

The Ultimate Peace Offering

(Sermon Notes) by Warren Zehrung 4/13/2019

In the Old Testament there were many types of sacrifices and offerings, and they all point to the various aspects of the Messiah – Jesus Christ.

The **Drink** Offering, **Wave** Offering, **Heave** Offering, **Freewill** Offering, **Burnt** Offering, **Meal** Offering, **Sin** Offering, the **Peace** Offering, and others. They were stipulated by God for different occasions and circumstances.

We find an **Old Testament offering** in the New Testament: For example, when Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary brought Him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luke 2:24 to offer a sacrifice [in this case a **Burnt** Offering] according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

We will see that Jesus Passover meal with His disciples was a type of a **Peace Offering**— and as I have labeled it— **The Ultimate Peace Offering**. Not understanding the Old Testament offering system very well, the Church of God has treated Passover as more of a **Sin Offering**. We focused on the propitiation and expiation part – where Jesus **paid** for our **sins** at His death.

In doing so we missed out on the beautiful picture of **togetherness**, unity, fellowship Christ, and oneness with God the Father that is offered to us. Jesus had much to share – before He died. The taking of the Bread and Wine at the Passover meal was for **life** – and should be separated from Christ's **death** – which **paid** for our sins.

This will be seen when we recognize that the Lord's **Passover Meal** was not a **Sin Offering** but a type of the **Peace** Offering. As we study into Jesus' last Passover we find many attributes of the **Peace Offering**. Jesus' death had multiple facets, as shown in the sacrificial system. Jesus' sacrifice accomplished much more than simply paying the penalty for sin.

While it is common to think of Passover in terms of a sin offering, largely because Jesus was crucified on Passover day, a careful study shows that there is much more involved in the evening Passover observance. On the night before He died Jesus ate the Old Testament Passover meal – the Seder with lamb and bitter herbs – and He ate the New Testament Passover meal of Bread and Wine (John 13:2).

In the past, our church practice has always been that we are not at Passover services to eat a meal, but keep the Passover service as a **somber** wake-like, funeral-like ceremony. We did not talk, smile, or greet one another – we simply focused on Christ's death. We were missing an aspect that Jesus gives us of the communion / **fellowship** aspect of the body of Christ which we were supposed to be celebrating. We will look at the general attitude and demeanor of Jesus at His last Passover. Jesus had the wonderfully greater picture fully in mind:

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the **joy that was set before** Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For example, Jesus said with eager anticipation:

Luke 22:15 ... With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

The **Peace Offering** is a **sweet smelling savor** to the Lord—like the smell of barbecue grilling.

Exodus 12:9 specifies that that Passover was to be “roasted . . . its head with its legs and its entrails.

These parts of the lamb were to be included in the Passover meal.

But, the **Sin Offering** was a sacrifice which provided **atonement for sin**. At Jesus last Passover meal He was not paying for our sins- yet. That would come the next afternoon. At the Passover meal of Bread and Wine, Jesus was doing something new. What was He doing? We will look at that.

With the **sin offering**, the head, legs, and entrails of the animal had to be burned outside the camp (Leviticus 4:11-12, 21).

Leviticus 6:25 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the **sin offering**: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is **most holy**.

Leviticus 6:26 The priest that offers it for sin **shall eat it**: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The Sin Offering was pleasing to God. It was **boiled** (Ezekiel 46:20), with the remainder of the **sin offering**, including the **hide** and **hair** being **burned** (Exodus 29:14). That part smelled terrible. It was **not** a **sweet smelling savor**.

As we see, the Passover sacrifice is not like a Sin Offering at all.

Of all the offerings, the Passover bears the most resemblance to the **peace offering**, with which most people are far less familiar. Though the instructions for the Passover and the peace offering are not identical, they line up in many areas, and they have far more in common than any of the other offerings.

The **Peace Offering** pictures an individual in **fellowship** with God because God has already bestowed His favor—He has already accepted the individual. It is often called a thanksgiving offering because it was given to God in response to something He had done for the individual.

In type, the **Peace Offering** shows a shared meal with God where there is harmony, and everyone is satisfied.

The satisfaction is not simply because of the food, but because everyone is at peace with each other—and that “everyone” includes the Most High God Himself.

That makes Passover an occasion of security and wellbeing.

In short, the **Peace Offering** celebrates that the relationship between God and the individual is on good terms, which should be a cause for extreme gratitude and thanksgiving.

The Passover is a prime example of this, where God chose to make an exemption, and thus bestowed great favor on Israel, when they should have been destroyed – had God strictly applied justice.

First let's consider that Passover was **a meal**.

Exodus 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

Exodus 12:4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man **according to his eating** shall make your count for the lamb.

The emphasis of the Passover sacrifice **is on eating**; it is, first and foremost, a meal (see Exodus 12:3-11).

However, our church narrative has always been that we are not there to eat a meal, but keep the Passover service as a somber wake-like, funeral-like ceremony. We did not talk, smile, or greet one another – we simply focused on Christ's death.

We totally missed out on the communion / **fellowship** aspect of the body of Christ which we were supposed to be celebrating. The Corinthians in Paul's day went **overboard** in the opposite direction! The Corinthians were having such an out of control Feast prior to taking the bread and the wine, and Paul was, trying to set apart the Passover from their normal fellowship meals because they were muddling things and missing the point of Godly fellowship.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give **for the life of the world**.

Jesus defines the bread that He gives as His flesh, which He would "give for the life of the world."

Because we hear so often about Jesus giving Himself for the sins of mankind, we commonly read this verse in a similar way—that He would give His flesh in exchange for the lives of all men.

However, the sense of the verse—indeed, the whole passage—speaks to the abundant, spiritual, eternal life **rather than the payment for sin**.

He is not saying here that He would give His flesh as payment, but that He was living His physical life so that the world could likewise experience life as He lived it.

There is another quality about Christ's life that adds to this picture. The basis of the **bread of life**'s ability to provide true satisfaction and immortality is its absolute purity and sin-less-ness.

The bread of life is a symbol of the sinless life that Jesus lived and that He offers to His followers. His sinless flesh is what grants us access to the spiritual Holy of Holies. We are cleansed by His blood, and we then approach the Father because we are accepted.

Eating the bread is about the ongoing relationship rather than the **payment for sin**. The meal we are to eat is not the Old Testament Supper, **but the meal** consisting of our Lord's Body and Blood.

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have **no life in you**.

The Scriptures use Christ's Body and flesh as symbols of life. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that "we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30)—imagery of life rather than death.

As the body of Christ, the church is very much alive. Its members are dead only to sin (see Romans 6:11, 13; 8:10).

As we partake of Christ, we become one with the living Savior; He manifests His life in our mortal flesh (2Corinthians 4:11).

Christ's perfect physical life becomes our pattern, and even as He was raised to eternal life, so will we be raised to immortality through our union with Him—through His living in us (Galatians 2:20).

The unleavened bread that we eat on Passover represents Christ's body. When bread is used as a symbol for Christ's body, it is consistently—even overwhelmingly—a symbol **of life**, even eternal life.

John 6:54 Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

I believe we erred in the WCG in making it a funeral-like atmosphere. It is a solemn—important—occasion, and yes Christ's death is in mind, yet Christ Himself even tried to **cheer** the disciples up—there is no indication at all that He was melancholy or stone-faced that evening.

Luke 22:15 Jesus said... With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

Jesus even couched His death in terms of "going away" (and "coming to you") rather than speaking starkly of "death" (John 14:28; 16:5, 7).

Passover is a significant occasion, but also one that should be filled with hope, appreciation, and **spiritual fellowship** with others who are also part of the "one Bread."

The repeated emphasis in both Old and New Testament Scripture is on the **eating** of the Passover **meal** (Exodus 12:43, 48; 34:25; Numbers 9:11; 2Chronicles 30:18; Ezra 6:21; Matthew 26:17, 26; Mark 14:12, 14, 22; Luke 22:8, 11, 15, 19; John 13:2; 1Corinthians 11:23-26; see John 6:31-58).

This begins to set the Passover apart from a **Sin Offering**. The Passover meal **of Bread and Wine is not a Sin Offering**.

Like Israel in Egypt, Christ's **Passover meal** was an **exemption**—an act of grace—God acted – though it was undeserved—rather than a payment for sins.

God overlooked the disciples' sins on the basis of the covenant that was about to be sealed, even as He mercifully **passed over** – **exempted** the grievous sins of Israel for the sake of a covenant.

God's confidence that Jesus Christ would submit to His will and go through the crucifixion allowed the disciples to have this fellowship even before He provided atonement!

For all intents and purposes, the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

However, His atoning blood is only applied to those who have accepted His blood of the covenant. It is only within the covenant relationship that we find forgiveness.

In addition to the close fellowship between God and man, the **peace offering** also symbolizes an individual giving of himself fully in service and cooperation with God's will. In the order of events of the New Testament Passover, the bread is shared first, followed by the wine (Matthew 26:26-27; Mark 14:22-23; Luke 22:19-20; 1Corinthians 11:23-25).

Matthew records, "And **as they were eating**, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'" (Matthew 26:26).

Paul later expounds on the **bread and body** symbolism:

1Corinthians 10:16-17 "...The bread which we break, is it not the communion/fellowship of the body of Christ?

For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread."

In God's Church we get to thinking sometimes that God **passed-over** our sins because we were doing everything correctly and **right**. The truth is just the opposite. God loved us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8).

In the Hebrew language, **Passover** is 'pesach' meaning that God gives an **exemption**. It is God who initiates the fellowship with us, **overlooking** sin at the outset.

We tend to think of Passover in terms of having our **sins forgiven**, but there is a more profound meaning in that 'Passover' means we are at **peace** with God, and able to be in close **fellowship** with Him.

We see that concept much clearer when we compare the Old Testament Sin Offering to the Peace Offering.

Passover is primarily about God's **exemption** and **overlooking** of sin more than providing a payment for sin.

He is not condoning sin by any means, but in His mercy, He is not holding us immediately accountable for them.

Certainly, Jesus has paid for our sin – but there is also something of great importance that is going on here.

The purpose of today's sermon is to demonstrate from Scripture that the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ was much more than simply a Sin Offering to appease the Father.

Christ's Passover is a **Peace Offering**. We do not perform the Old Testament **offerings** any more, and as a result, they have become rather obscure to us. However, God has made them an integral part of His word, the Bible, because, as Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these Scriptures that bear witness of Me." (John 5:39).

This tells us that the Old Testament **offerings** are important to our understanding.

Leviticus 6:25-26 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the **Sin Offering**: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: **it is most holy**. The priest that offers it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The Sin Offering was most pleasing to God. It was a sacrifice which provided atonement for sin, but **Passover is not a Sin Offering**.

The Sin Offering was **boiled** in a stew-pot, while the Passover lamb was **roasted**. The Sin Offering was for the purpose of cleansing – which comports more with Atonement.

On the other hand, the **Peace Offering**—of which the Passover is a type—shows the perfect fellowship produced—between us and God, and us and our fellow man.

Passover commemorates the peace we have with the Father and the Son, and the incredible covenant to which They have pledged Themselves. When the significance of that awesome privilege truly sinks in, it motivates the Christian to likewise honor the fellowship of the entire spiritual Body.

The Passover is a memorial of our unique and undeserved standing with God, and a reminder of the redemption process He is faithful to complete as we continue to abide in Him.

Because of Christ's overwhelming dedication and devotion to the point of death, we can now gratefully enjoy fellowship with God because of the **peace** Jesus Christ has provided. Speaking of Messiah Jesus:

Ephesians 2:14-17 He is our **peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity... to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making **peace**; that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Romans 5:1-2 Being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith **into this grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Yes! It is by God's **good grace** that we have been **exempted** when He overlooked our miserable sinful condition for His Name's sake (Ezekiel 20:5-9).

God allowed the Israelites' continued existence because of His covenant promise to Abraham concerning his descendants.

Because of God's faithfulness to Abraham—God devastated Egypt while **exempting** Israel which was involved in the **same** abominable sins.

The covenants are made with those whose transgressions are **overlooked** by God so He can establish a covenantal relationship.

This is why Jesus Christ proposed the New Covenant to His disciples at that Passover observance even before He had died to provide the atonement.

The covenant came **first**.

The Peace Offering shows that God has done the exact same for us—**Passing-over** our sins. Thank God for His peace and mercy on us, His people.

Passover is about communion—sharing; **fellowship**—which is wholly absent in the sin offering. It should be evident by now that **sin** is not the focus of the Passover observance.

Forgiven **sin** was not an aspect of the Exodus Passover at all, nor are sins (or forgiveness) mentioned in the Passover with Abraham and Melchizedek in Genesis 14.

Instead, God's mercy sets the stage for the fellowship He initiates with His people, and which we commemorate on Passover evening.

The remission of sins is part of the New Covenant, but the greater focus of the New Testament Passover is on the current and ongoing fellowship with the Father and the Son, as well as the communion we share with others in the spiritual Body.

The Sin Offering was made for **unintentional sins**. Never think that it is OK to sin with impunity.

Romans 3:25 [Jesus Christ] Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of **sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God;

But Paul realized that we sin even after we repent and intend to sin no more (Romans 7:14-25). "I do not realize what or why I'm doing something wrong. I do not do what I intended to do. Instead, I end up doing what I hate." So we continue to strive to **come completely out of sin**.

Hebrews 12:1, 4 Let us **rid ourselves of the sin** which doth so easily beset us... Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, **striving against sin**.

The meaning of Passover

Egypt was filled with Pagan idolatry – they deserved to be destroyed. When God was delivering Israel, they too **carried their idols** with them.

Why were they not destroyed also? Certainly, God did not approve of their idolatry – quite the contrary!

He abhorred it, and yet for His own Name's sake—He would have a people in which to fulfill His covenant promises—He **overlooked** Israel's transgressions. He did not approve of their transgressions. He did not excuse their sins, but He graciously extended His mercy to them.

The Israelites' redemption was that God was buying them back from Pharaoh, **not paying for their sins**.

Israel was not worthy of that deliverance, but God considered the fact that His Son would pay for their offenses that He might dwell and fellowship with them.

Exodus 12:25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

Exodus 12:26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

Exodus 12:27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S Passover, who **passed over / exempted** the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Though God clearly was merciful toward the Israelites (Numbers 14:19), He makes no mention of atonement or forgiveness in the context of this Passover. He only references His covenant with Abraham, part of which includes His deliverance of Abraham's descendants. God promised Abraham that he would become a great nation (Genesis 12:2).

There is no mention of forgiveness, atonement, or propitiation, or expiation in the context of those Passover instructions.

Moreover, the basic meaning of the Hebrew word for Passover reveals that God was making an **exemption** rather than forgiving—He mercifully “passed over” rather than requiring, or providing, payment for their sins.

God did not redeem Israel from the death penalty, but only from the hand of Pharaoh, as He had promised Abraham. The Sin Offering – applies to much more than merely a Passover setting.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which **takes away the sin** of the world.

More Peace Scriptures: (Colossians 1:21-22; 2Corinthians 5:18; 2Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 7:2). Paul wrote:

1Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump [we are lumped together with all Christians], as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

“You are unleavened.” How should we understand the statement “...you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us”?

Is the apostle referring to the sin offering as the reason Christians are “truly unleavened,” or is there something else here?

Being considered **unleavened** comes from the continued relationship with our father, for if our unleavened condition depended solely on forgiveness, then our state would continually fluctuate between “leavenedness” and “unleavenedness” as we sinned, sought forgiveness, sinned again, sought forgiveness again, etc.

That is not the case! We are **unleavened** because of our covenant relationship with God. Notice that the Corinthians were “unleavened” even though they were displaying improper glorying, malice, and wickedness—and those are just the sins mentioned in this passage!

They were still carnal (1Corinthians 3:1-4). They were falling short, but had righteousness imputed because of their ongoing relationship with Christ. 1Corinthians 10:16-17 shows the basis of this:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Our drinking of the cup and eating of the bread are acts of fellowship with Christ.

Verse 17 shows that such partaking also creates a common experience and spiritual bond with other members of the Body. All who partake of that “one bread” become **one** with each other and with Jesus Christ.

We remain **unleavened** for the rest of our lives because of the covenant relationship we entered into at our baptism. God the Father and Jesus Christ make their abode in us forever more.

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

That **covenant relationship** that we entered at our baptism is renewed every Passover. The Passover commemorates a covenantal relationship, one which includes forgiveness, but also knowing God, belonging to Him, and having His laws written into our very being.

Christ's blood provides payment for sin, but it is also a pledge by the Father and Son to complete Their good work in us.

The Passover bread symbolizes the eternal, sustaining life of Jesus Christ that is made available to us, and the wine represents the covenantal blood that guarantees that life, just as the life of flesh is in the blood.

Putting this all together, God does not consider church members to be **unleavened** simply because He forgave our sins at baptism; rather, we are unleavened because we **are in Christ**—the bread of life, the epitome of unleavened bread.

The Passover is a **type of the peace offering**, and shows God making an exemption—in spite of our sinfulness—so that He can continue a covenantal relationship, even before He provides atonement for sins.

The New Covenant Passover reminds us that God has redeemed us, but also that He has a future, greater redemption in store for us.

Jesus has already completely **fulfilled** the **Sin Offering**. Passover is **forward** looking. The Passover observance has not yet been completely fulfilled, it will not be fulfilled until the Kingdom of God comes (Luke 22:16).

Jesus' words simply show that the Passover is a commemoration of something that is **ongoing**.

That is why Jesus said that He looked forward to that day.

Luke 22:15 And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

Verse 15 tells us what was on Christ's mind here at the Passover, and it was not the disciples' sins.

Instead, the Son of God had been fervently looking forward to this special occasion—this fellowship—with those whom the Father had given to Him (see also Matthew 26:18-29; Mark 14:13-25).

As with previous Passovers, it was a shared meal, one that Christ had been **eagerly anticipating**.

Like the Exodus Passover, Christ's final Passover focused **on eating** (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12, 14; Luke 22:8, 11, 15-16; John 13:2), which separates it from the **sin offering**...

Jesus has already completely fulfilled the sin offering, for all time, as we commemorate on the Day of Atonement (see Hebrews 1:3; 7:27; 9:12-14, 26-28; 10:12, 18), yet He declares that the Passover will not be completely fulfilled until He returns.

Luke 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more **eat thereof** [notice the emphasis on eating the Passover meal of Bread and Wine], until it be **fulfilled** in the kingdom of God.

Matthew 26:29 I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, **until that day** when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

What is it that will be **fulfilled** when Christ returns and His Kingdom is established over all the earth? It cannot be the **sin offering**, for that has already been completely fulfilled by **Christ's death**.

The book of Hebrews shows repeatedly that the only payment for sin that will ever be needed has already been paid by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:3; 7:27; 9:12-14, 26-28; 10:12).

As Hebrews 10:18 says, "Now where there is remission of these [sins and lawless deeds], there is no longer an offering for sin."

The sin offering **has been perfectly fulfilled**, which is what the Day of Atonement commemorates. However, even though we already have remission of sins, we are not yet perfect.

We are still awaiting the **complete fulfillment** of something that the Exodus Passover unambiguously teaches—redemption of our bodies from this carnal sinful nature into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

We are now of that one flesh of Jesus Christ – we have been exempted – our sinful nature has been **passed over** – and we have been brought into the **peaceful fellowship** of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Credit to David Grabbe

END: The Ultimate Peace Offering