

## SABBATH THOUGHT 2025-04-12—DESPISING THE PASSOVER

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Offenses occur frequently because too many are easily angered even with small matters. One recent example was someone who told me that I would end up in the Lake of Fire because they became angry over my *opinion* about physicians. A desire to inflict a horrible death upon someone over such a minor topic is beyond irrational—it is unrighteous anger and hatred.

Every offense involves anger, which many times leads to condemnation. All should “judge with righteous judgment,”<sup>1</sup> but that is not the same thing as condemnation. Judgment simply means assessing something as true or false, good or bad, based upon one's own understanding. Condemnation, on the other hand, is pronouncing punishment on someone.

Even if a judgment is correct, there is no place for condemnation among the *ekklesia*. Vengeance (condemnation) belongs to God<sup>2</sup>. There is also no such thing as “righteous anger”<sup>3</sup> except with God. Anger is the result of pride and too many are so filled with pride that they love to find fault in others, usually to demonstrate how ‘religious’ or ‘converted’ they are compared to everyone else. They think that being baptized decades ago or knowing a prominent preacher makes them more godly. This was the issue with the Pharisees “who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and **despised others**.” (Luke 18: 9-14).

Offenses are a worldwide epidemic that has infected the *ekklesia*. Unreconciled offenses among the Body of Christ have affected everyone whether they are an offender or victim. In fact, they are the cause for the many separate denominations among the Churches of God—every single one was formed out of unreconciled offenses. Ironically, the very names of some organizations are, many times, the exact opposite of *how* they were formed. By one estimate, there are 36,000 of them today (all COGs, not just WCG splinters). Unreconciled offenses are a terribly sad statement of the ‘unlove’ within the *ekklesia*.

Resolving offenses requires reconciliation between the offender and victim. In the Hebrew, reconciliation is covering (same as atonement) whereas the Greek means to change or transform. And THAT is the purpose of the Passover<sup>4</sup>. God the Father put the offenses the world upon His beloved Son and then subjected Him to terrible suffering and death by crucifixion<sup>5</sup> to RECONCILE offenses:

[TS2009] ISAIAH 53:6-12 We all, like sheep, went astray, each one of us has turned to his own way. And [the LORD] [GtF] has laid on Him [JC] the crookedness of us all. 7 He [JC] was oppressed and He [JC] was afflicted, but He [JC] did not open His [JC] mouth. He [JC] was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its

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<sup>1</sup> John 7:24.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 32:35, 41; Rom. 12:19.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the article, “[Righteous Anger](#).”

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 4:24-25; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-21; Heb. 2:17.

<sup>5</sup> JC = Jesus Christ; GtF = God the Father.

shearers is silent, but He [JC] did not open His [JC] mouth. 8 He [JC] was taken from prison and from judgment. And as for His [JC] generation, who considered that He [JC] shall be cut off from the land of the living? For the transgression of My [GtF] people He [JC] was stricken. 9 And He [JC] was appointed a burial-site with the wrong [wicked], and with the rich at His [JC] death, because He [JC] had done no violence, nor was deceit in His [JC] mouth. 10 But [the LORD] [GtF] was pleased to crush Him [JC], He [GtF] laid sickness on Him [JC], that when He [JC] made Himself [JC] an offering for guilt, He [JC] would see a seed, He [JC] would prolong His [JC] days and the pleasure of [the LORD] [GtF] prosper in His [JC] hand. 11 He [GtF] would see the result of the suffering of His [JC] life and be satisfied. Through His [JC] knowledge My [GtF] righteous Servant [JC] makes many righteous, and He [JC] bears their crookednesses. 12 Therefore I [GtF] give Him [JC] a portion among the great, and He [JC] divides the spoil with the strong, because He [JC] poured out His [JC] being unto death, and He [JC] was counted with the transgressors, and He [JC] bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Passover has been the centerpiece of the Bible from the beginning. It is the singular act of God the Father and Jesus the Lamb by which offenses can be reconciled. Both gave everything to reconcile with mankind, so imagine the fierce anger of God toward anyone who despises that sacrifice. But that is *exactly* what every unreconciled offense among the *ekklesia* is doing—despising the Passover sacrifice of God the Father and Jesus the Lamb:

ROMANS 2:1-5 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for **in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself**; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or **do you despise the riches of His [God the Father's] goodness**, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that **the goodness of God leads you to repentance**? 5 But **in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

The “riches of His goodness” is a beautiful phrase that pictures the abundance, peace, and joy of the New Kingdom without offenses. But these verses are primarily a warning. The goodness of God covers our sins with the blood of His Son, forgives our sins, and reconciles our offenses. The goodness of God IS the Passover!

EPHESIANS 2:4-7 But God, who is rich in mercy, **because of His great love** with which He loved us, 5 even **when we were dead in trespasses [sins]**, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might **show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**.

But the riches of God's grace through the Passover are not to be taken lightly:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-31 For I [*Paul*] received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. 27 Therefore **whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** 28 But **let a man examine himself,** and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in **an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself,** not discerning the Lord’s body. 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For **if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.**

It is ironic when you consider how “examin[ing]” oneself to partake of the Passover in a “worthy manner” has been made out to be something hard to understand, when the reality is that it is simply about reconciling offenses. Anyone who finds it hard to understand that unreconciled offenses are a failure to examine oneself and that unreconciled offenses are an unworthy manner of keeping the Passover, then there is a serious problem because **unreconciled offenses DESPISE the Passover.**

The humility (toward God) and meekness (toward brethren) required to reconcile an offense comes from examining oneself and understanding that what God the Father and Jesus the Lamb sacrificed to reconcile offenses can *never* be repaid. From that perspective, who are WE, then, to refuse to reconcile with each other. Even if an offender refuses to repent to a victim or a victim refuses to forgive an offender, all must be sincerely WILLING to repent or WILLING to forgive at the very least. No offense is so grave that it cannot be reconciled to this extent. There is also no shame in reconciling offenses! Think past this temporary existence and imagine the eternity to come in the New Kingdom in which *all* wounds—including anger, shame, and the hurt of offenses—will be healed<sup>6</sup>.

Partaking of the Passover with unreconciled offenses despises the goodness and riches of God. Again, can you imagine the fierce anger of God toward anyone who despises the sacrifice of His SON? What stands in the way of reconciling offenses? Pride and anger. How hard is it (really!) to say, “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you?” Move past the shame. Jesus bore your shame, my shame, and everyone’s shame to the grave along with the sins of our offenses. Read Psalm 69. Jesus foretells of HIS reproach, HIS shame, and HIS dishonor that HE bore (v. 19) but that WE caused. Reconciling offenses is about cherishing the riches of God’s goodness and grace through the Passover sacrifice:

EPHESIANS 1:7-8 **In Him [God the Father] we have redemption through His [Jesus Christ] blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace [God the Father]** 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

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<sup>6</sup> Rev. 22:1-5.

All have caused offenses<sup>7</sup> and all will die without that Passover sacrifice. It is nothing more than pride to think we no longer sin because we were baptized 30, 40, 50, or more years ago. Or that we are such biblical scholars and obedient children of God that we are perfect. If we were humble and contrite<sup>8</sup> enough to admit and repent of our offenses (sins) before baptism, why would we no longer be humble and meek enough to ask forgiveness for our offenses today? Baptism is not a badge of pride; it is humble recognition of GOD'S righteousness upon us after we were reconciled to Him for our offenses through repentance and baptism<sup>9</sup>:

ROMANS 5:8-10 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from *[God the Father's]* wrath through Him. 10 For if **when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved** by His *[Jesus Christ's]* life.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-21 Now all things *are* of God, **who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us **the ministry of reconciliation**, 19 that is, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not imputing their trespasses *[i.e., offenses]* to them, and has committed to us **the word of reconciliation**. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, **be reconciled** to God. 21 For He *[God the Father]* made Him *[Jesus Christ]* who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Taking a cue from Ecclesiastes 3:2-8, when it comes to offenses among the *ekklesia*, Passover is a time to *plant*, a time to *heal*, a time to *build up*, a time to *gather*, a time to *embrace*, a time to *seek*, a time to *cast away*; a time to *mend*; a time to *speak*; a time to *love*; and a time of *peace*. The riches of God's goodness and grace are not a byproduct of the Passover; they ARE the Passover—HIS forgiveness and reconciliation of OUR offenses. Passover is a time to **repent**, a time to **forgive**, a time to **reconcile**!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>7</sup> Rom. 3:23.

<sup>8</sup> Isa. 57:15.

<sup>9</sup> Also Col. 1:20-21.