PASSOVER SERVICE

as conducted by Herbert W. Armstrong
on the evening (after sunset) of April 17, 1981 (14-Nisan-5741)

Introduction to Foot Washing

This is the most solemn ceremony or service of the year. It is my 55th Passover.

I'm quite sure that must be a little larger number than any of you have. God ordained the Passover forever when the Children of Israel were in Egypt -- thousands of years ago now.

But at Jesus' last Passover that He observed, during His Earthly Ministry, we read that [Luke 22:7]:

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.

Now the day of Unleavened Bread, actually the day that had arrived at sunset that night was the preparation day for getting leaven out of the home preceding the seven Days of Unleavened Bread. It of itself was not one of the Days of Unleavened Bread, but the day on which all leaven should be put out. And he said to peter and John (continuing in verse 8)

Luke 22:8 … Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.

(Verse 14)

Luke 22:14 And when the hour was come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with him. 15 And He said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. for I say unto you that I will not anymore eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God....

-- indicating that we will continue the Passover in the Kingdom of God after the coming of Christ.

Now Jesus changed the symbols of the Passover from eating the roast body of a Lamb, after its blood had been shed and the Lamb had been killed, to the Bread and the Wine.

So that we read now in Matthew 26,

Mat 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

So that the broken bread represented His broken Body -- broken for us.

Mat 26:27 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
28 For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
29 But I say unto you, I will not drink [hereafter or] henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Of course, there, Jesus talked with them a while. He went apart and prayed. He almost weakened when He realized what was going to happen, and that the hour had come, and the time and the day had come, and He had to face it now.

But that lasted on through the night. He was taken into various places and tried by the Government officials and by the Jewish officials, and was condemned to death.

Now in John 13, (verse 2):

John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], to betray him;
3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;
4 He riseth from supper….

It had been a supper when they ate roast Lamb up to this time. This was the last supper.

Now Jesus was to change it from eating a meal into merely the bread and the wine which we shall take here tonight.

John 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe [them] with the towel wherewith he was girded.
6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?
7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.
8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. [And] Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.
9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also [my] hands and [my] head.
10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash [his] feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.
11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.
12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?
13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for [so] I am.

14 If I then, [your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.
15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

The washing of their feet was an act of humility.

In those days, they wore open sandals. The roads were dusty. They probably didn't have cement sidewalks to walk on.

A servant would take off a guest's slippers or sandals when he came in at the door of the house and would wash his feet -- after which the guest would probably put on other sandals that were there waiting and clean for the guest.

In other words, the Host would always have some extra sandals for guests to wear. The people of Japan still do something like that in their country.

Now I have gone into homes in Japan where I had to take off my shoes and put on slippers of some kind that were there at the home for guests to use when coming into the house.

But it is an act of humility. Jesus was their Lord and Master and he stooped to do this to them.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.
17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them.

So now, at this time we will leave and have the Foot-Washing Service.

And, I think you know I have not -- as I said, I have not participated in the Passover here at this place for some years, but I'm sure you all know just where to go.

And, there should be no conversation, no talking, but quietly go and then return as quickly as possible.

[PAUSE FOR FOOT-WASHING SERVICE]

Bread

Let me read now from the eleventh chapter of the Apostle Paul's First letter to the Corinthians beginning with verse 23:

I Cor 11:23 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:
24 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.

25 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.

Therefore, it is a memorial.

I Cor 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.
27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, …

… referring only to the manner in which you do it, …

… shall be guilty of the body and [the] blood of the Lord.
28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup.
29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, [in the manner in which he does it] eateth and drinketh damnation ….

… or judgment …

… unto himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you,…

… not discerning the Lord's body that it was broken for us, for our physical healing. His blood was shed for the remission of our spiritual sins. His body was broken for the healing of our physical sins or whatever has happened to cause illness, sickness or suffering.

Now from John 6 and verse 53:

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

I might just explain in that regard that we do not have life until we receive the Spirit of God. We have a material, chemical existence. It is not life in the Spiritual sense at all.

As you read in Second Corinthians the first two chapters that you were dead in your trespasses and sins. As a matter of fact, Adam and Eve did not have life.

There were created with a chemical existence. Before them was the Tree of Life and they could have had life.

But they made the wrong choice, and took to themselves the Knowledge of what is Right and what is Wrong, or Good and Evil, of deciding for themselves what is sin.

They did not receive life.

God has decreed that as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive in a Resurrection to Judgment (First Corinthians 15 verse 22).

Judgment has begun already at the Church of God but judgment has not begun as yet on the world.

Judgment will begin on the world of all those who survive and are still alive after Christ comes when the world is ruled by the Kingdom of God and the Government of God.

Judgment is not a process of condemning but a trial as to whether you receive Life or Death. In other words, we might say it is an opportunity to receive Life.

I think there has been so much misunderstanding on that VERY VITAL POINT.

The world is not yet judged. Everyone who has ever been born will be judged in his own due time.

But there are three Resurrections yet to come mentioned in the Bible.

The First Resurrection will be those who have been judged to have received Life. I hope that includes all who are in this room. That will be at the coming of Christ.

The Second Resurrection will be the resurrection to judgment -- the Great White Throne Judgment mentioned in the the twentieth chapter of Revelation.

The Third Resurrection will occur after that Judgment which may last 100 years -- which may last a very short time -- God knows.

One passage of Scripture indicates it could be 100 years. That Scripture can be translated into different ways, and another way of translating it, it would not refer to a 100-year lifespan in that Resurrection. So, we just cannot know that.

However, the Last Resurrection will be a Resurrection of those who have been judged, whose eyes have been opened, who have known the Truth, who have rejected God, and rejected Christ and Christ's sacrifice for them and God's gift of Eternal Life, and who have been judged guilty. They will die in the Lake of Fire -- which will burn them up -- not a hell fire that burns and burns and never burns up.

Chemically, such a thing would be impossible. Yet millions have believed it. The world has been very greatly deceived.

(We must have the bread and wine served next.)

PRAYER: Almighty God in heaven, we pause now to ask your blessing on this broken Bread representing the broken Body of Jesus Christ -- broken for our healing.

Father help us all to take it worthily. Help us to have Faith and Believe.

We are in a time of trouble when apparently Satan has come down after the Battle with Michael in Heaven and is persecuting the Church in every way possible. Our only defense is the Shield of Faith in the Armor of God.

Father in Heaven, help us to understand that we don't work up Faith ourselves. That Faith is the gift of God -- that it comes through your Holy Spirit -- and that you give it when we are totally surrendered to you.

It is not our Faith. It is Jesus' Faith given to us -- the same Faith He used to walk on the water -- the same Faith He used to heal the sick, to perform miracles, to cast out demons.

Father, I ask you to give all in this room that Faith -- a Faith that many of us have never had. Open our minds to receive it, in the name of Jesus, and bless this Bread to that purpose, as we partake of it, in Jesus' name, Amen.

[PAUSE FOR THE TAKING OF THE BREAD]

Wine

PRAYER (in progress): Jesus said for all of them to drink of it -- that this is the New Testament of His blood shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

Help us to understand, Father, that this merely is a Memorial representing, a symbol representing, the Blood of Christ -- and our taking it means our receiving again the Blood of Christ for the remission of our sins.

God is the Lawgiver -- God the Father.

Our sins cut us off from God the Father -- and when Jesus paid the penalty in our stead, that simply reconciles us to God the Father -- and God has Eternal Life to give.

However, the Life comes through the Resurrection of Christ rather than through His death. And, it comes through our resurrection, ultimately, and I hope for God's Church at the Second Coming of Christ -- for Judgment is on us now.

So, Almighty God bless this wine as we take it and help us to realize the significance -- the meaning of it -- that we are once again affirming by taking it that we are accepting the Blood of Christ for the remission of our sins, and to reconcile us to God.

And, that means that we have repented because we have no right, we cannot accept His Blood unless we have repented, and to repent means to turn away from sin that we will not commit those sins, whatever they may be, again. At least that we will strive mightily never to again -- and that we ask God's help.

He said as a Church, that if we sin, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins -- and not only us but the rest of the world too.

So, bless everyone in this room, Father, as they partake of this. Help us to realize the real deep significance of it and the meaning of it as we take it. We ask your blessing on it, in Jesus' name. Amen.

[PAUSE FOR THE TAKING OF THE WINE]

Conclusion

The thirteenth chapter [of John], beginning with verse 31:

John 13:31 Therefore, when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, …
34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Most people would not understand how that could be a new commandment. You'll find it quoted way back in the Old Testament.

It is new because any thing new never becomes old. It is a Spiritual Commandment and Spiritual things never become old. They are continually new.

Therefore, it is still a New Commandment and always will be.

John 13:35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another….
14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

He will come in clouds. He will receive those who have at that time God's Holy Spirit whether dead or living.

The dead shall rise first. We which are alive will be changed instantaneously from Mortal to Immortal and caught up to meet Him in the air -- but we are merely going to meet Him as he is coming back here.

For His feet will rest that same day on the Mount of Olives and He is going to remain here for the next Thousand Years -- and where He is that is where we shall be also.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, …

… Dwelling in Him by the Spirit -- the same as the Father can dwell in us by His Holy Spirit.

… He doeth the Works.

Jesus is the Word of God. He does not speak of just His own will alone.

He speaks the will of the Father but his will and the Father's will are one. They are united.

Two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3), so says God.

God the Father, and Jesus Christ have been walking together for Trillions and Centrillions of years [eternity actually] because they are totally agreed and always will be.

May we be agreed with them.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

He said it was expedient for them that He go away (John 16:7).

If He did not go to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come. But if He went to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit.

We could not do such works without the Holy Spirit. That is why it was expedient for us that He go away.

He is in Heaven, has been alive these 1950 years. Incidentally, it is -- [[[1950 years ago to the day [to 1981 from 31 A.D. it is 1950 years -- to 2007 from 31 A.D. would be -- [[[1976 years ago to the day]]] that Jesus died -- one century of times cycles, plus [[[50 -- 76]]].

That is rather significant that it happens to be exactly that time in this day. He did not die at this time of day, but it was the same day.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do [it].

But you cannot ask in his name, unless if you ask in the power, you might say the Power of Attorney, of having His authority to do it. And, you cannot ask something that is contrary to the will of God, and expect that He will perform it.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

At the time, Jesus spoke that, the Holy Spirit was dwelling with them in the person of Jesus, but it was not in them yet -- not until the Day of Pentecost after His resurrection.

So, He was dwelling with them in the Holy Spirit through Christ, and was later, and on the Day of Pentecotst to be within them.

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you …

… and Christ does come through the Holy Spirit.

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 will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Reminds me of something that you will read in the first chapter of First John -- that our fellowship is with God the Father and with Christ, as well as with one another. Fellowship is a very, very important thing.

And, our fellowship is not only with one another -- it is also with God the Father and with Jesus Christ His son.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Now coming to Chapter 15:

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.
2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away….

The Father takes away as the Vinedresser…

John 15:2 … and every [branch] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

In other words, corrects and chastens, even punishes every son whom He loves.
God's punishment is never revenge.

God's punishment is never making us pay the penalty of what we did. God's punishment is always corrective, to correct us, and to get us Back on the Track, and to help us.

God's punishment is always given in Love. Many people do not understand what Jesus meant when He said to pray for your enemies. Pray for them that despitefully use you (Matthew 5:44).

I pray for all such -- by praying that God will bless them by dealing with them in the way that He knows is for their good

Now, sometimes that might be punishment to correct them. But it is never going to be with an intent to just harm -- or to make them pay the penalty themselves.

You cannot pay the penalty of your own transgressions. Well, some things you can.

It is like on a blackboard, or a green board, such as we have in college classrooms. You make a mark with chalk and you can erase it.

But there are some things, some mistakes you make, you cannot ever erase. If you should murder or kill a man, you cannot bring him back to life.

Some sins cannot be corrected. If you steal or take from a man, you can give back -- and the Bible tells you how much to give back.

But overall, it is Christ who paid the penalty of our sins for us.

If God corrects us then we will not need to sin again. Then we will not need His shed blood for other sins. But if we sin, we certainly will need it. But, He punishes every son He loves.

John 15:3 Now, He says (John 15 verse 3), you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

If we are clean in this Church, it is through the Word of God.

If I am your leader, Brethren, and you are all my children directly or indirectly in the Lord. If there is any reason why God might have called and chosen me, I can only think of one.

It is because I have been willing to believe God.

But thousands heard Jesus preach for three and a half years when He was on Earth. Only 120 were still believing Him after His crucifixion.

It is a very, very rare thing to believe God.

There are many Churches, many Religious organizations. They all follow a leader.

Where did their leaders get what they preach, and what they believe, and what they teach?

I know of none who got it directly from God. They all got it from other men, other people. They come up in a certain denomination. Many of them go to a seminary, or a

school of that denomination, and they just absorb whatever the men of that denomination teach them.

I was challenged. I began to study the Bible. I found it said just the opposite of what I had been taught.

I had to begin to prove whether or not I could believe the Bible. I had to prove whether God exists and I did prove that.

And, I have proved it to Atheists and caused them to admit it. I proved that the Bible is the Word of God in its original writings.

We have translations. There are a few errors or mistakes in the King James translation -- or any other one translation.

We have many translations to compare. We have many, many copies of the original -- thousands of copies -- and it is possible to know exactly what is the Truth.

I found I did not agree with God. I agreed to what I had been taught in Sunday School -- and coming up in a Protestant denomination.

And, I found that if I was going to walk with Christ, I had to agree with Him. And so, I had to change what I believed and begin to believe what He says here.

Jesus Christ in person taught the original Apostles. Jesus is the Word of God in person. I read to you a while ago that He said only what the Father told Him to say.

Everything He said is precisely what the Father says. He and the Father are of one mind and in total, absolute agreement.

The Bible is the same Word in writing. The first Apostles received their knowledge, their understanding of Truth, from the personal Word of God -- in person. He is not here in person now.

He is in Heaven as our High Priest. But [And] He is alive and He is the Leader of this Church. He is the Head of this Church. But [And] He taught me through this Word.

I found I was wrong. I was wrong about this and that and the other thing again and again and again -- and I had to be corrected and begin to believe what God said, by Jesus Christ. That's what I have been trying now for the last 55 years, or 54 years, to teach you people -- and thousands of others like you.

And It is the truth -- and it is truth alone that makes sense -- that explains humanity, explains the world and its conditions -- explains why things are as they are -- explains the evils and the problems and the troubles in the world that the world cannot understand. And the world too often is not willing to understand.

[I] didn't mean to preach a sermon tonight -- but I just felt that I needed to make a comment or two as I go along on some of these things.

Well, again Jesus said (John 15:5):

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Whatever has been done in this Work in these last 54 years [since 1947 -- to 1981] has not been done by me at all. It has been done by the Living Jesus Christ.

I have merely been an instrument that has been used. You may hear a beautiful violin number but it is not really the violin. It is the man who plays the violin that is giving you the music.

The violin is his instrument. And I have only been an instrument.

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples.

(Verse 11):

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full.

(Verse 16):

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.
18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you.

(Verse 22):

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

Coming on to the 16th chapter -- just a few little excerpts here. (Verse 5):

John 16:5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?
6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you…

That is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ has been very busy for these 1950 years in Heaven on His Father's Throne as our High Priest -- guiding this Church for one thing in our lifetime. He has been guiding it.

He built this college campus -- the most beautiful in the United States - or in the world -- and another very beautiful one over in Big Sandy that will soon be restored [past history] -- and a third very beautiful one that is now owned by a public utilities company -- and their pride and joy in Bricketwood in England. They are all the type that glorifies God, His kind of character, of stability, of beauty, and of the godly type of character.

Now I would like to come to Jesus' final prayer -- a little of it.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, (this is in chapter 17 [of John], Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

(Verse 4):

John 17:4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

I would like to make a comment right there.

He had finished the Work that God gave Him to do -- that is, gave Him to do in His person as a human while He was on Earth. And, that is what He meant on the cross when He said, "It is finished," just before His head dropped, and He died.

What was finished was the Work God gave Him to do.

But He's had other Work to do and that is to guide us in a Work that we have to do. And, we are only instruments in his hands in doing it.

John 17:4 I have glorified thee, (He said to His Father), on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.
6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

...

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

...

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are] [one].

... Kept in the name of our Father God. That is why we are the Church of God -- not the Church of Armstrong, or Luther, or Calvin, or of Wesley -- that we may be one and united.

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name…

The name of the Church is very important.

… I kept … in thy name those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.
13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

(Verse 20):

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I think that that will suffice. It is just some of the things that Jesus said to His disciples on that night before He was taken by an angry mob, and taken from one court to another and tried by the Jews and by the courts of Caesar's Government, until He was put to death and crucified.

This Church has been persecuted. I have been persecuted ever since I gave myself over to Him -- and I expect to continue to be. I counted the cost.

I knew what He said about persecution. And, it has happened. And it will happen.

I need your prayers, and you do have mine -- continually. And we all need to be much in prayer.

So, I will just give a prayer and then we'll sing a Hymn and go out.

CLOSING PRAYER: Almighty God in Heaven, I ask You to somehow impress the solemnity of this service and of the meaning of some of these things on all of us who are here.

I ask You to carry these things in the mind with all of these lovable Brethren as they leave, and that we will start now to rid our lives of sin.

Now, we are coming on to seven Days of Unleavened Bread -- putting sin out of our lives, as we shall now have put leaven out of our homes and out of our properties.

Thank You Almighty God for this Service. Thank You that You gave it to us, and for what it means.

Bless all of these people as they leave. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[NEXT IS THE SINGING OF THE CLOSING HYMN]