

Discerning the LORD'S BODY

Many of the Truths taught by Herbert W Armstrong have been watered down since his death.

Many baptised members of the Church of God may not be aware that even the very PASSOVER SERVICE itself has not escaped Satan's attention!

When we take the BROKEN BREAD at the Passover service, WHAT are we picturing? Are we sure we UNDERSTAND?

Let's be sure we correctly DISCERN THE LORD'S BODY!

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Do we faithfully HOLD FAST to the Truths given to us? Do we value and TREASURE what God has revealed to us through His servants? Or, does the passage of time mean that we begin to forget what we have heard? Do we grow careless — and, almost casually, let God’s Truths just “slip away?”

In Hebrews, Paul warns us: **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should LET THEM SLIP ... How shall we escape, if we NEGLECT so great salvation,”** Hebrews 2:1,3.

Many fundamental Truths given to the Church have been dismantled, spiritualized, opposed or simply “ignored” since the death of Herbert Armstrong in 1986. His successors in Worldwide Church of God were quick to reconvert from God’s Truth, back to old-fashioned Protestant teachings.

One of the first doctrines to be “reviewed” by Joseph Tkach Senior was the doctrine of HEALING.

Mr Armstrong taught that God had PROMISED to heal — that it was God’s WILL to heal. Joe Tkach concluded otherwise — God would heal you only IF IT WAS HIS WILL in your SPECIFIC case (and of course, in Joe Tkach’s theology, no one can ever be sure what God’s will IS; sometimes He might heal you, other times He might not).

As part of the “new teaching” on healing, Mr Tkach and his advisors had to make changes to the PASSOVER SERVICE. No longer could Church members take of the BREAD and wine to symbolize their acceptance of Jesus’ broken body *for their healing*, and shed blood for the forgiveness of their sins. It was necessary to provide an *alternative explanation* for the BREAD which was taken at the Passover.

Unfortunately, this false teaching remains “alive and well” among the people of God, even among many who have long since departed from the Worldwide Church of God. Quite a number of the Churches of God do not take the Passover with a proper understanding of what the Passover emblems MEAN.

And this is not just a matter of “academic knowledge.” Consider Paul’s WARNING to the Corinthians: “**Wherefore whosoever shall EAT THIS BREAD, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* WEAK and SICKLY among you, and MANY SLEEP,**” 1 Corinthians 11:27-30. The consequence of taking the Passover UNWORTHILY was sickness, ill-health and premature DEATH!

So, let’s look at the meaning of the Passover emblems, and in particular the meaning of the BROKEN BREAD. Let’s look at what Herbert Armstrong taught, and what the Church of God has taught historically, and see if it was based upon THE BIBLE. Then we will compare what is taught by some among the Churches of God today. At the conclusion, we can then make a decision as to how WE will take of the Passover in future years ... and whether we will fall under the judgment of 1 Corinthians 11:30.

Herbert Armstrong Explains

Herbert Armstrong wrote two booklets on the topic of divine healing. One in 1953, entitled *Does God Heal Today*, and one in 1978, entitled *The Plain Truth about Healing*.

Let's consider some of Mr Armstrong's statements in *Does God Heal Today*, as he explains the KEY passage in 1 Corinthians 11:

“We know the wine represents the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of our spiritual sins. But what does THE BREAD represent? Why do we take that?”

Notice the instruction of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

‘The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.’ His body was BROKEN, beaten with lashes, and by HIS STRIPES we are HEALED! Thru this He, Himself TOOK our infirmities, and bare our sickness!

Now complete Paul's instruction in this passage. Let him make this meaning absolutely plain and clear! ‘Whosoever shall eat this bread . . . unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord . . . For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.’ That is, not UNDERSTANDING that Jesus' body was broken FOR OUR HEALING. Now continue: ‘For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep’ — that is, are DEAD! (Verses 29-30). Because they do not understand Jesus' body was broken for our HEALING — because they take this bread unworthy, (that is, not trusting in Jesus' stripes for healing), many are suffering sickness, may have died — which is the penalty of physical transgression!”

This should be very clear to us all. Herbert Armstrong shows that this passage refers to members who were sick and dying because they **“do not understand Jesus' BODY was BROKEN for our HEALING.”**

THAT is what THE BREAD of Passover represents — Jesus' broken body FOR OUR HEALING. Notice how Mr Armstrong refers to

Jesus' physical body being "BROKEN, beaten with lashes, and by HIS STRIPES we are HEALED!"

This should be so simple a child could understand!

Some 25 years later, HWA wrote in *The Plain Truth about Healing*:

"Let's review briefly the teaching of the apostle Paul in his instruction regarding THE PASSOVER to the Church at Corinth.

In regard to taking the bread — symbol of CHRIST'S BODY BEATEN WITH STRIPES to pay for us the penalty for broken laws governing physical health — the inspired teaching is: 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily (the RSV translates it "in an unworthy manner"), eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body' — that is, His body was broken or beaten with stripes, paying the penalty we suffer in sickness or disease. "That is why (RSV) many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (I Corinthians 11:29-30).

Some in the Church lacked the FAITH to BELIEVE Christ paid for us the physical penalty of sickness, disease — or even the first death.

This is important; UNDERSTAND the meaning of what was written here! Taking the broken unleavened bread means we ACCEPT Christ's beaten and broken body (prior to being taken to the cross) that WE MAY BE HEALED. How does His broken body make our healing possible?

It is IMPORTANT that you UNDERSTAND the answer to this ..."

Mr Armstrong has not altered his teaching in any way over 25 years. He clearly and plainly states that Jesus gave His PHYSICAL BODY to be BROKEN for our HEALING. Mr Armstrong shows this to be

a very clear teaching in connection with the PASSOVER SERVICE instruction.

If we are to take the Passover worthily, we have to FULLY UNDERSTAND, ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPT the total sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. We MUST accept His death in payment of our spiritual sins. And we MUST accept His brutal beating and scourging in payment of our physical sins, that we may be HEALED.

Consider 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 again: **“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY. For THIS CAUSE many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”**

Notice the direct connection ... Paul affirmed that because many did not “discern” Jesus’ BODY, many are SICK and even DEAD! Jesus’ BODY and our HEALING are connected!

Herbert Armstrong could see this clearly, and taught it all of his life. There were many passages of Scripture he could turn to.

Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson 33 of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, which dealt with the meaning of Passover, confirmed this clear understanding:

“Question 2. Did Jesus suffer this excruciatingly painful torture of His body so we might receive physical HEALING of our bodies through faith in Him? Isa. 53:5; I Pet. 2:24 and Ps. 103:2-3.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ allowed His body to be literally RIPPED OPEN in hundreds of places until He could not even be recognized! He suffered this torture so you and I, through faith in His broken body for us, may have the FORGIVENESS of our PHYSICAL SINS — the healing of our bodies when we are sick

— as well as the **FORGIVENESS** of our **SPIRITUAL SINS** by **His shed blood!**

That is why Jesus instituted the breaking of unleavened bread at His last Passover Supper. It is a SYMBOL of His BROKEN BODY given to the tormentors for our healing and a REMINDER to us that it is by “His STRIPES we are healed.”

When we take of the bread at Passover, we should be deeply conscious and grateful for this *symbol* of Jesus’ BROKEN BODY ... for our healing.

Bible Teaching on Healing by Jesus’ Stripes

The first Passover took place in ancient Egypt, and details are given in Exodus 12. The tenth plague was the death of the Egyptian first-born. However, God PASSED OVER the children of Israel, because He saw the BLOOD of the Passover LAMB on their door posts.

But the Israelites did *not only* splash the blood of a young Passover lamb on their doorways. They also roasted and ATE THE BODY of the lamb. Why? We understand the significance of the BLOOD of the lamb, but what about the BODY of the lamb? What did the body of the lamb signify?

An indication can be found in Psalms 105:37: “**He brought them forth (from Egypt) also with silver and gold: and there was NOT ONE FEEBLE person among their tribes.**”

How could it be that there was NOT ONE FEEBLE person among two to six million Israelites — young, medium, old (and downright ancient)? It would seem that God had miraculously HEALED THEM. And when? Almost certainly when they had partaken of the BODY OF THE PASSOVER LAMB. The blood of the lamb was for their protection from the death penalty, and the body of the lamb for their physical healing. (Although this is not *explicitly*

stated, the indication is there and, as we'll see, it fits in with other Scriptures).

Next, consider Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 has always been accepted, even by Protestants generally, to be a prophecy of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Notice what this passage tells us:

“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, *there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our GRIEFS, and carried our SORROWS: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and with His STRIPES WE ARE HEALED ... He hath poured out his soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,”* verses 3-5, 12.

Verse 4 is not too clear in the KJV. In particular, the words *griefs* and *sorrows* do not convey the true meaning. Here is how that verse is translated in some other versions:

“Surely our DISEASES he did bear, and our PAINS he carried; whereas we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,” Jewish Publication Society.

“Surely He has borne our SICKNESSES, and He carried our PAIN; yet we esteemed Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted,” Literal Translation by Jay P Green.

And in case we think these translations are a little suspect, let's see how the Evangelist Matthew translated this verse under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit:

“And He cast out the spirits with *His* word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our INFIRMITIES, and bare *our* SICKNESSES,” Matthew 8:16-17.

Consider also: WHEN did Jesus pour out His soul unto death? At His crucifixion. WHEN was He numbered with the transgressors? At His crucifixion. WHEN did He bare the sin of many? At His crucifixion. And WHEN did He carry our sicknesses and diseases? At the self-same time — at His crucifixion. In the hours before being nailed to the stake, Jesus was scourged till He was just a mass of torn, bleeding flesh, enduring intense pain.

At Passover, we are to reflect on Jesus’ COMPLETE SACRIFICE for us. His shed blood and death for our spiritual salvation, and His torn and broken BODY for our physical healing. The price for both was paid AT THE SAME TIME. We NEED both, and should REMEMBER BOTH.

The instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 are clear on this point:

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which He was betrayed took BREAD: And when He had given thanks, He brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also *He took* the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the LORD’S DEATH till He come,” verses 23-26.

The Passover ceremony has TWO EMBLEMS — the bread and the wine. They picture Jesus’ DEATH. The wine pictures Jesus’ shed blood. The bread pictures Jesus’ “BODY which is BROKEN for you.”

Herbert Armstrong was in complete agreement with these Scriptures. Let's read again what HWA wrote:

But what does THE BREAD represent? Why do we take that?

Notice the instruction of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

'The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.' His body was BROKEN, beaten with lashes, and by HIS STRIPES we are HEALED! Thru this He, Himself TOOK our infirmities, and bare our sickness!

In the "Passover letter" that Mr Armstrong sent out, giving instructions on HOW to take the Passover at home if we couldn't make it to a service, Mr Armstrong wrote: "... **the one conducting the service will remove the napkin from over the bread and wine, and bowing head, give thanks and ask God in prayer to bless the BREAD, as a symbol of HIS BODY, BROKEN FOR US (for physical HEALING).**"

This is all very clear, and for many decades there was no disputing this view — until after the death of Herbert Armstrong, and the rejection of the doctrine of healing. It was necessary, then, to remove *the true meaning* of the Passover bread from the Passover ceremony, and replace it with a false substitute.

Today's FALSE Teaching

At Passover, we do partake of BREAD as well as wine. And Jesus said the bread represented HIS BODY. In 1 Corinthians 11, we are told of the need to properly *discern* the Lord's BODY. But if we don't really believe in God as our Healer, and want to find a plausible "religious sounding" alternative for the meaning of the bread, WHAT can we find? Ah ... Joe Tkach knew just the answer. Let him answer in his book on healing:

“Now let’s consider what 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 means when it says that many were sick or had died because they failed to discern the Lord’s body. Paul was correcting the Corinthians, explaining that they were missing the point of the Lord’s Supper.

They were divided (v. 18). They were despising the church of God by shaming those who were poor (v. 22). The actions and attitudes some of them had toward others demonstrated that they did not understand the connection between Jesus’ sacrifice and the church they were part of (v. 29).

In the previous chapter, Paul had reminded them that the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ that make possible the unity and oneness of the members of the Body of Christ — the church (1 Cor. 10:16-17). [So Joe Tkach teaches that the primary purpose of taking the bread and wine is to symbolize unity — NO reference to HEALING]. The indication is that the Corinthians were guilty of neglecting the needs of fellow members of the Body of Christ. As a result of such neglect of the Body of Christ, God had withdrawn his blessing of healing from them to help them come to repentance (1 Cor. 11:30-32).”

Tkach continues: “In 1 Corinthians 11:20-30 Paul upbraided members for ignoring their sick friends, and said further that their selfishness proved they didn’t understand the full implications of the Lord’s Supper in the Christian life. If they had understood, then they would have seen that by taking the bread they expressed love for the church [So Tkach explains that taking the bread pictures our love for the church — not our acceptance of Jesus’ battered body for our physical healing]. Their love should have been demonstrated by their action of caring for one another.”

Joe Tkach reasoned that he could take the expression “the body of Christ” and apply it — even in the Passover context — SOLELY to “the Church.” After all, there are many Scriptures that refer to the Church as being the body of Christ, as Paul himself did a little later

in 1 Corinthians 12:27 where he wrote, “**Now YE are THE BODY OF CHRIST, and members in particular.**”

It is, of course, true that in SOME Scriptures the apostle Paul referred to the Church as being “the body of Christ” — but let’s not forget that there was a REAL BODY of Jesus Christ, too! When Jesus walked this earth He had a physical body — and that body was ultimately scourged, whipped, striped and beaten so badly that Jesus was left almost unrecognizable. Again, we can think of Revelation 1 which describes Jesus’ present-day *glorified body*. We read of “*one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*” Jesus had a physical body whilst on the earth, and now has a glorified spirit body — so let’s not confuse Jesus’ *actual body* with the analogy which compares the Church to His body.

In Joe Tkach’s theology, when we take of the bread at Passover we are picturing the “unity and oneness of the members.” Whilst taking of the bread, he says we need to be reflecting on whether we have been properly expressing “love for the church,” or whether instead we are “guilty of neglecting the needs of fellow members.” Nice sounding words — but an example of turning the wine of God’s Word into water!

According to Herbert Armstrong (and the Bible!), we should take the bread fully reflecting on Jesus’ *physical beating and scourging* — His body being BROKEN for our HEALING. Joe Tkach would have us reflect instead upon whether we are living in a selfish manner and not showing love to the brethren.

Quite a difference! And if we choose wrongly, Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 11:30, “**many of you even now are listless and sick, and others have gone to an early grave,**” Message Translation.

“Weak” Teaching: United Church of God

United Church of God is the largest of the churches to form out of the old Worldwide Church of God. With their larger numbers, sizeable financial budget, and ability to produce regular booklets and magazines, they have a real opportunity to remind brethren of the Truth — the PLAIN TRUTH!

On the topic of the meaning of the Passover bread, they unfortunately BLUR the clear teaching of the Bible and Herbert Armstrong. They have what might be called a *lukewarm* explanation. Here is an excerpt from their booklet on the Holy Days, *God’s Holy Day Plan*:

“Our decision to eat the Passover bread means we understand that Jesus Christ has ‘put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself’ (Hebrews 9:26). He willingly consented to suffer an excruciating death for us. Christ bore in His body mental and physical suffering brought on by sin.

Jesus' sacrifice is also intricately associated with our healing. (Thankfully, United do not seem to totally ignore the connection between Jesus' sacrifice and our healing!). Peter wrote of Christ's suffering that He ‘bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness-by whose stripes you were healed’ (1 Peter 2:24). Isaiah prophesied of Jesus' suffering on our behalf: ‘Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Matthew 8:16-17 depicts incidents of healing in Jesus' ministry. Jesus helped “many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.’”

Through the forgiveness of our sins, Christ also made possible our receiving eternal life. ‘I am the bread of life,’ He said. ‘Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world’ (John 6:48-51).

The Passover bread reminds us of the close relationship Christians have with Jesus Christ ... Eating the bread demonstrates our commitment to allow Christ to live in us ... The Passover bread reinforces our understanding that Jesus Christ, the true ‘bread of life,’ must live within us, enabling us to live an entirely new life. God forgives our sins to sanctify us—to continue to set us apart for a holy purpose, to redeem us (that is, purchase us for a price).”

United’s comments are not wholly wrong, but “miss the mark.” They lack the explicit connection that Scripture makes about the bread picturing Jesus’ BROKEN BODY and our HEALING.

Notice United’s explanation of the meaning of the bread, as given above:

“To eat the Passover bread means WE UNDERSTAND that Jesus Christ has ‘PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of Himself.’”

“The Passover bread reminds us of the CLOSE RELATIONSHIP Christians have with Jesus Christ.”

“Eating the bread demonstrates OUR COMMITMENT to allow Christ TO LIVE IN US.”

So, says UCG, the bread represents our “close relationship” and “commitment” to Jesus Christ. The bread shows that Jesus must “live in us.” It means we understand that Jesus “put away sin.”

What happened to the bread symbolizing OUR ACCEPTANCE of Jesus' BROKEN BODY for our HEALING, as taught by Herbert Armstrong?

More False Teaching

The Sabbath Church of God illustrates how the Joe Tkach teaching can permeate even the smaller “independent” churches of God. Notice how their teaching waters down what was given to us by Herbert Armstrong. The following quotation is taken from their booklet, *That They May Be One*:

“The Church of God today is not unified. We are not one. We know that we are supposed to become one by partaking of the Bread of Life, which is Jesus Christ, our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). Addressing the division within the Church, Paul shows that our very salvation depends on our caring for one another. “For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you.” (1 Corinthians 11:18).

“Division” was the subject when Paul wrote that the Lord's body was not being properly discerned. He said that we must examine ourselves as to whether or not we are a part of any division before we take Passover. *Later in the booklet, we read:*

Many verses firmly establish that “the Lord's Body” is a direct reference to the people of the Church of God. (So, whereas Herbert Armstrong, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course — and indeed the Bible itself — show that the Scripture is talking of Jesus' PHYSICAL BODY that was scourged on our behalf for our healing, this author applies 1 Corinthians 11 to the “analogy” of the overall church. Just as Joe Tkach did). When Paul said that we must be properly “discerning the Lord's body,” he meant that we cannot take the Passover and at the same time be responsible for any of the division: the broken, shattered condition of the church. The Church of God is not to be broken. (So the Scripture is allegedly concerned with “the church” being “broken” — divided — not with Jesus' PHYSICAL

BODY being scourged, torn and broken). Now, let's consider more closely what Paul meant by “discerning the Lord's body.”

Continuing, the author writes: The question has been asked, “Wasn't Jesus' body *broken* to make payment for our healing?” The Scriptures reveal that for our healing Jesus received “stripes.” “By whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5)

The manuscripts do not indicate that Christ's body was broken. The King James translators embellished the Greek text (*They did not; they were faithful; see Appendix*). The words *which is broken* are not in the original text (*Incorrect: they are in almost EVERY original Greek text*). “The Lord Jesus ... took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat: this is my body, *which is broken* for you: this do in remembrance of me.” This is how the scripture should be rendered according to E. W. Bullinger:

“The Lord Jesus ... took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, this is my body, for you: this do in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24) (*Bullinger was in error. He relied on the minority of faulty Greek manuscripts; see Appendix for full details*).

Later on we read: There is a direct correlation between our well being and the unity and oneness we share with all of the children of God, who constitute the Lord's body. Paul said that sickness and death were the result of partaking of the Passover while division existed among the saints. The brethren had not discerned the Lord's body. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” (1 Corinthians 11:30)

This entire healing and salvation process is contingent on our having direct positive interaction and unity with God's children. If we, who are called of God, do not possess a genuine devotion and Godly tenderness for the brethren, we diminish the sacrifice of Christ and will suffer sickness and death.”

So, according to the Sabbath Church of God, “discerning the Lord’s Body” is a direct reference to THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. It means that we should examine ourselves to ensure we are not a cause OF DIVISION. We will suffer sickness and death if we don’t understand and practice love and unity.

In an associated Newsletter regarding the Passover and the meaning of the Lord’s Body, it is stated:

“When reading the phrase, *‘the Lord’s body,’* in this Scripture (*i.e.* 1 Corinthians 11), many will mistakenly think about the dead body of Jesus (Herbert Armstrong presumably suffered from this “mistake,” though of course we are to more correctly focus on Jesus’ living body which was beaten, striped and scourged — not His “dead body”). They will then begin to try to ‘discern the dead body.’ That is not what is meant here. We must answer the question, What does Paul mean by the ‘Lord’s body?’ Paul was speaking of the Church of God! ‘The Body of Christ’ was a common term meaning all the converted people of God. *‘For [Christ’s] body’s sake, which is the Church.’* (Colossians 1:24)

All the brethren who are in the Church of God are the ‘Body of Christ.’ *‘You are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.’* (1 Corinthians 12:27) *‘The church, which is His body.’* (Ephesians 1:22-23)

It is abundantly clear from these Scriptures that Paul is referring to all the members of the Church of God — as the Lord’s Body, when he spoke of the tremendous importance of discerning the Lord’s Body. How do we then, examine ourselves with regard to all the members of the Church of God — the Body of Jesus Christ? It is a big job — isn’t it? And it’s an important task at Passover time. Paul said that because of the ongoing division between members — described as, not discerning the Lord’s Body, *‘many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.’* (1 Corinthians 11:30)

This is virtually the same as Joe Tkach teaches — that the purpose of the bread is to picture unity, oneness and love for the brethren: let’s remind ourselves again of what Joe Tkach taught:

“Paul had reminded them that the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ that make possible the unity and oneness of the members of the Body of Christ — the church (1 Cor. 10:16-17). The indication is that the Corinthians were guilty of neglecting the needs of fellow members of the Body of Christ. As a result of such neglect of the Body of Christ, God had withdrawn his blessing of healing from them to help them come to repentance (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

In 1 Corinthians 11:20-30 Paul upbraided members for ignoring their sick friends, and said further that their selfishness proved they didn’t understand the full implications of the Lord’s Supper in the Christian life. If they had understood, then they would have seen that by taking the bread they expressed love for the church. Their love should have been demonstrated by their action of caring for one another.”

Let’s look at a brief comparison of these views:

Joe Tkach says taking the bread **“expressed love for the church.”**

Sabbath Church of God says taking the bread has a “correlation” with the **“unity and oneness we share with all of the children of God, who constitute the Lord’s body”** and **“the ongoing division between members — described as, not discerning the Lord’s Body.”**

Herbert Armstrong wrote that taking the bread **“means we ACCEPT Christ’s beaten and broken body (prior to being taken to the cross) that WE MAY BE HEALED.”**

Quite a difference? Mr Armstrong DIRECTLY connects Jesus’ beating with God’s provision for our HEALING. Others turn away from that teaching, and prefer to talk in vague generalities about “unity and love and fellowship etc.”

Two Opposite Teachings?

Whilst none of us would dispute the importance of unity and love among the brethren (and we can all bemoan its absence), we dare not lose sight of the SPECIFIC PURPOSE of the Passover emblems — which are to direct our attention to Jesus Christ, OUR PASSOVER LAMB, and to acknowledge the vital importance of both His shed blood AND His broken body for us — for the *forgiveness* of our sins, and the *healing* of our bodies.

Remember that Jesus Himself DELIBERATELY BROKE THE BREAD. It was ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. Jesus was conferring on us a GREAT BENEFIT. He was going to give His physical body to be BEATEN, scourged and WOUNDED, that “**by His stripes ye were healed,**” 1 Peter 2:24. The breaking of the bread, and what it SYMBOLIZED — Jesus’ BROKEN BODY — was an ACT OF LOVE from Jesus and the Father. It was a GIFT to us. “**How does Christ’s broken body make our healing possible? ... Simply by having PAID THE PENALTY IN OUR STEAD — THAT’S HOW!**” (HWA, Plain Truth About Healing).

To take a SYMBOL of God’s LOVE toward us — a reminder of the tremendous benefit that Jesus PAID FOR — and “convert” the bread into a vague picture of a divided squabbling church is way off the mark!

Taking the Bread UNWORTHILY

What does Scripture mean about taking the bread of Passover UNWORTHILY? Hopefully, we all realise that none of us is “worthy” of ourselves — from a spiritual point of view — to merit Jesus’ sacrifice! None of us is actually WORTHY to receive Jesus’ broken body and shed blood.

Mr Armstrong explained it as follows in his booklet, *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord’s Supper*:

“Notice I Corinthians 11:27, 29. This is not speaking about a Christian being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of

the MANNER in which we do it. To take of it unworthily is to take it in a wrong manner ... To take the bread and wine while NOT TRULY ACCEPTING THE BODY and blood of Christ with the whole heart would be taking it unworthily and to one's damnation."

Conclusion

In Deuteronomy 30:15-19, we read: **"See, I have set before thee this day LIFE and GOOD, and DEATH and EVIL ... I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life AND death, blessing AND cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE!"**

In this life, we have MANY CHOICES to make. There are often TWO WAYS facing us, just as Adam and Eve had TWO TREES in front of them. Which should they choose?

When it comes to taking the Passover each year, you and I now have A CHOICE to make. Do we take Passover as taught and instructed by Herbert Armstrong over the course of almost 60 years — taking the BROKEN BREAD as we **"give thanks and ask God in prayer to bless the BREAD, as a symbol of HIS BODY, BROKEN FOR US (for physical HEALING)."**

Or, alternatively, do we take the bread, to remind ourselves of the problem of division in the Church, and that we need to **"examine ourselves with regard to all the members of the Church of God — the Body of Jesus Christ?"**

The choice of which teaching to follow is ours.

But consider the choice VERY CAREFULLY.

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the LORD'S BODY. For this cause many *are* weak and SICKLY among you, and many sleep (HAVE DIED)."

APPENDIX

WHAT THE MANUSCRIPTS *REALLY* SAY

In the King James Version of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 reads as follows:

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU: this do in remembrance of me.”

This is an important part of the Passover service — taking the broken bread to symbolize Jesus’ BROKEN BODY — which was scourged, torn, ripped and beaten in the hours leading up to His nailing to the stake. Scripture tells us that by Jesus’ stripes we are HEALED.

Yet some dispute the word *BROKEN* in verse 24. It does not appear in a number of the more “modern” translations of the Bible. For example, the New American Standard Bible, the NIV and the RSV all simply state: “... when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, **which is for you**; do this in remembrance of Me.’” The word “broken” does not appear in these translations. They claim that the word *broken* does not appear in the original Greek manuscripts from which the New Testament was translated.

As the author of *That They May Be One*, quoted earlier, said: **“The manuscripts do not indicate that Christ's body was broken. The King James translators embellished the Greek text. The words “which is broken” are not in the original text ... This is how the scripture should be rendered according to E. W. Bullinger: ‘The Lord Jesus...took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, this is my body, for you: this do in remembrance of me.’”**

So, what is the Truth? Did Paul faithfully quote the Lord Jesus Christ, who said His BODY was to be BROKEN — and that we should take the BROKEN BREAD in remembrance of this event? Or did the King James’ translators “embellish” the text?

In coming to an understanding of this matter, it is necessary to realise that there are TWO classes of Greek manuscripts from which the New Testament is translated. As far as 1 Corinthians 11:24 is concerned, ONE class of Greek manuscripts contains the word *broken* — and the other class of manuscripts DOES NOT. The King James' translators based their translation upon the *former class* of manuscript. They did not in any way “embellish” the Greek text. They faithfully translated the *actual Greek* word which appears for *broken* in the manuscripts which they chose to use.

So, the basic question we would need to answer is: *which class of Greek manuscripts is the more accurate? Which represents the original inspired text?*

The vast majority of available Greek manuscripts (over 95%) belong to what is called the *Byzantine family*. They are also known as the Antiochian manuscripts, in view of their early origins in New Testament *Antioch*. These manuscripts are the foundation of what is known as the *Textus Receptus* (or Received Text), and are THE BASE of the King James Version. The Church of God has ALWAYS RECOMMENDED the KJV largely because of the recognised ACCURACY of the underlying Greek text. These are the *official manuscripts* of the Greek Orthodox Church to this day, and are the manuscripts preserved at Mt Athos and other locations.

The other 5% of manuscripts, the tiny MINORITY, are usually referred to as the *Alexandrian texts*, important ones being the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts. The COG has always dismissed these as being of *vastly INFERIOR QUALITY*. Although they are physically “older” than the Byzantine texts (they go back to the 4th century) that is no mark of quality. As Frank Nelte, a Church of God minister, says, “When these two ‘oldest’ manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) are compared with each other, here is what emerges: in the four gospels alone, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus disagree with each other OVER 3000 TIMES!” They are hopelessly corrupt and unreliable.

Regrettably, most of the modern translations (RSV, NIV, NASB and some others) use these old, but inferior, Greek texts. That is why many people, including the Church of God, historically, have always recommended the King James Version. Not because of its quaint medieval language — but because it is a very accurate translation, based upon the BEST QUALITY Greek texts!

Spiros Zodhiates, in his “Complete Word Study New Testament,” explains that his translation is based on the Greek text “approved by the Greek and Eastern Orthodox churches ... (being of) the Byzantine family.” Zodhiates includes an interlinear text, and the words “My body which is BROKEN for you” can be clearly seen in the Greek.

Jay P Green uses the Textus Receptus in his Interlinear. Again the Greek words “My body which is BROKEN for you” are clear. George Ricker Berry’s Interlinear is the same.

Fred Coulter, a minister in the Christian Biblical Church of God, has produced his own New Testament translation. Mr Coulter takes some considerable time in his book to explain why he uses the Byzantine Greek text as his base (in particular the Stephens text of 1550 which is virtually identical to the Textus Receptus). He explains that the Greek text (such as used for the KJV) is categorically the MOST ACCURATE. Mr Coulter’s translation of 1 Cor 11:24 is: “this is My body, which is being BROKEN for you.”

The third year Theology class at Ambassador College, 1958-59, prepared a paper on the “Text of the New Testament.” This was as part of the Graduate School Translation Committee at Ambassador College. They wanted to ensure that the Church of God had a good understanding of what constituted the best quality Greek manuscripts.

Other than the KJV, the most popular translation in the 1950’s was the Revised Standard Version (RSV). There were a number of differences in how the RSV and the KJV translated certain verses, based upon the fact that they used different underlying Greek texts. The KJV used the 95% of texts that had been recognised by the Greek

community for 1,500 years. The RSV decided to use the minority 5% of manuscripts that “modern scholarship” preferred. The Ambassador College Theology class examined the issue.

They demonstrated conclusively that the Greek texts used by the modern versions, the Alexandrian text of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, are “**the most corrupt**” despite their age. They comment that “**the nearly 4,000 manuscripts of the Byzantine or Official Text agree so perfectly with each other that the only work of the critic is to weed out individual scribal mistakes in the copying of each Manuscript. The text is not in question!**”

They then compare the RSV to the KJV, and point out the mistakes, additions and omissions in the RSV. In Part 1 of their report, they list, as they put it, “**Verses left out of the RSV Text — which are in the King James Version and belong in the inspired Greek Text.**” Against 1 Cor 11:24 they show that the RSV WRONGLY OMITTS the word “broken” and that **IT IS IN THE ORIGINAL GREEK.**

So, whilst it is accurate to say that many modern versions do not include the word “broken,” that’s because they base their translations on poor quality Greek texts.

Bullinger, the editor of the Companion Bible, and who was quoted earlier, was seemingly impressed by the scholarship that stood behind the modern acceptance of the minority 5% “hopelessly corrupt” manuscripts. This is a weakness in Bullinger’s work that his readers should be aware of. His comments about 1 Corinthians 11:24 are in error.

The *best quality* Greek manuscripts — the vast majority of ALL manuscripts — clearly state that Jesus’ actual BODY was BROKEN FOR US. And THAT is what we are to accept and remember when we take the Passover emblems ... **IF we wish to take the Passover worthily!**

