

# Discerning the Lord's Body

Steven Greene—March 14, 2019

Greetings, brethren! I live in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and still working as an electrical engineer. My wife works at the same place I do and we've been in the Church longer than we're going to claim.

I think that we are at a time in the Church where we are all growing closer together as we are farther apart. That may sound a little strange, but I know that in the last seven or eight years I don't have a congregation that I attend with, but it's interesting, because God has brought me closer to people that I didn't know before then. I think that there is a greater desire among us to know one another and spend time with one another.

So, it's a real pleasure to be here today. I've been thinking about events over the past week or two, and this world has a lot of people—maybe not most, maybe not all—who are afraid. ***They're fearful!***

While I don't think they really understand what they mean when they say that they're afraid, or this is fearful, I don't think they've known true fear. ***It's a place that is in their heart that is growing with intensity!***

This is a fulfillment of God's curses upon the nation that will forget Him and walk away from His commandments. God said, 'You will go out one way against an army, and you will retreat seven ways.' ***That's fear!***

What are they afraid of? ***Their fear is death!*** While in times past—WWII, Civil War, etc.—we have had so many stories of bravery, of heroism, sacrifice of life for others. There wasn't that heart of fear.

You can go back to the days of Elijah. There was a woman he visited and he told her to give him a 'morsel of food.' She said, 'I only have a little bit of oil and flour, and I'm going to make this into our last meal, then we die!'

Fear of death today is uppermost in the minds of people and that is destructive to a nation.

- Are we afraid?
- Do we have a reason to be afraid?

We're coming up on the memorial of the most singular event in all of history. We can talk about memorials for war, memorials for great men/leaders, but none compare to the Passover as a memorial in the events in the history and the future of mankind.

This memorial that we call *Passover* is all about putting aside death and taking on life. We don't have real life. This physical world, life and body that we have is not real life. This is a test for all of us, and a calling for some of us. For all it is still a test.

God said, 'Will you obey Me?' to the Israelites. ***Choose life! It's a choice! It's a test!***

1-Corinthians 11:27: "For this reason, *if* anyone shall eat this bread or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and *the* blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup accordingly, because the one who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking judgment to himself, **not discerning the body of the Lord**" (vs 27-29).

This is not a new Scripture! But in this particular Scripture, when it talks about "**...not discerning the body of the Lord**" it is talking about:

- the whole sacrifice
  - the shed blood
  - the broken body
  - the sins put upon Christ
  - His death
- and**
- His resurrection and life afterward

Both the blood and the body are required for us. I want to put us in remembrance of a particular aspect of this sacrifice of Jesus Christ, ***this total sacrifice!*** I want to talk about the body, the broken body of Jesus.

## **Why did Christ have to suffer?**

Matthew 8:14: "And after coming into Peter's house, Jesus saw Peter's mother-in-law lying *sick* with a fever; then He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose and served them. Now, when evening had come, they brought to Him many possessed with demons, and He cast out the spirits by *His* word, and healed all who were sick; so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, **'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases'**" (vs 14-17).

This is not new; we all understand this. Jesus Christ healed many people during His ministry. It was all physical healings, because He was not yet authorized to heal people spiritually, because He had not been sacrificed. So, it had to be physical healings.

1-Peter 2:24: “Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree, so that we, **being dead to sins...** [this is a fact of life when we have taken upon us, through Adam, the law of sin and death; it is in us] **...may live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed.**”

I think everybody gets that part of it. These are the primary Scriptures that we turn to for Passover, but I want to emphasize the particular part of Christ's sacrifice pertaining to His body.

Isaiah 53:5: “But He *was* wounded **for our transgressions**; He *was* crushed **for our iniquities**; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and **with His stripes we ourselves are healed.**”

So, Peter<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> was quoting Isaiah, because his mother-in-law was healed. It doesn't say our physical illnesses, it says, “**...for our transgressions...for our iniquities...**”

What does it mean to heal a transgression of sin and iniquity? *Those are all things that happen when we break God's commandments!* When you do something that is anti ‘nomos’: **against the Law**, you have committed an iniquity, a sin, a transgression. Jesus Christ said that He took those on and healed us. These are not violations of the physical, they're violations of the *spiritual* for us. Isaiah was speaking to the ancient Israelites. Peter<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> was quoting to those who would be of the New Covenant, so it's different.

James 5:14: “Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and **if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.** Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, **that you may be healed...**” (vs 14-16).

What does it mean to be healed of sin? *We all know that when we commit a sin, the first thing we need in the process of repentance is God to cover it with the blood of Jesus Christ!* There's nothing simpler than that concept; *the atonement blood covers our sins!* This is talking about spiritual healing.

Jesus said that the reason He speaks<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> in parables is because if He didn't, and they understood with their heart He would have to heal them:

Matthew 13:15: “...and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted... [repentance, forgiveness, baptism] ...and I should heal them.”

This is not talking about physical blindness or deafness; it's talking about *spiritual blindness*

*and deafness*, which means that they do not have the means to understand God and His Law and purpose. They haven't had that deception taken away from them, yet.

If a virus or bacteria invades our body, our bodies are an incredible balanced system and will, in most times, eliminate that sickness, illness, bacteria or virus on its own. Otherwise, what happens? *As long as you have virus or bacteria, you keep getting sick!* This is exactly what the spiritual healing is all about. It is about the fact that when we sin, we have a sickness that we have sinned because of... We have a lust, which is a *spiritual sickness* in our heart and mind. As long as it's there, we will keep sinning again without the healing of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, His broken body. We cannot be healed of our sins, lusts and desires, and we might as well just live in a pool of Jesus Christ's blood, because we have to be covered continually until that lust goes away.

I say that someone tongue-in-cheek, but you get that idea. We can ask forgiveness of God for our sins, but if we keep sinning, we have to keep going back and asking Him to apply the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We also need, when we go and repent, it is important to also involve God's healing for those sins. We need to take that lust away before it becomes sin again.

- Why did Jesus suffer?
- What is His death not sufficient for our healing?

There's a couple of reasons for that!

Every time we ask to be forgiven of a sin, every time we ask to be healed of an illness, disease, lust or thought, there's a price that's attached to that sin. Every sin has a price. Yes, death is the ultimate price. In many cases there is another price that goes along with that, and it comes in terms of suffering.

Sometimes it can even be a financial sin, you hurt financially. The sin of somebody else, or your own sins cause you sickness. There's a price there: fever, cold, flu; there's a suffering there. It can be to the extreme where we cause somebody else's death. There's always a price for sin! *Always!* Jesus Christ knew that part of the price that He had to pay for sin, in addition to forgiveness of sin, is suffering.

Isaiah 53:3—pay particular attention to sin and healing: “*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 has borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows**; yet, we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, **and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions...** [physical or spiritual] *...He was crushed for our iniquities...* [and sins] ...the

chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and **with His stripes we ourselves are healed**. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have **turned each one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted..." (vs 3-7).

Verse 8: "...for the transgression of My people He *was* stricken."

Verse 10: "...to crush Him and He has put Him to grief..."

***These are all the things that God did to Jesus Christ so that we might be healed!***

Verse 11: "...My righteous Servant justify many; and **He shall bear their iniquities.**"

Verse 12: "...because He has poured out His soul to death..." ***We are forgiven every time we are healed, and there was a price to be paid!***

- Who paid that price? *Jesus Christ through the will of God the Father for that suffering!*
- Why did He have to suffer?

Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone... [Why? (v 10)]: ...to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

When it says taste death, that's not where Christ was stabbed, kicked over and was dead. He tasted the death that was preceded by His suffering. You can't taste death if you're dead. Tasting death was what He did before He died. It was led up to His death, and that was suffering because of our sins, because of our iniquities that were put upon Him for the entire world. ***He was perfected as the Author of our salvation through suffering!***

Hebrews 5:7: "Who [Jesus], in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard **because He feared God.**"

Remember that He was flesh and blood; not as Catholics think, some manifestation through a physical form. ***He was flesh!*** In His flesh He feared God, ***He obeyed God!***

Verse 8: "Although He was a Son, *yet*, He learned obedience from the things that He suffered, and having been perfected, **He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him**" (vs 8-9).

We're going to find in 1-Peter 2 that there is a responsibility that every Christian has to God, to suffer as the example of Jesus Christ that He set for us. There's something uniquely different about this kind of suffering from what the rest of the world has.

1-Peter 2:19: "Because this *is* acceptable: **if**, for *the* sake of conscience toward God, **anyone endures sorrows, suffering unjustly**. For what commendation *is there* if, disobeying and being beaten, you endure it?..." (vs 19-20).

If you're doing something wrong and you're punished, that's deserved! You can't argue against it. I certainly didn't with my father, and you can't argue against it with God, either. If you have done something wrong, He has the authority to correct us.

"...But **if while doing good you endure suffering, this is acceptable with God; for to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example...**" (vs 20-21).

His suffering was done in innocence. His suffering occurred *before* the sins of the world were put upon Him, just before His death on the cross. Why? ***He had to bear the sins of the world in Him before He shed His blood!*** If He didn't have the sins of the world in Him before His death, His blood would not be valid for our sins! He had to have our sins in Him before He shed His blood. But ***He suffered before*** our sins were put upon Him. ***In that He suffered unjustly leaving us an example!***

What was His example? ***That in suffering unjustly He obeyed God!*** He was obedient to God the Father in all things. That is our example for suffering. So, when we suffer, as Jesus' example, we are suffering in innocence. This is His suffering for us, because He was tempted in all things. This is one of the greatest temptations, I believe, to have the sins of the world on Him when He died, ***but to suffer prior to that without cause!***

So, He asks us to do the same. Why did He have to suffer. How could He look any of us in the eye... like

- Isaiah who was sawn in two
- those who were crucified on the cross
- the Prophets died horrible deaths

How could Jesus look any one of them and say, 'Oh, I'm so sorry that happened to you, welcome to the Kingdom. I don't know what you went through, but I'm sure it was terrible.' ***NO!***

He is their Succor, their Comfort; He knows exactly what they went through because He endured it and experienced it. He had to as an innocent man before the sins of the world were put upon Him.

When we talk about the body of Christ we

think of the symbol of unleavened bread, because during the days of Unleavened Bread leavening has a special symbolism of sin.

John 6:26: "Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied. Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed'" (vs 26-27).

Verse 32: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven; but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'"

Verse 35: Jesus said to them, 'I AM the Bread of Life

Verse 47: Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me has eternal life. I AM the Bread of Life" (vs 47-48)

Verse 50: "This is the Bread, which comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. I AM the living Bread, which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (vs 50-51).

I don't think anyone misunderstands the Passover symbolism of Christ's body being for our lives. The blood, the broken body, His suffering, but the total sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Passover includes the blood to cover our sins. It includes

- His suffering and broken body to heal us of those sins
- His death, having taken on all our sins, to cover them
- His resurrection without which we might have the blood to cover our sins and His broken body to heal us.

*We would be the most clean and pure dead bodies in the earth, but without life! If He didn't raise from the dead we would not have that life!*

It's a complete and total sacrifice. He gave everything, it covers everything, and brings to us the gift of everything, which is true life, complete *without fear, without concern, without worry!* We know that death is the end of a life that is not true and not real.

Death is the beginning of a time of unconsciousness wherein we await our resurrection. No more, no less, but looking forward to the true life! I don't know if you've thought about this, but I

want to read the first part of several verses in Matt. 5. All of these are Scriptures that should be foremost in your mind these days. Also, read 1-Peter, Heb. 9—*all of these pertain tot the Passover!* Don't forget about them. In addition, John 17-18, 1-Cor., this is part of it.

#### Matthew 5:

- v 3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit..."
- v 4: "Blessed *are* those who mourn..."
- v 5: "Blessed *are* the meek..."
- v 6: "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness..."
- v 7: "Blessed *are* the merciful..."
- v 8: "Blessed *are* the pure... [clean] ...in heart..."

*Those are conditions of people that have been healed of their sins!* If you were healed of your sins:

- How can you be poor in spirit?
- How can you be meek?
- How can you mourn for the earth?
- How can you be merciful?
- How can you have a clean heart if God doesn't heal us?
- v 9: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers..."
- Who can be a peacemaker if they are not healed of God?
- v 10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness..."
- v 11: "Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you..."

*If you've been healed, you are now suffering unjustly as Jesus Christ gave us example!*

Matt. 5 is talking about those who have the Passover Covenant, the Passover promises for forgiveness, for repentance, for sins and have gone through those things. Who have had their sins covered, their sins healed, and life is being grown in us to the spiritual Kingdom.

While we call Matt. 5 the beatitudes, it reveals the identity of those who have been forgiven and healed and are now also suffering unjustly for Christ.

Colossians 1:21: "For you *were* once alienated and enemies **in your minds by wicked works...**"

That is what God heals with the broken body of Jesus Christ. There are physical healings in that promise, but there's also the need and the promise for spiritual healing.

"...but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death..." (vs 21-22).

***He had to come back alive again through the resurrection of God for us to have that life!***

“...to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him” (v 22).

***May God bless each of us this Passover!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 11:27-29
- 2) Matthew 8:14-17
- 3) 1 Peter 2:24
- 4) Isaiah 53:5
- 5) James 5:14-16
- 6) Matthew 13:15
- 7) Isaiah 53:3-8, 10-12
- 8) Hebrews 2:9-10
- 9) Hebrews 5:7-9
- 10) 1 Peter 2:19-21
- 11) John 6:26-27, 32-33, 35, 47-48, 50-51
- 12) Matthew 5:3-11
- 13) Colossians 1:21-22

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter
- Hebrews 9
- John 17-18
- 1 Corinthians

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