other thing wrong'. Yes, the "Body of Christ" is the one that will judge us if we are wrong. We are helpers of our brother; we are our brother's keeper.

The Church of God has the true doctrines of Jesus Christ and that is the correct answer that we are looking for.

**Colossians 3:15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

You see how Paul is ascribing to the church this lack of confusion, this lack of hate, and this peace. He keeps coming back to "*one body.*" Yes, there are some Colossians, there are some Ephesians, there are some Romans, and they are all over. We could make a list of all of the ones mentioned in the New Testament. There is only one Church, and there is only one Body.

As we go through these scriptures, we see everything tied together. We see that the church members of the true Church are called the saints, the Church of God, they are called the Body of Christ, they are called the brethren, they are called the household of God, and they are called the assembly of God.

**Hebrews 13:3** Remember them that are in bonds, [jail] as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

There were quite a few Christians who were slaves, and they had a lord and master in the physical form. He owned them, and they may have been pagans themselves, and the slaves were the ones that were Christians. He is saying that we should remember our Christian brothers who are not free like we are. Maybe they could not go to the Feast, maybe some of them had harsh task masters that locked them up or chained them on the Sabbath. He was telling them to have some empathy.

You cannot say, 'Oh, they must have made the wrong choice; I was born in the right family, and they are just low-lives'. Paul says, "*...as bound with them,*" there is that unity of the Spirit. He says, "*remember them which suffer adversity...*": people who are

sick, who have lost jobs, who have had accidents and so forth. "...As being yourselves also in the body," is the way that we are supposed to look at the Church of God.

Brethren, you and I have been given the inestimable blessing of being a part of God's true Church. But that concept that we see in Hebrews 13:3, I think is the one that the church is lacking today. As we look at the Church of God, and you paint it with a broad brush; there are people in Australia, Africa, Europe, America, everywhere. We must think of this concept of being in ONE body. The right hand is not going to break the left thumb off. You are not going to break the left leg. We are to look at members of the body of Christ in that way. We must suffer with them when they suffer, rejoice with them when they rejoice. This is what Hebrews 13 says.

The scriptures are so clear. Christ's body is supposed to operate as an integral whole.

**Romans 12:4** For as we have many members in one body, [arms, legs, eyes, nose, etc] and all members have not the same office:

In our body the ear does not digest the food; the eyes do not appreciate music like the ears do. We do not have the same jobs in the church. Where would the church be if we did not have the Bible that we can read, if we did not have the Feast, if we did not have the children, if we did not have the teaching? We would be nowhere.

**Rom 12:5** So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

This is a concept that we have not locked in real good today. We have been saying that we are members of Christ's body. We are saying, 'I want to be your right arm, I want to be your strength', or whatever. We do not see Christ so much, He is living in us in Spirit, and the Father is living in us in Spirit. Here, he says that every one of the members are members of one another. We need each other like the eyes need the head. This is one of the most rejected truths of the Bible. The Church of God does not practice this; the Church of God does not understand this love of the brethren for each other, that we see in verse 5.

When Jesus Christ returns, He is going to reintroduce the system that runs this world, and it will be in perfection and completion. It is going to be the same rules that He gave to Adam and Eve in the garden. It is going to be the same rules that He reiterated to Moses. Each member of the "Body of Christ" has a responsibility to live according to those rules of the Kingdom. We must be doing this right now, at this time, and with each other. Sometimes I fear that we, in the Church of God, have this concept of:

"I found it, I am in it, I am a part of the Body of Christ. I know that He said we are to forgive, to love, to serve, to visit the imprisoned and clothe the fatherless, and feed the hungry widows, but right now that is not

practical. But when He comes back and He sets it up, we will be doing that. Everybody will be loved and the whole system will be set up, and that is when I will start doing all of those things”.

No, brethren, it will be easy to be a Christian then. That is not what we are talking about. We are to put into practice the way of life that Jesus Christ taught now, when it is difficult and when it is not easy, and it is not convenient. As individual members of His body we live like Jesus Christ lived. He gave us the example. We should think while coming into Passover, ‘What was His example? What did He do?’ The answer is that He laid His life down for all of us.

What does it mean to be *“dead to the law?”*

Does it mean that we do not have to keep the Ten Commandments any more, as they were nailed to the cross? Does it mean that we do not keep God’s rules? No, that is not what it means at all.

**Romans 7:4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him [Jesus Christ] who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

When you see, *“my brethren,”* that is the saints, that is the Church of God, that is the “Body of Christ.” This is not written to the world, this is written to the church. If we want to understand what the “Body of Christ” means we need to understand what it means to become dead to the law. Somehow we kind of understand that because Jesus died, He paid for our sins, we do not have to die the eternal death; and we just throw it out there like this. But notice a while ago we talked about the one flesh, look at how this verse ends, *“...that ye should be married to another, even to him [Jesus Christ] who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”* That verse, right there, needs a lot of study and explaining.

The law of marriage says that when you or your mate dies, the marriage is over. It is hard to be a good mate when you are dead in the grave. We are dead to that law, now we can get married to Christ when that comes along. That is one of the meanings in this verse.

Paul has just explained this back in Romans 6:

**Romans 6:3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

What is he saying there? He is saying that baptism pictures being plunged into death. It is a picture of dying.

**Romans 6:4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We see it very clearly that when Jesus was dead God the Father raised Him (Jesus Christ) from the dead.

**Romans 6:5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Our baptism pictures us being buried with Christ. In the same way we were buried like Christ was, and we know that God the Father lifted Him out of death and into life, and the same way we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. That is how we know that we have salvation and life.

**Romans 6:6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

A while ago we were asking what was nailed to the cross. Here we see that our old man, that old man of sin, was nailed to the cross. It is talking about our bodies; *"that the body of sin might be destroyed,"* but I did not live 2,000 years ago. But this is what our baptism pictures, being nailed to the cross. Jesus Christ became sin. When Jesus Christ was hanging on that cross, He was sin, He was vile, He took on our sins. But notice what he said, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Think about Jesus Christ becoming sin. The world does not understand this, and they do not think about it. I think in the Church of God we need to understand it a little bit more.

Jesus Christ endured the shame of the cross, which is a filthy miserable way to die, but He went further than that. Jesus Christ took on our sins. When God the Father looked at Jesus Christ He did not say, "That's my boy!" What He saw was all of our sins being nailed to the cross. Death was being paid for; our death was being paid for. We need to think about some of these things going into Passover.

**I Peter 2:24** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

This ties it down so well. Jesus Christ bore our sins, He became sin. What happened when He became sin? Sin does not come into the presence of God. In Isaiah 59 it says, *"...but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and our sins have hid His face from you."* God the Father, who is in all perfection, all pureness, and all righteousness, is not going to have our sin mixed up with what He is doing. We are

not going to mess up His household; it is perfect and it is going to stay that way. If you come to the door covered in sin you are not invited in. If I appear before God the Father covered with sin, it says that my sins have separated me from Him. He hides His face from me that He will not hear. That is what happened when Christ took on all of our sins.

This is me: **Isaiah 59:3** *"For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."*

That is the debt that we had before we were saved by Christ.

We will see that God's face is going to be hidden from Christ, as we just saw in Isaiah 59. Because of our sins, not the sins of Christ, but our sins that were borne by Christ when He was on that cross, God the Father could not look at Him, He hid His face from Christ.

**Mark 15:34** And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Jesus Christ realized and understood that God the Father pulled back, drew away, turned His face, and would not look at that sinful body on the cross. Jesus Christ died alone, and He died, as what the Bible describes as the shame of the cross. But it was you and I that did it. We are the ones that killed Him. God the Father turned His face and Jesus Christ felt a tremendous loneliness, and I do not even think that is the right word. It must have felt a whole lot like abandonment. It was prophesied that Christ would cry out, "Why have you forsaken me God?"

We need to realize that we deserve to die because of those filthy sins. You say that you are not a murderer, you killed Christ. If everybody else had lived a perfect life, Jesus Christ would have hung on that cross bearing my sins.

**Romans 8:10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

This is the righteousness of Christ that we put on. We deserve to die but we are covered by the blood of Christ.

Paul carried the realization with him all of his life, "I killed Jesus." It is easy for us to say, 'Well, me and a hundred thousand other people killed Christ, so what I did was not much more than a blister or a splinter'. Paul carried the realization that he personally and individually killed Christ. This is the way that you and I are supposed to think about it, and it will enhance our prayers and our lives to understand that.

**II Corinthians 4:10** Always bearing about in the body [Paul's body] the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Paul is saying, 'I carry this as a burden, as something that I am guilty of, and it is hanging over me and it will not go away'. I think that in this verse Paul is saying that he is carrying around the responsibility that, 'I killed Christ,' "*...that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*" Paul is saying, 'What responsibility does that now put on me? I am going to live my life like Jesus, and I will sacrifice and suffer for people'. Yes, I realize that every member of the body needs every other member of the body. I think that he is saying here that for the rest of his life that is how he is going to live.

How did we become cleaned up? How were we made holy? How were we set apart? Well, that filthy man of sin that we were, was borne by Jesus Christ on the cross.

**Hebrews 10:10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

That is when we got cleaned up.

This is the rendition by Luke of what took place on that last Passover night when Jesus Christ said, 'God, I am looking forward to doing this again in the Kingdom of God'. Passover is going to be kept when the Kingdom of God is set up. This "Christian" world thinks that Old Testament stuff has been done away with; we have Easter to look forward to. Christ says to His disciples, 'I will not take Passover again until I do it anew with you in my Father's Kingdom'.

**Luke 22:19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

That word "is given" is interesting, it is the Greek word *didomi* (did-o-mee). It means that this is my body which is granted for you, which is yielded for you, and which is bestowed for you. In my own words, it is spent, it is used up for you.

I hope that you can take this outline where the "Body of Christ" has so many connotations and so many meanings that contain so much of what took place in Passover, what the life of Christ is all about and can tie this in. Jesus Christ said if they did not eat His flesh they had no part in Him. It really grossed them out; it was a strange concept to eat of Christ. It is this concept of putting on Christ and being in the "Body of Christ". We need to work on these and study them until they become a part of us, and until we understand what it is all about. Then it should culminate in our understanding that we are the walking, talking, living, "Body of Christ", each and every one of us. We should treat each other with the respect, the love, the care and the service that we do ourselves. We have self-love, we respect ourselves, but we are supposed to love others as ourselves. That comes to the Church of God. We must be putting others first and esteeming others better than ourselves.

**I Corinthians 10:16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

There is a whole sermon right there in that. What is the communion of the blood of Christ and the communion of the body of Christ? What do we say to one another? What do we do with one another? What is our character with one another? How do we interact with one another? When we read of the "Body of Christ" here do not just think of the bread, and the dead body of Christ. Think of the full meaning of the "Body of Christ." This is what it meant to Paul as he was writing here. Paul has all of this meaning attached to the "Body of Christ."

**I Corinthians 10:17** For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

WZ/pp/sl