

The Rest of The Story (Go To Meeting)

Russell Kemp—March 17, 2023

Good evening, everybody! Welcome to our Sabbath!

At this time of the years we always hear a lot of sermons obviously concerning the Passover, and rightfully so when we consider the significance of that event. In a little over two weeks all the baptized members should be taking the Passover.

I would like to begin by reviewing and summarizing some of these events. I know this is ‘old hat,’ but I think we need to go over it, take a look at it. I’ll try to minimize some of this stuff, because I know that we go through a lot of these Scriptures over and over again and I hope to introduce some ‘seed for thought.’

We need to see where we actually are in order to see where we’re going! I’d like to begin with Exo. 12 where it gives the details concerning the first Passover. It’s important to know exactly where we’re heading with this.

Exodus 12:3—*God is instructing Israel:* “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them each man a lamb for a father’s house, a lamb for a house.’”

Verse 5: “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year....”

In other words, it’s in the prime of its life and it’s the best that they had. They were instructed to kill the lamb on 14th of the month between the two evenings.

Verse 7: “And they shall **take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and upon the upper doorpost** of the houses *in* which they shall eat it.”

In the following few verses they were instructed on how to cook and eat the lamb. Then He gives the purpose for these events; this is what He tells them:

Verse 13: “And **the blood shall be a sign to you upon the houses where you are.** And when I see the blood, I will pass over. you.... [there’s the term for the Passover] ...**And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt.**”

That plague is obviously what He told Moses to tell Pharaoh in:

Exodus 11:5: “And all the firstborn in the

land of Egypt shall die... [strong words] ...from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sits upon his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave-girl that *is* behind the mill; also the firstborn of beasts.”

Pretty stern instruction! As we know in v 29 God carried out that promise of the plague! He carried it out! Make no mistake here. They were given explicit instructions from God that had to be kept to the letter. There was no, ‘I’ll do my way’ or ‘I’ll do it this way.’ God made it very clear what they were to do.

Had they failed to put the blood on the doorpost as instructed, they would have received the exact same punishment of the Egyptians. ***When God gives us instructions, we need to take heed!*** The blood gave them the protection from the death angel that night!

Then the instructions that He gave to them (Exo. 12:14) pertains to us as well today.

Exodus 12:14: “And this day shall be a memorial to you.... [something to remember] ...And you shall keep it a Feast to the LORD throughout your generations.... [here is where He makes it clear to us when He says]: ...You shall keep it a Feast as a Law forever.”

If you believe that we’re Israelites, or we come under that Israelite nation, we are still required forever to keep that. Notice that this is a Law forever and it doesn’t change, so it applies today.

So, in just a couple of weeks, all the baptized members will keep the Feast of Passover. Then in vs 15 & 16 they were instructed to put all the leavening out of their houses, and they were to eat unleavened bread for seven days. It’s not just get the leavening out, ***but we are to eat unleavened bread for seven days!*** Then once again He gives them the purpose in so doing”

Verse 17: “**And you shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for in this very same day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.**... [out of the sinful life that they were living in Egypt] ...Therefore, you shall keep this day in your generations **as a law forever.**”

Of course, we collectively as a group of people, a church, will be keeping the days of Unleavened Bread beginning that week following Passover.

As you know the Egyptians were anxious to see Israel out of their land, obviously after the death that they received of the firstborn. They willingly allowed the children of Israel to depart with their silver, gold and other expensive items taken from the Egyptians.

The children of Israel departed Egypt. This is just a quick summary of what took place. However, it wasn't long before the Egyptians came after them with a powerful army capable of killing all the Israelites. They were obviously deeply concerned. But God gave them protection both day and night.

This is the most amazing thing; after they witnessed all these miracles *they still lacked the faith and trust in God*, and they saw the Egyptian army approaching. When they saw this, they told Moses in Exo. 14, and again, these are the people who just witnessed all of these miracles.

Exodus 14:11: "And they said to Moses, 'Have you taken us away to die in the wilderness because *there were* no graves in Egypt? Why have you dealt this way with us to carry us forth out of Egypt? Did we not tell you this word in Egypt, saying, "**Let us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians?**" for it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness'" (vs 11-12).

'Oh ye of little faith' is all I can think about! Of course, then God opened the Red Sea! Can you imagine? *Can you imagine another miracle like that?* The children crossed on dry land, but they were followed by the Egyptian army, but they were finally destroyed when the waters of the Red Sea returned!

Shortly thereafter, as we go through the proceeding chapters, God gave them His laws, His statutes, ordinances, judgments and following that God entered into a covenant with them where He would provide them protection and a new 'promised land' ***IF*** they would obey His Laws and keep His commandments.

Exodus 24:3: "...And all the people answered with one voice and said, '**All the words which the LORD has said, we will do.**'"

And again, Verse 7: "...*'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.'*"

We kind of do that when we go through baptism. Basically, that's the end of the story! They all lived happily ever after! Right? *Absolutely not! We know that!*

Paul Harvey used to say all the time, 'Now for the rest of the story!' Let's look at the rest of the story! Think about these things!

The Israelites were living as slaves in a very sinful city that worshiped false gods, and they were unable to worship the true God. But God through numerous miracles brought them out of the land of Egypt. He gave them a covenant and He promised them protection, and gave them a promise of a land 'full of milk and honey'!

The problem is *they weren't there, yet!* That land of 'milk and honey' was still a distant travel through a barren land. They had a promise, ***but it all came with conditions!*** ***IF*** they meet the conditions of the covenant they would indeed be God's people and receive the blessings of the 'promised land.'

In reality, we know that didn't happen; it just never happened! They constantly complained and sinned as they moved forward to the 'promised land.' They constantly looked back and ***probably would have actually returned if it hadn't been for God!***

Miracle after miracle was not enough for them to have trust and faith in God. As a result, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, not one other single adult that left Egypt reached the 'promised land.' They all died in the wilderness without reaching their goal.

Let me fast forward a little bit to New Covenant. As with the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is established with the blood of the Lamb. Every since Adam and Eve we have all been under the death penalty, because we're sinners.

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way death passed into all mankind; **and it is for this reason that all have sinned.**"

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

In like manner from the Old Covenant, we are under the death penalty, and that must be reconciled by the blood of the Lamb. Christ gave up His Godhead and His position as the Creator of all living things, and He humbled Himself to be that sacrificial Lamb to atone for our sins.

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God."

Verse 3: "**All things came into being through Him...**" *He was the Creator of all things!*

Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His

glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth.”

Notice that Christ is referred to as the Lamb of God:

Verse 29: “...John sees Jesus coming to him, and he says, ‘**Behold the Lamb of God**, Who takes away the sin of the world.’”

Verse 36: “And as he [John] gazed upon Jesus walking, he said, ‘**Behold the Lamb of God!**’”

Very clear that He’s the sacrificial lamb!
So, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God without blemish and in the prime of His life was worthy to take away the sins of the world!

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.” *That’s all of us! Everyone!*

Why was He worthy?

Verse 10: “Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Christ died and suffered after living a sinless life to atone for ***our sins, yours and mine, not His!***

In Matt. 26 we see that Christ gave instructions on carrying out the Passover under His New Covenant. Remember, this Passover is a memorial and a law forever. So, we’re to carry out the Passover every year.

But the procedures have changed with Christ being the Lamb slaughtered to atone for our sin. Here’s the instruction that Christ gave to the apostles:

Matthew 26:26: “And as they were eating, Jesus took the bread and blessed *it*; *then He* broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ And He took the cup; and after giving thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, ‘All of you drink of *it*; for this is My blood, the *blood* of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for *the* remission of sins’” (vs 26-28).

In a like manner to ancient Israel, ***Christ’s blood, as the sacrificial Lamb Christ gives us the protection from the death angel!***

It doesn’t mean that this physical body is not going to die—it is!—but it will not be a permanent death. Those Israelites in Egypt were living in a very

sinful city and God led them out from where they were bound in slavery to a sinful Egypt.

Today, when we follow God’s instructions and we repent of our sins, we are forgiven and taken out of that slavery from sin in the world we live in today. However, as the departed from Egypt, the Israelite were still pursued by their sinful captives. They weren’t going to give up on them. Today, even after repentance, we’re still pursued by Satan and the evil world that we live in. *You’re not out of it!*

Then the Israelites were baptized as they passed through the Red Sea, and when the water passed over the Egyptians their past life was buried! Gone! This cutoff the opportunity to turn back, the Israelites couldn’t turn back, though many wanted to.

Today, as we’re baptized, it symbolizes our burial and death of our past life. The past life needs to be gone!

Then Israel entered into a covenant with God, and they were given the promise of becoming God’s own people in the ‘land of milk and honey.’ Isn’t it amazing, all of that was predicated on doing God’s will and keeping His laws, statues and commandments! After baptism and the laying on of hands, we enter into a covenant with God to keep His will and His Laws! ***We have also been given God’s Spirit to help us do just that!***

Like the Israelites, we came out of sin, have been baptized and we entered into a covenant with God! *A very serious step!* The end of the story. Right? ***Absolutely not!***

Like those Israelites, we are still in the wilderness. We are not to be part of this world! But we’re still in it; we’re not out of it!

John 17:15—*as Christ was praying to the Father*: “I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [that was not His intention] ...**but that You would keep them from the evil one.**”

Protection, like God promised the Israelites! We still have to live in Satan’s world until we die or the return of Jesus Christ, whichever one comes first.

We have not reached the ‘promised land,’ eternal life in God’s Kingdom. We have not reached that! Could we grumble and complain, and turn back and not enter that ‘promised land’? *Yes, it is possible!* Sin separates us from God, and unfortunately, brethren, ***we will sin!*** God didn’t guarantee that we would never sin again! In speaking to the Church John tells us that:

1-John 1:8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.” ***In other words we’re lying!***

We must continually repent of sins, and we should be growing in the grace and knowledge of God on a daily basis, constantly!

As Paul Harvey said—he's the one who coined that—'Now for the rest of the story.' You see, we're not there yet, brethren, we are not there. We must still struggle against:

- human nature—you're still human
- the sins of this world we live in—and what a world we live in today

I don't think I'd get an argument out of too many of you about how far we've gone down hill. I gave a sermon many years ago about what happened to the country that I grew up in. I've got to tell you, *it 'ain't the same country!* Satan would love to spoil God's plans, so he will do everything he can to draw you back into the world.

If you don't think that can happen, I want to ask those of you that have been around the Church of God for many years if you know of anyone who is no longer in any of the Churches of God? What happened to them?

In a couple of weeks is Passover and the following days of Unleavened Bread. They are a memorial; they remind us of the events that have taken place, and it is a memorial and a law that we're commanded to keep forever!

The days of Unleavened Bread following the Passover represent you and me coming out of sin. Putting sin out of our lives for seven days is not only a memorial and a law, but a process that we are to continue to keep until we are in the 'promised land.' *We're not there!*

If we continue to grumble, complain and lack faith in God—as did the Israelites of old; while still in the wilderness in our case this sinful world that we live in—we may never reach the 'promised land.' *Don't think it can't happen!*

We began a process with repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands, *and we can't look back like the Israelites did!* I only covered a couple of Scriptures, but they constantly wanted to go back! They didn't like living out in the wilderness.

We all remember the story of Lot and how he and his wife were given the opportunity to escape the destruction of the sinful city of Sodom. As they left that sinful city they were instructed and told very clearly"

- don't look back
- don't want to return
- don't go back to that sinful city

Genesis 19:26: "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." *She didn't make it to the 'promised land!'*

As we approach the end of this current age of man, we have been warned what it will be like. We've been warned, there's no excuse!

Luke 17:26—*Christ warns us:* "Now, as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man."

In other words, like Egypt and Sodom Noah was living in an extremely sinful world! Think about this: It was so sinful that God was about to destroy all living life with the exception of Noah, his family and the animals that were brought into the ark. God was going to destroy it all!

I know if we're living in those same days, yet, or not, but God's not going to allow that to happen. At that time He says:

Verse 27: "They were eating, they were drinking... [living a normal life] ...they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all."

- *They didn't see what was coming!*
- *They had no idea what was coming!*

They were content with their sinful way of life.

Verse 28: And it was the same way in the days of Lot..."

Now in v 31, speaking of the return of Christ, we are told:

Verse 31: "In that day, let not the one who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, come down to take them away; and likewise, let not the one who is in the field return to the things behind."

- What are these physical things anyway?
- What are they going to do for you?

Verse 32: "Remember Lot's wife." *Don't turn back!* We've made a commitment and entered into a covenant and we cannot turn back.

As Israel came out of Egypt, they were not to return to the way of life they left. But they grumbled and wanted to turn back.

1-Corinthians 10:1: "Now, I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud... [that protected them] ...and all passed through the sea... [another miracle] ...And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (vs 1-2).

Now, here's food for thought for when we actually take the Passover:

Verse 3: "And they all ate the same spiritual meat. And they all drank of the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them. And that Rock was Christ" (vs 3-4).

When we take the Passover, we will eat of the body and drink the blood of that same *spiritual Rock*—Christ—and we need to be very careful not to go the same route that they chose.

In v 5—God explains that He was not happy with their lack of trust and behavior:

Verse 5: "But with many of them God was not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now these things... [this is significant] ...**became examples for us**, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (vs 5-6).

Then we're given examples of these things that prevented them from reaching the 'promised land.'

Verse 7: "Neither be idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.' Neither should we commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and **twenty-three thousand were destroyed in one day**" (vs 7-8).

And it warns us, v 9: **Neither should we tempt Christ**, as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. **Neither should we complain against God**, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer" (vs 9-10).

Once again, we're reminded of the purpose of these things:

Verse 11: "Now, all these things happened to them *as* examples, and **were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming**."

I think we're getting very close to the end of the age. Things are getting very tough! Yes indeed, the end of the age is coming and we live in Satan's very sinful world! We could talk about all the things that are taking place. ***I have never seen such insanity in my entire life that I am seeing in the world that I live in today!***

Could we be drawn back into and held captive by the wilderness that we live in? *The answer to it is:*

Verse 12: "**Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall.**"

We need to give serious consideration to this in a few weeks where it says:

Verse 21: "**You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons.**"

We live in a very corrupt world! In just a couple weeks we're going to take the Passover, reminding us that:

- the blood of Christ atoned for our sins
- we eat the unleavened bread as a reminder that we are to become part of the Body of Christ

We get all the leavening out of our houses and we eat unleavened bread for the seven day to symbolize our coming out of sin!

But that is still not the end of the story!

Keeping the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread is a memorial, but in reality, overcoming and developing the character of God is an ongoing process.

We're not in God's Kingdom, yet! The rest of the story is what happens from now until the time we enter the Kingdom of God. It ain't over till it's over! we need to be developing faith and trust in God, and be growing in the grace and the knowledge of God.

That's the rest of the story!

Remember ancient Israel never reached the 'promised land' because of their ***lack of trust and faith*** in God.

Let's take a look at what we do on our journey through the wilderness, this sinful world that we live in. What do we do? As we proceed through the wilderness, like Israel, ***we're going to face many trials!***

I don't know about you, brethren, I've already faced plenty of them in my life. I'm sure I'm not done, yet, even though I'm getting up there in age. There is a purpose for trials. We should be growing as a result of those trials.

God uses trials as an instrument for our growth; rest assured, we are all going to face trials. We all need to recognize that our spiritual life is not unlike our physical life—believe it or not! Our physical life, speaking of: we're born, we grow and eventually mature. That's all part of the process we go through. Our spiritual life is the same!

John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said to him [Nicodemus], 'Truly, truly I say to you, **unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom**

of God.” *So, we start a new life, not a physical life!*

Verse 4: “Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man who is old be born? Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?’” *We’re looking at a different birth!*

Verse 5: “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone has been born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. **That which has been born of the flesh is flesh; and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit**” (vs 5-6).

Once born of the Spirit, we must grow and eventually mature as it is with the physical life. I gave a sermon on drinking milk, do we just keep drinking milk, or do we eventually take meat and grow?

God does give us His Word, the Bible. He gives us those who feed, the ministers and others, and the fellowship that we have with one another is all part of that system. Our fellow believers to help us mature is all part of the maturing process.

But God also uses trials to bring us to maturity! Let’s look at ***four reasons why we have trials:***

1. **To Test Us**

God uses trials to test us; as we grow we go through various trials and tests. Peter tells us:

1-Peter 4:12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you *which is* taking place to test you, as if some strange thing *were* happening to you.”

There’s a purpose for it! Peter makes it clear that sometime we are tested to see if we will obey God!

- God tested Abraham to see if he would sacrifice his own son
- God tested Noah to see if he would actually build an ark

The people thought he was really insane!

- even Jesus Christ had to be tested to see if He could/would live without sin

Be aware that when we face difficult trials, ***God has a purpose in allowing these things to happen!*** They’re not pleasant, we understand that.

2. **Because we live in a sinful world**

Paul gives us a pretty good breakdown of human nature. It explains what happen to the human nature. The bottom line is given to us in:

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God.”

We are the product of a fallen race of people. We also live in a world of turmoil and natural disasters. Look at them! They’re exploding all over the world today. We’re going to face those things. It’s not easy for us to deal with, especially with all the conflict taking place in the world today, as well as all the natural disasters.

I defy anybody if you’re anywhere close to my age or just a little younger, if you think we live in the same world. We also live in a world of crime. I can’t speak specifically of Canada, Australia and other places, but I can speak of the United States, and it’s horrible! And sickness and death is all part of what we deal with.

All of these things create trials that we must face and make decisions on how we will react to these things, ***that we don’t lose faith! We can’t lose faith!***

3. **Because of the power of Satan**

- Do you think Satan wants you to win?
- Do you think he wants God to win?

Oh no! He’s going to make sure that he throws plenty of trials. Satan is not that funny little red character with a pitchfork that everybody makes fun of.

He is real and he is powerful! He is our adversary and will do anything whatsoever he can to destroy the works of God! Face reality, brethren, face reality! We’re told in 1-Pet. 5. I don’t know if we just blow through these things or not. We should take them serious!

1-Peter 5:8: “**Be sober! Be vigilant!** For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour.”

He’s real! If you don’t think he’s real and you believe in your Bible, consider what he did to Job!

4. **Christians are on a collision course with the world**

Jesus warned of this conflict in John 15, notice what He says. He’s speaking to you!

John 15:18: “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, **but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this...** [do you think the world loves Christianity?] ...Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also” (vs 18-20).

That’s a job and responsibility that we have today! Also, look at how many suffered and died for Christ. In Heb. 11 Paul talks about those who lived in the faith:

Hebrews 11:36: “And others endured *the* trial of *cruel* mocking and scourging; yes, and moreover, of chains and imprisonment.... [could be coming, I don’t know] ...They were stoned to death, they were sawed in two, they were *brutally* interrogated, *and* slaughtered by *the* sword.... [and we think we have trials] ...They went about in sheepskins *and* in goatskins, being destitute, oppressed, *and* ill-treated” (vs 36-37)—***and through all of this they were still awaiting the promise!***

Verse 39: “But these all, *though* they had received a good report through faith, did not obtain the promise.”

Consider the trials faced by the apostles and others that followed Christ after His death. I’m sure many of you have looked at these:

- Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia killed by the sword
- Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead
- Luke was hanged in Greece as a result of his tremendous preaching to the lost

I don’t have time to go through all of these.

This is what they went through! Unlike Israel, as we wander through the wilderness we must continue to maintain our faith in God. We need to continue to stay and live in that hope of faith. The trials we face going forward as Christians are different.

1-Peter 4:13: “But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice... [think on that little bit] ...so that at the revelation of His glory, you also may rejoice exceedingly.” *That’s closer to the end of the story!*

Let’s look at some of the ***reasons our trials as Christians are different:***

1) **We do not suffer alone**

Hebrews 13:5: “...*but be* satisfied with what you have; for He [Christ] has said, **‘In no way will I ever leave you; no, I will never forsake you in any way.’**”

- Do we believe that?
- Do we take that sincerely and honestly?

Verse 6—*Paul says:* “So then, let us boldly say, ‘*The Lord is my Helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*’” *Once again, we do not suffer alone!*

2) **We become partakers of Christ’s suffering**

We just read that in 1-Peter 4:13.

3) **There is a design in our difficulties**

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose, because those whom He did foreknow He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son, **that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren**” (vs 28-29).

God has a design and a purpose for all the things that He does, all the trials that we face!

4) **We might look forward to the glory**

Finally, after facing all the trials of this life, we can look forward to glory!

Romans 8:17: “Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs... [inheritors of the same thing] ...truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; **if** indeed we suffer together with Him... [our purpose for suffering] ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him. For I reckon that **the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us**” (vs 17-18).

Brethren, as we continue to wander through this wilderness—***and we are wandering through a wilderness***—like the Israelites, we will face trials and temptation. There’s no doubt about it, we’re going to be tempted, ***to test us to see if we have the faith and the trust in God!***

The apostles after having received God’s Spirit still had to complete their journey without having received the promise! So it goes with us.

In a couple of weeks there will be the memorial as described in John 13. Here Jesus and the apostles had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. I can imagine that they all had a pleasant meal. I’m sure they enjoyed the fellowship and the discussions with each other.

As we will do on that particular night, the Passover night, Jesus even washed the apostles feet. I’m sure that was really shocking to them. To setup an example of the humility that we need as we go forward.

It's not all about you and me! At that event Jesus also revealed the tough times ahead.

John 13:21-30 Christ explains how He would be betrayed by Judas.

Then in vs 36-38 Christ tells Peter that he would deny Him three times. I'm sure that Peter said:

Oh no! That's shocking! That ain't going to happen! Im not going to do that! Never happen!

I'm sure that Peter didn't really believe that was true. But we're also warned of the tough times ahead. Jesus says in John 16 to listen, because the time is coming and has already come.

John 16:32^[transcriber's correction]: "Listen, the time is coming, and has already come... [talking about current and future events]: ...that you shall be scattered each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone; and *yet*, I am not alone because the Father is with Me."

We are to be scattered! There's a chance we're going to be alone!

Verse 33: "These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace.... [however, he warns us that]: ...In the world you shall have tribulation.... [we will have trials and tribulations in this world; no question about that] ...**But be courageous! I have overcome the world.**"

These are hard things to fashion, take a look at, believe and things of in the world today. In this world most of us will go through things that we never thought would happen. And many will go through things that we never thought we could. I've had some tough times in life, and I'm sure most of you have.

In spite of the world we live in, Christ tells us in:

John 14:1: "**Let not your heart be troubled...**"

We can have peace even in perilous times. However, as we trek through this wilderness that we're in—on our journey to the Kingdom of God, looking for that 'promised land'—we must maintain our faith and our trust in God.

Remember, it was the lack of that trust and faith that prevented ancient Israel from reaching the 'promised land.' Tough times were ahead and they just couldn't trust God to carry them through that journey until they got to the Kingdom of God or the 'promised land.'

- we need to believe God
- we need to exercise our faith in God

Belief is a life-changing word! Look at all those mentioned in Heb. 11, and how they acted in faith, because they believed God. Acting in faith, we must believe that God exists, that He is the Creator!

We have to have faith that God is in control and He answers our prayers. We must have faith that Christ died for our sins, and our salvation is in His hands. ***Without faith it is impossible to please God!***

Hebrews 11:6: "Now, **without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**"

Faith is believing that all the promises of God are true, and the things that are impossible for us to see do exist! We have to take that on faith! We can't feel, smell, taste, hear or see the things of the spirit. But we ***must believe*** that it exists. *That's faith!*

Verse 1: "Now, faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for... [we do, we hope that these things are true and this is exactly what's going to take place] ...*and the* conviction of things not seen."

We're convicted even though we don't see some of these things.

Verse 3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God, **so that the things that are seen were made from things that are invisible.**"

That's amazing! That's where our faith is! We have to believe that all the promises that has made concerning His plan for humanity and the existence of the Kingdom of God is true!

Apparently Israel lacked that kind of trust and faith in God, and even after seeing all the miracles performed, they never saw the Kingdom of God.

After Passover, and the days of Unleavened Bread, we—you and I—will be writing the rest of the story. How we proceed will determine the end of the story. We face temptations and tribulations in the world we live in today.

- we face the disappointments and hurts of our childhood
- we often face the shattered dreams of our working years
- we also face the loneliness and pain of old age; especially when we lose a loved one

But that's reality of life that we live! However, also consider that Jesus was also a 'man of sorrows.'

Isa. 53 tells of us of Christ Himself:

Isaiah 53:3: “*He is* despised and rejected of men... [He came to save man and He was rejected] ...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.” (vs 3-4).

Here’s something we need to take very seriously on Passover night:

Verse 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.”

Verse 6—*talking specifically of us*: “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.”

What a terrible thing! When we consider the Passover Lamb, we read:

Verse 7: “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet, He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

Christ also had to suffer the process of what He was about to go through. He knew what He was facing. He knew what He was about to go through; He was aware of it.

He told Peter that He was going to die, and then said to the disciples:

Matthew 26:38: “Then He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, even to death.... [How would you feel if you knew what He was getting ready to go through?’....”

Then He prays to the Father; v 39: “...‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me...’”

Would you want to face what He was facing, and knowing what He’s facing? He knew He was about to be tortured and die a horrible death, but notice His attitude; this is the attitude that we need to have:

“...nevertheless, **not as I will, but as You will**” (v 39).

We all need to adapt this attitude of Christ. We all face difficult times, I don’t care who you are. Life isn’t always fair, trust me it’s not always fair. **Christ didn’t deserve anything that He received! He didn’t deserve any of it!**

But like Christ, His physical life, all these things are temporary. I guess the final question is:

- Is it all worth it?
- Do you want to reach that ‘promised land’?
- Do we have the faith and trust in God to finish the journey to that ‘promised land’ of the Kingdom of God?

Apparently, ancient Israel didn’t think so!

We may be writing the rest of the story right now. But the story already has an ending, and it’s good news! It is a happy ending! Christ did die! And He shed His blood to atone for our sins! Not His! But He did not remain in the grave. He was raised from the dead and now sits at the right hand of His Father in heaven, and is waiting for the decision of when to establish His Kingdom here on earth. That’s what He’s waiting for!

If we trust in God and remain faithful unto the end—because you have to hang on until the end—we have the opportunity to be part of that Kingdom.

Rev. 21 really lend to answer *what’s the rest of the story?* The end of the story? This is the promise that we have from God, if we trust God and remain faithful. This is the grand finale and the climax that’s coming. Here’s God’s promise and it couldn’t get any better:

Revelation 21:1: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the Holy City, *the New Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (vs 1-2).

Verse 3: “And I heard a great voice from heaven say, ‘Behold, the Tabernacle of God *is* with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away’” (vs 3-4).

Think about all the tremendous blessings that God has prepared for us. All those temporary physical things we deal with will be gone. Yes, we face:

- tough times
- temptations
- tribulations
- other things

But the end of the story says that they will be gone!

We must endure until the end!

- no more crying
- no more pain
- no more tears
- no more separation from friends and loved ones

Because the last enemy to be destroyed is death (1-Cor. 15).

Verse 5: “And He Who sits on the Throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ Then He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the Water of Life’” (vs 5-6).

Brethren, that is the end of the story!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 12:3, 5, 7, 13
- 2) Exodus 11:5
- 3) Exodus 12:14-17
- 4) Exodus 14:11-12
- 5) Exodus 24:3, 7
- 6) Romans 5:12
- 7) Romans 3:23
- 8) John 1:1, 3, 14, 29, 36
- 9) Hebrews 2:9-10
- 10) Matthew 26:26-28
- 11) John 17:15
- 12) 1 John 1:8
- 13) Genesis 19:26
- 14) Luke 17:26-28, 31-32
- 15) 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, 21
- 16) John 3:3-6
- 17) 1 Peter 4:12
- 18) Romans 3:23
- 19) 1 Peter 5:8
- 20) John 15:18-20
- 21) Hebrews 11:36-37, 39
- 22) 1 Peter 4:13
- 23) Hebrews 13:5-6
- 24) Romans 8:28-29, 17-18
- 25) John 16:32-33
- 26) John 14:1
- 27) Hebrews 11:6, 1, 3
- 28) Isaiah 53:3-7
- 29) Matthew 26:38-39
- 30) Revelation 21:1-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 12:29; 15; 16
- John 13:21-30, 36-38
- John 16: 23-31

- 1-Corinthians 15

RK:bo
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