

When Should We Observe the New Testament PASSOVER?

Did Jesus Christ change the time and manner in which the Passover should be observed? The Jews have always kept Passover on Nisan 15. Jesus gave new Passover symbols to His disciples at His "Last Supper," on Nisan 13. He was crucified and died at 3:00 PM during the afternoon of Nisan 14, when the Jews were slaying thousands of Passover lambs. What does all this have to do with the Christian PASSOVER? When should the Passover be observed by God's people today? When the "Lord's Supper" occurred? At 3:00 PM? Or on the traditional day of Nisan 15?

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In Proverbs 18:13 we read, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." And in Revelation 12:9 we read that ". . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan . . . deceiveth the WHOLE WORLD."

Truer words were never spoken -- and they apply to the Passover ceremony and celebration itself, believe it or not!

When should the Passover be kept today? When should Christians observe the Passover? Is the "New Testament Passover" any different or at a different time than the Old Testament Passover? Did Jesus change the date, time, and manner of observance?

Jesus Himself said we are to live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt.4:4; Luke 4:4). What does the WORD OF GOD say about the Passover?

A person wrote to me saying that he doesn't know of any Church that observes Passover at the time the Bible quotes (Matt.27:46, Mark 15:34, Luke 23:44) -- that is, 3:00 PM in the afternoon of Nisan 14, when Jesus actually died on the stake or tree. He also mentioned there are four distinct events at Passover time -- the Last Supper, crucifixion, night to be

remembered, and resurrection. He then quoted Luke 22:15 as implying that Jesus kept the Passover a night early so that He could change it from physical to spiritual. He also quoted Deuteronomy 16:6 as showing the Passover was to be kept at the going down of the sun, before even or sunset. He then referred to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and I Cor.11:24-25, saying Jesus told us to take the bread and wine -- symbols of His body and blood -- in remembrance of Him, not of the Last Supper, or the resurrection. This person concluded that the time to "remember Him" is 3:00 PM when He died on the stake, not some other time.

Is this true? Should the Passover therefore be observed at 3:00 PM in the afternoon?

This same individual then pointed out that "we," meaning I suppose the Worldwide Church of God, Church of God International, and other offshoots, take the Passover the evening before the time Jesus was killed, then go home, eat leavened bread or products, and the following day -- the daylight portion of the 14th -- continue eating hotcakes, biscuits, toast, hamburgers, hotdogs, etc., all day up until sunset, when all leavening is finally put out, prior to Nisan 15. This, he pointed out, makes no sense.

In conclusion, he said, his question is this: "Where in God's Scriptures does it tell us to observe the Passover at any time other than the 9th hour (3:00 PM) on the 14th day of the first month of God's calendar?"

That's a good question! As the Bible is our sole authority on this subject, and all Scripture is given by inspiration of God -- is "God-breathed" (II Tim.3:16) -- what does Scripture say about this question?

Illogical Passover Nonsense

My correspondent was right that the present day observance of Passover by those who attempt to keep it during the "Lord's Supper," prior to the actual Passover, at the beginning of Nisan 14, is in error and makes no sense. It is ludicrous that some eat the unleavened Passover bread at what they call the "Passover," then go right back into eating leavened bread -- a type of SIN -- the following hours, and don't put it out of their homes until prior to sunset the following day, almost 24 hours later! Such a symbolism is screwy and foolish. Do we partake of Christ, then go back into SIN and "live it up" for 24 hours, and only then finally "repent" and put the leaven -- SIN -- out of our lives? Nonsense!

The Lord's Supper, as it has been called, which many believe occurred at night shortly after the beginning of Nisan 14, was NOT the Passover. The Jews did not celebrate the Passover until after the lambs were slain, generally from 3-5 o'clock during the afternoon of Nisan 14, according to the Jewish historian Josephus of the first century. They slew the lambs on the 14th, as God commanded, and then ate the Passover on the 15th of Nisan. This was the "night to be observed unto the LORD" (Exodus 12:42).

When, then, should we observe Passover? God's commandment is plain. God commanded Moses and all Israel, "And ye shall keep it [the lamb] until the 14th day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall KILL it in the

evening" (Exo.12:6). The expression "in the evening" in Hebrew means "between the two evenings." This is a general period of time which means between high noon when the sun begins to go "down," until actual sunset when the sun has disappeared beneath the horizon -- a time span of about six hours. Thus the Israelites were permitted to begin slaying the Passover lambs after noon and up until sunset. This was important, because all the lambs had to be slain at the Temple or place where God put His name. The Passover had to be sacrificed "in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there" (Deut.16:2).

This slaying of the lambs perfectly represented the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, who was slain for our sins (I Cor.5:7; II Cor.5:21), and who expired on the stake about 3:00 PM in the afternoon of Nisan 14 (Matt.27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44).

Passover Night

But when was the Passover actually to be eaten, and partaken of, as a meal? Notice the very Word of God on this question! "And they shall eat the flesh **IN THAT NIGHT**, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. . . And ye shall let nothing of it remain **UNTIL THE MORNING** . . . It is the **LORD'S PASSOVER**. For I will pass through the land of Egypt **THIS NIGHT**, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the **LORD** . . . and when I see the blood, I **WILL PASS OVER** you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And **THIS DAY [NISAN 15]** shall be unto you for a **MEMORIAL**; and ye shall keep it a **FEAST** to the **LORD** throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a **FEAST** by an ordinance forever" (Exodus 12:7-14).

Notice carefully. The **LAMB** was to be slain during the afternoon of the 14th, at the very time Jesus Christ died on the stake for our sins. But the **PASSOVER** itself was not to be celebrated, and **EATEN**, as a meal of rejoicing and deliverance, until **NIGHT** (Exo.12:8-10), and nothing of it was to remain until the next **MORNING**. Since Nisan 15 began at sunset, this proves conclusively that the Passover celebration of eating the Passover meal, with the lamb and unleavened bread and bitter herbs, was not to occur until **SUNSET -- AT NIGHT -- ON NISAN15!**

This is the very time God Almighty **COMMANDS** us to observe the Passover -- and it is the **TIME** when the Jews have kept it from time immemorial, throughout their history! They never forgot the right day to observe this chief of all their holy days! This is the very time we should observe it **TODAY -- A FEAST BY AN ORDINANCE FOREVER!** (Exo.12:14). To observe it on any other day or time, such as 24 hours earlier, at the beginning portion of Nisan 14 -- is an act of sacrilege, disobedience, rebellion, willful pride, and arrogance -- an act of callous **REBELLION** against this plain and simple **LAW** of Almighty **GOD!** He is the One who sets the date, time and manner we should observe His festivals -- not some church leader, sect, cult, or modern day church group!

God's Word says plainly, "These are the **FEASTS** of the **LORD**, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim **IN THEIR SEASONS**. In the fourteenth day of the first month **AT EVEN** [at the end of the day] is the **LORD's passover**" (Lev.23:4-5). The Passover was

actually to be slain or sacrificed "AT EVEN, at the going down of the sun" (Deut.16:6). The sun goes down from noon till about six o'clock, when it sets; after the sun "sets," it is no longer "going down," but has "gone down." Therefore, the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed during the AFTERNOON of Nisan 14 -- not on Nisan 13 or any other day! Nor were they to be slain after sunset of Nisan 13, at the beginning of Nisan 14, when it was dark, after the sun had already "gone down."

The Scriptures are PLAIN. The Passover was killed in the afternoon of Nisan 14, and then eaten on the NIGHT portion of Nisan 15. Nothing else makes any sense whatsoever. The Jews, knowing this fact, have properly observed the Passover on Nisan 15 for thousands of years, and never lost this precious knowledge. No wonder God said He gave His holy oracles to them to preserve, and not to others (Rom.3:1-3). No wonder Jesus said that the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and had authority to interpret the commandments and holy days of God (Matt.23:1-2).

However, God never commanded us to partake of the Passover meal, with its rich symbolism, at the beginning of Nisan 14, or even at 3:00 PM during the afternoon of Nisan 14. The fact is, Nisan 14 was simply regarded as the "PREPARATION of the Passover," which involved the killing and dressing of the lambs, and putting leaven out of their homes.

"The Evening of the 14th"

Some have claimed that the "evening" of Nisan 14 means the beginning of that day. They teach that the Israelites were to keep the Passover lambs up until sunset when Nisan 14 began, then sacrifice them before dark, and eat them that same night.

Is this true? Is it even possible? During the time of Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, he tells us that the Jews sacrificed some 256,500 lambs in Jerusalem, at the Temple, for the Passover, at a typical Passover celebration. Josephus wrote:

"So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour to the eleventh, but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves,) and many of us are twenty in a company, found the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty six thousand five hundred; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two million seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy" (*Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 3).

Josephus plainly states these lambs were slain between the ninth and eleventh hour, generally -- or from 3:00 PM in the afternoon until 5:00 PM -- obviously *BEFORE sunset!* Can you imagine the disarray and consternation the priests would have been under if they had to sacrifice all these lambs in the brief "twilight" period of time between sunset and dark -- maybe thirty minutes or so? Sheer chaos and pandemonium would have reigned! But God is

NOT the author of CONFUSION (I Cor.14:33) and commands that all things be done decently and in order (v.40).

In Exodus 12:6 God commands the Passover be killed "between the two evenings." This is the period of time between high noon, when the sun begins to go down, and actual sunset, when the sun has gone down. It is the time of the "going down of the sun" (Deut.16:6) -- not the time AFTER the sun has already gone down!

Some claim, however, that "evening" must refer to the beginning of the 14th of Nisan. One man said, in effect, "Show me one place where the Bible says a holy day begins the EVENING of the previous day!" Is this expression used anywhere else in the Bible?

You bet it is! In fact, in this very same chapter, God tells His people, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT EVEN, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month AT EVEN. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses . . ." (Exodus 12:18-19).

Notice! What were the beginning and ending days of this Feast? From the 14th at even till the 21st at even was SEVEN days, this verse tells us. If the 14th "at even" meant the beginning of Nisan 14, then the 21st day "at even" would have to mean the beginning of the 21st -- this would mean we would have to keep the Feast from Nisan 14 through the 20th, and exclude the 21st! Is this what God intended? Not at all!

Leviticus 23 answers plainly: "In the fourteenth day of the first month AT EVEN is the LORD's passover. And on the FIFTEENTH DAY of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the *first day* [the 15th] ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein . . . in the *seventh day* [the 21st -- add it up yourself!] ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev.23:5-8).

Now notice. The Passover occurred at the end of the 14th, beginning with the sacrificing of the lambs. The FEAST began after sunset, on Nisan 15, with the Passover meal itself. This feast continued for seven days, during which no leaven was to be found in their dwellings. Thus the feast concluded on Nisan 21. Now God had commanded them to eat "unleavened bread" on the 14th day of the month "at even" UNTIL -- THAT IS INCLUDING -- the 21st day of the month -- SEVEN DAYS! Count it up. From the evening (end) of the 14th of Nisan till the evening (end) of Nisan 21 is exactly SEVEN DAYS! Here is clear proof that "evening" means the END of a day -- not its beginning!

But there is even more proof. In Leviticus 23 God commands us to celebrate the Day of Atonement "on the tenth day of the seventh month" (Lev.23:27). That is very plain. God then says, "It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the NINTH DAY of the month AT EVEN, *from even unto even*, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (verse 32).

Thus the ninth day "at even" means the END of the ninth day -- even as the fourteenth day of the first month "at even" means the END of the fourteenth day -- not its beginning!

"The Preparation of the Passover"

Notice! The day after the "Lord's Supper" (John 13), Jesus had been arrested by the Jews, and brought before Pontius Pilate, who ordered Him to be whipped and scourged (John 19:1). On the morning of the 13th of Nisan, Pilate had Jesus brought to the place of judgment called "the Pavement" (John 19:13).

John records: "And it was THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER, and about the sixth hour [high noon – see our article, "What Do You Mean, 'The Sixth Hour'?"]: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John 19:14). The Passover itself would not occur until the following evening, after sunset. Nisan 10-14 was "the preparation period," and the body of Jesus had to be laid in the tomb before sunset ending Nisan 14 (John 19:31), when the High Holy Sabbath -- the first day of Unleavened Bread, would begin.

Jesus' "Last Supper"

But now let's go backward in time. Let's go back to the evening when Jesus sat down with His disciples for a final dinner before He was apprehended by the Jewish authorities. Notice the facts about that final dinner, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Some people believe that the last meal Jesus ate with His disciples was a Passover. However, this was not the case. It could not have been, as we have just seen. The Passover would not be held until the night following the execution of Christ, who was our "Passover Lamb" (I Cor.5:7).

The last meal Jesus had with His disciples was definitely not the "Passover." It was rather a "last supper," often called "The Lord's Supper." As we have just seen, the period following the last supper was still called "the PREPARATION of the Passover" (John 19:14, 31). This shows the Passover had not yet come.

Nowhere in Scripture does God command us or tell us to commemorate or observe this "last supper" as such which Jesus had at a time significantly BEFORE the Passover. Although He did give us three elements we are to observe – the symbols of the bread, wine, and the footwashing – He did not tell us to observe that evening as such! When we are to observe those important symbols, we will discuss later in this article. Suffice it to say for the present, Jesus never commanded us to observe that supper that night as a distinct event or observance. It is not a holy day or feast or festival of God. The fact that it was not the Passover itself is clear from the apostle John's record. Notice carefully!

John explicitly wrote, "Now *BEFORE the feast of the PASSOVER*, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. *AND SUPPER BEING ENDED . . . HE RISETH FROM SUPPER*" (John 13:1-4) -- and He began to wash the disciples' feet. Notice! This supper was clearly stated to have been "BEFORE the feast of the Passover" (verse 1). *Therefore it could NOT have been the Passover!*

Matthew, Mark and Luke actually corroborate this account in John's gospel. There is no contradiction in the so-called synoptic gospels. We find that Jesus taught on the Mount of Olives, on Nisan 11, teaching His disciples about His second coming (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13, Luke 21), probably teaching into late afternoon.

Now we come to Monday night, the beginning of Nisan 12. Let's pick up the story:

Nisan 12 -- Monday Night

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that AFTER TWO DAYS is *the feast of* THE PASSOVER, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matt.26:1-2).

"AFTER TWO DAYS was *the feast of* THE PASSOVER, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, not on a feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people" (Mark 14:1-2).

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew night, which is called the passover" (Luke 22:1).

Notice that I highlighted the expression "the feast of" as it is found in Matthew and Mark. This expression, in italics in the King James Version, is supplied by the translators and *does not appear in the Greek originals at all!* This was an incorrect assumption by the translators. It was not the "Feast" that was two days hence, but rather "the Passover" -- that is, the day of Nisan 14, when the Passover was KILLED! This was the very day that Jesus Christ would be crucified, as our Passover (I Cor.5:7). Thus the time sequence here shows that we have come to the evening of Monday, and the beginning of Nisan 12 -- Monday night. What occurred at this time?

"Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat [dinner]. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (Matt.26:6-13; see also Mark 14:3-9).

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him" (Matt.26:14-16).

It was now Monday evening. Judas went out after the supper in the home of Simon the leper, and met with the chief priests, who were Sadducees, and made an agreement to betray Jesus to them for the equivalent of \$150 dollars today -- the price of a slave in those days. And

so was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah:

"And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zechariah 11:12).

Nisan 12 -- Tuesday

What was the next event to occur in the life of the Messiah, the Lamb of God?

Here is where scholars, Bible translators, and theologians, all become the most confused, befuddled, and frustrated. Here is where grievous misunderstanding of the text and of the sequence of events has led to massive error and doctrinal confusion on the part of churches, Christians, and students of the Scriptures. Scholars assume that the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke -- called the "synoptic gospels" -- differ from the gospel of John. Most theologians also ASSUME there is a problem in reconciling the first three gospel accounts with John's account. This has led to many strange and puzzling theories and even wild speculations, concerning the last days of Jesus, and the 'Lord's supper.'" Why all the confusion?

Let us proceed carefully, step-by-step, and see if we can solve the problems that suddenly begin to appear in the various accounts. Is the problem in the *texts*? Or is the problem in the *minds of the men who study and interpret* the texts?

Some scholars *assume* the contradictions are real, and therefore prove the gospel accounts contradict and therefore *could not be divinely inspired*. Some theologians are *hard pressed to find a "reasonable" explanation* for the assumed "contradictions."

What IS the problem? Some believe the "last supper" Jesus held with His disciples was the Biblical "Passover" and was held at the beginning of Nisan 14, even though the Jews would not be sacrificing the passover lambs until the following afternoon. The churches who teach this believe that the Jews *over the centuries* somehow *changed the passover* from the beginning to the end of Nisan 14. Other churches admit that the Jews never changed the passover -- it was always held at the end of Nisan 14. But they believe that the "last supper" Jesus held with His disciples was at the beginning of Nisan 14 and was "the New Testament passover." That is, they conclude that even though Jesus NEVER SAID He was changing the date and time of the observance of the passover seder or dinner, *He did it anyway by instituting the bread and wine ceremony at the "last supper"!* Therefore, they call this the "New Testament Passover," in distinction from the "Old Testament Passover."

Nowhere in the entire New Testament, however, do we ever find the expression "New Testament Passover"! This teaching assumes and claims that *Christ CHANGED a holy day observance, and replaced the "Old Testament Passover" with a "New Testament Passover" -- yet Jesus Christ said He did not come to abolish or destroy even a "jot" or a "tittle" of the Law of God (Matt.5:17-19).*

The apostle Paul tells us that Christ is "the SAME, yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb.13:8).

Why all this confusion? What is the TRUTH? Let us notice very carefully and examine minutely the next events to occur in the final week of Christ on this earth -- His "last few days" leading up to the crucifixion!

A Crucial Mistranslation

Matthew's account:

"Now the **FIRST day** of the *feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we PREPARE for thee to eat the passover?"

"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they **MADE READY THE PASSOVER**" (Matt.26:17-19).

Mark's account:

"And the **FIRST DAY** of unleavened bread, *when they killed the passover*, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we *go and PREPARE* that thou mayest eat the passover? . . . And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they *made ready the passover*" (Mark 14:12-16).

Luke's account:

"Then came the **DAY** of unleavened bread, when the passover must be **killed**. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and PREPARE us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we PREPARE? . . . And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they **MADE READY** the passover" (Luke 22:7-13).

Notice! The King James Version has inserted the words "day" and "feast of" in Matthew's account. These words do not belong! In the original Greek, as the *Englishman's Greek-English Interlinear* shows, the correct rendering is as follows:

"Now on the first [day] of unleavened bread."

Thus the real Greek reads, "Now on the first of unleavened bread." However, the first *day* of unleavened bread would not come till Nisan 15th arrived! What does the expression "the first of unleavened bread" really mean? The Greek word for "FIRST" here is #4418 in Strong's Concordance -- *PROTOS* -- and means,

"FOREMOST (IN TIME, PLACE, ORDER OF IMPORTANCE): --
BEFORE, BEGINNING, BEST, CHIEF . . ."

Therefore, this verse in Matthew merely states, "Now in the *beginning of* unleavened bread," or "Now *before* unleavened bread! This refers to a period of TIME at the beginning of or

preceding the Feast of Unleavened Bread -- *an indefinite period which is not specified but which is related to the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!*

The Word "DAY"

But what about the word "day" as found in the accounts of Mark and Luke? Mark says it was the "first day" of unleavened bread "when they killed the passover." Luke says it was "the day" of unleavened bread when the passover "must be killed." Many ASSUME that this MUST mean Nisan 14, because that is the literal 24-hour day the passover was commanded to be killed (Exo.12:6). However, the truth of the matter is that the Greek word "DAY" has *many different meanings!*

Notice! The Greek word translated "day" in these verses is *HEMERA*. It is #2250 in Strong's Concordance and means --

"DAY, i.e. (lit.) *the time space between dawn and dark, or the whole 24 hours . . .* fig. A PERIOD (ALWAYS DEFINED MORE OR LESS CLEARLY IN THE CONTEXT): -- AGE . . . DAY . . . TIME, WHILE, YEARS."

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words defines *hemera* as follows:

"(a) the period of natural light . . . (b) the same, but figuratively for a period of opportunity for service . . . (c) one period of alternate light and darkness . . . (d) A PERIOD OF UNDEFINED LENGTH MARKED BY CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS, such as 'the day of small things,' Zech.4:10, of perplexity and distress, Isa.17:11; Obad.12-14; of prosperity and of adversity, Ecc.7:14; of trial and testing, Ps.95:8; of salvation, Isa.49:8; 2 Cor.6:2; cf. Luke 19:42; of evil, Eph.6:13, of wrath and revelation of the judgments of God, Rom.2:5; (e) an APPOINTED TIME, Eccl.8:6; Eph.4:30 . . . (f) a notable defeat in battle, etc., Isa.9:4 . . . (g) by metonymy -- 'when,' 'at the time when' . . ."

Clearly, this word has many different uses in the Greek language and most certainly does NOT always refer to a particular 24-hour "day"!

Notice how it is used in various Scriptures in the New Testament!

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see *my day* [*the period of Christ's coming*]: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

"At that TIME [*HEMERA*] there was a great persecution against the church" (Acts 8:1).

"But to Israel he saith, All DAY long [i.e., for a very long time] I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom.10:21).

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that ONE DAY is with the Lord AS A THOUSAND YEARS, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet.3:8).

"But the DAY OF THE LORD [period of Christ's intervention] will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet.3:10).

With this understanding then, we see that the verses in Mark and Luke can be translated, and understood, as follows:

"And the *beginning period of unleavened bread*, when they killed the passover" (Mark 14:12).

"Then came the *TIME of unleavened bread*, when the passover must be killed" (Luke 22:7).

The Word "KILLED" Examined

Now let's take a closer look at these two verses, and the word "KILLED," as used in them. The word for "killed" in both Mark's and Luke's accounts is *THUO* in Greek (Strong's' Concordance, #2380), and literally means, "to sacrifice." It is not the normal word used for "kill" as in killing a man, but rather a word which means "to immolate, slaughter for any purpose." To sacrifice the Passover lamb was not just taking a lamb and "killing" it. This was a very careful, regulated procedure which required proper preparation and TIME.

As we have already seen, the Israelites were commanded to select their Passover lambs on Nisan 10, and then to keep them apart for five days, until the ending of Nisan 14. During this time, they were to inspect the lamb, and be sure it had NO BLEMISH of any kind. They were to *maintain it* in perfect condition, without injury or flaw. *All of this PREPARATORY WORK was part of the ritual of slaying the Passover lamb.* Since the word *thuo* specifically refers to a *sacrifice*, it must of necessity *include the required elements of preparation!*

In other words, these verses are discussing the TIME OF PREPARATION -- the beginning period of PREPARATION -- for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread!

Tuesday, Nisan 12, would certainly qualify in every way to be part of this PREPARATION PERIOD OF TIME, getting ready for the Passover which was coming up very soon -- just two days later!

There is absolutely no grounds for assuming or believing that these verses must refer to the day of NISAN 14 itself! To the contrary, it would seem LUDICROUS to BEGIN preparation for the Passover as LATE as Nisan 14, the very day all leaven had to be out of the homes, and the Passover lambs were killed! It would have seemed to be a complete dereliction of duty on Christ's part to WAIT UNTIL NISAN 14 BEFORE TELLING HIS DISCIPLES TO "GO AND PREPARE THE PASSOVER"! This would be DOUBLY TRUE if the "Passover" was going to be observed THAT VERY NIGHT!!!

Think about it!

What Do You Mean, "PREPARE the Passover"?

Our day-by-day chronology of events in Jesus' last week has brought us to Tuesday morning, Nisan 12. The Passover celebration itself would begin with the sacrificing of the lambs on the afternoon of Nisan 14. Prior to that time, all leaven had to be burned or disposed of hours before the end of Nisan 14. Then, the families would eat the Passover after roasting the lambs for hours until they were well cooked, at some time after the beginning of Nisan 15, on the first annual High Holy Day of Unleavened Bread.

Jesus tells His disciples to "go and prepare us the passover" (Luke 22:8). This means the time had come to BEGIN PREPARATIONS for the Passover! Our time-flow shows us that this was TUESDAY MORNING, Nisan 12th -- two days before the killing of the lambs, and two and one half days before the Passover seder would be eaten! Chronologically, this makes perfect sense. Then, Monday morning, the disciples went into the city, a journey which may have taken an hour or so, found the man they were to follow, made the inquiries they were instructed to do, found the appointed room, and *then they made the Passover preparations*.

Anyone who has kept Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread would know that much work would be involved in making all the proper "preparations." They would need to clean the room, be sure it was free of all leaven, and remove any leaven from the premises. They would need to go to the market, purchase supplies and stock up on food and unleavened bread to use during the seven-day Passover Festival (see Luke 22:1; Ezek.45:21). This "preparation" probably took at least four or five hours, to get everything ready in advance for the upcoming Passover celebration! These preparations occupied the daylight portion of Nisan 12, that Tuesday.

The common belief that it was *already Nisan 14, when Jesus sent the disciples into the city to "prepare for the Passover," is flawed on several counts*. First, it doesn't make any sense that the Messiah, Saviour of Israel, would wait until the last minute to instruct His disciples to make such important preparation! If Passover was that very night, as some insist, then they would have pulled their hair out, wracked with worry and anxiety, knowing that there was simply not enough time!

Second, since they would have started into the city on Nisan 14, after the sun had set ending Nisan 13, it would have been dark by the time they reached the city. How would they follow a man in the dark? But even if they did, it would have taken them hours to clean the room, and remove the leaven, to be ready for "Passover."

And third, if they had gotten such a late start, *where would they have gotten the time to go to market, and purchase all the things needed for the Passover?* By nightfall, all the markets would have been closed. The disciples would have thought that Jesus was "out of his mind" for waiting so long to tell them to "prepare the passover" if they were to celebrate it that very evening, and the sun had already set!

But when we realize it was only Tuesday morning, Nisan 12, when He told them to "go and prepare," the whole scenario makes much more logical and reasonable sense!

What happened next?

Nisan 13 – Tuesday Night

"Now when the EVEN WAS COME [that very night, which would be the beginning of Nisan 13 -- Tuesday night!], he sat down with the twelve. And AS THEY DID EAT [they were eating dinner!], he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matt.26:20-22).

"And *IN THE EVENING* he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and DID EAT [DINNER!], Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you that eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, it is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born" (Mark 14:17-21).

"And when the hour was come [the hour for dinner -- the supper hour!], he sat down and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, *With desire have I desired to eat this passover* with you before I suffer: [I will explain this comment later in this article. Jesus was not referring to that meal, but to the upcoming Passover Feast.] For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:14-18).

Notice that up to this point, Matthew and Mark are treating this final meal as just that -- a dinner or supper held among friends. There is no mention of this night being the "Passover" at all!

Notice also -- we have taken this chronology of Christ's last week on a careful day-by-day introspection. We have carefully pointed out what occurred in the morning of each day, and the evening. We have gone through the ending of Friday, Nisan 8, Sabbath, Nisan 9, Sunday, Nisan 10, Monday, Nisan 11, and logically we must now come to Tuesday, Nisan 12, and Tuesday evening, the beginning of Nisan 13!

What occurred on this *Tuesday*? Simple: Jesus sent His disciples into the city, to "prepare for Passover" which was coming up soon, and much preparation work was needed. Then, "when evening was come," *it logically must have been that very evening -- Tuesday evening, Nisan 13, which would have begun at sunset! This "last supper" therefore -- contrary to common assumptions -- occurred TUESDAY NIGHT!*

So, with this amazing fact in mind, let's continue the story-flow.

At this "last supper," the gospel writer Luke quotes Jesus as making a remarkable statement. Luke mentions Jesus made the astonishing statement, "With *desire* have I *desired* to eat this passover with you before I suffer . . ." (Luke 22:15). Does this one simple statement "prove" that this dinner was the "Passover"? Not at all! Jesus could just as easily have been harking back to the Passover which they had been preparing for, which was due to arrive a few days later. They understood what He was talking about. They knew He meant the upcoming Passover Festival, with the Seder on the night of Nisan 15 (Ezekiel 45:21).

What Jesus really meant by this expression is revealed when we look into the original Greek language. The Greek word for "desire" here in this verse is not the normal word used for "desire" in the New Testament. That word would be *eudokia*, meaning literally "good pleasure." But the word Jesus used is #1939 in Strong's Concordance, the word *EPITHUMIA*, which means "A LONGING (ESPECIALLY FOR WHAT IS FORBIDDEN)."

Jesus longed to be able to partake of the upcoming Passover celebration -- *but He knew He could not, because He knew He would be DEAD AND BURIED at the time the Passover was being celebrated in Israel!* He is merely expressing to the disciples His keen yearning to be able to keep the Passover with them -- but He knew it would not be possible. Why? Because He knew He was going to *BE our Passover Lamb that very Passover!*

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary says of this word *EPITHUMIA*:

"A DESIRE, CRAVING, LONGING, MOSTLY OF EVIL DESIRES,' FREQUENTLY TRANSLATED 'LUST' . . .

*"With regard to evil 'desires,' in Col.3:5 the RV has 'desire' for the KJV, 'concupiscence'; there the preceding word *pathos* is translated 'passion,' RV, for KJV, 'lust' . . . *Epithumia* is the more comprehensive term, including all manner of 'lusts and desires' . . ."*

Why did Jesus use this word at His final supper with His disciples, before the Passover, which was only two nights away? The answer is simply that *humanly speaking He longed, even craved, to keep that Passover with them -- but He knew that He couldn't, and still fulfill the plan of God, and BECOME our Passover sacrifice!*

This word comes from the word *epithumeo* which means, "set the heart upon," "long for (rightly or otherwise)," "covet, desire, lust after." In other words, Jesus is simply telling His disciples how much He LONGED to be able to eat this upcoming Passover on the night of Nisan 15 with them -- *but He knew it would be impossible!* It simply was not to be; it was not possible according to the plan of God. Rather than eat the Passover with them, He would BE our "Passover lamb," sacrificed for us (I Cor.5:7)! What He was longing for, in this particular instance, was indeed "forbidden" -- for He could not possibly do BOTH, partake of the Passover and BE our Passover!

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon points out that this word literally means, "desire,

craving, longing," specifically, "desire for what is forbidden, lust." The plain truth is, humanly speaking, Jesus did not want to have to go through with the crucifixion, being beaten, scourged, nailed to the stake, and KILLED! He sweated great drops of blood, praying to the Father later that same night, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Luke records, "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (verse 44). Even for Jesus, our Saviour, this trial of the crucifixion was a great ordeal, one He did not look forward to.

This fact adds meaning and depth to our perception of His remarkable words to His disciples that he literally "CRAVED" to eat this upcoming Passover with them, on Nisan 15, and not have to go through with the ordeal that lay ahead of Him that would prevent Him from doing so! He most certainly would NOT have used such a word merely to describe having the "last supper" with them at the beginning of the 13th of Nisan. That meal itself has no particular significance other than being their last meal together.

The truth is so beautiful, when we understand it! Jesus was not referring to that dinner that very night at all! Notice! The apostle John makes this point abundantly clear.

A Quick Review

Matthew tells us, "When evening came, Jesus was RECLINING AT THE TABLE with the Twelve" (Matt.26:20). John tells us: "It was JUST BEFORE the Passover Feast. . . . The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from THE MEAL" (John 13:1-4). This was a regular MEAL, not the Passover feast! Luke adds, "When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table" (Luke 22:14).

How clear! This was not the Passover -- it was about 48 hours BEFORE the Passover! But a unique thing happened at this special meal -- this final meal Jesus would have with His disciples, since He would BE our Passover lamb slain for us the afternoon of Nisan 14, about one and one half days later. Therefore, at this final meal, Jesus gave His disciples instructions for the future.

This was not the actual Passover, which would not be eaten for another 48 hours, but it was the last chance Jesus had to have a fellowship meal with His disciples, before His arrest, trial, and death. It was His last real meal since Jesus would be imprisoned later that very night, and then crucified, dead and in His tomb during the actual Passover. Therefore, He told His disciples, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15-16).

All the gospel writers, other than Luke, plainly state that the true Passover was not to occur until another two DAYS passed. John plainly says this evening meal was "BEFORE" the Passover. Yet some think Jesus seems to be calling this final meal "this Passover." Why, then, does this ambiguity occur? Why does Jesus refer to "this Passover"?

As we have already seen, He was merely referring to the UPCOMING Passover, not to that meal that very night. In fact, He DID eat that meal with them! And He ate it AFTER He said the words that He would not eat the 'Passover' again until the Kingdom of God comes! Therefore, that is one more proof that that meal was not the Passover, and could not have been. Would He say He would not again eat the Passover, and then go right ahead and EAT it immediately after He said those words? Such a belief makes Him out to have been a "liar." He did not "lie," for that meal simply was not the Passover!

The New Bread and Wine Symbols

What about the special ordinance, then, that Jesus gave to His disciples that evening – the partaking of bread and wine, symbolizing His body and blood? Just what were these symbols?

Notice! We read:

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat: this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom'" (Matt.26:26-29). Mark corroborates this account exactly (Mark 14:22-25).

Luke, however, adds a distinction. Very plainly, in Luke, there are TWO CUPS of wine. Notice! "After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' IN THE SAME WAY, AFTER THE SUPPER HE TOOK THE CUP, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you' (Luke 22:17-20).

Why does Luke mention two cups? Was he all mixed up? Of course not! The Scripture cannot be broken, Jesus told us (John 10:35). "Thy Word is TRUTH" (John 17:17).

Luke did not make a mistake. His gospel account is also inspired Scripture (II Tim.3:16). Luke was a very careful and elegant writer, the most learned of the gospel writers. He did not become confused and repeat himself. Rather, he really meant to say that there were TWO distinct cups of wine during that supper that Jesus called special attention to. Luke's gospel account is simply more complete than that of the other apostles on this point. John doesn't mention the bread and wine symbolism at all, whereas Matthew and Mark give very similar accounts. But Luke adds this extraordinary observation that TWO CUPS were actually involved, one simply divided among the Twelve after giving thanks, and the SECOND or LAST cup symbolizing the blood of the covenant!

In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the Jewish Passover seder or meal, which is held on Nisan 15 and lasts for several hours, in remembrance of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt

and freedom from bondage, involves the taking of FOUR CUPS of wine diluted with water during the evening, each cup having special meaning and significance. The first cup is the "cup of sanctification," taken at the beginning of the Passover. At the end of the first part of the meal the "cup of plagues" is taken -- symbolizing the wrath of God upon His enemies, and the plagues poured out on ancient Egypt. The third cup begins the main portion of the Passover, and is the cup of redemption. The final cup, taken toward or at the end of the meal, is the cup of praise. Obviously, the first cup Jesus offered His disciples recorded in Luke at the beginning of the final supper He had with His disciples corresponded to the first cup of wine which was taken at the beginning of a meal. The second cup of wine Luke mentions was the cup symbolizing the blood of the new covenant in His shed blood -- it was the same as the cup of redemption!

However, Jesus never intended to TRANSFER the Passover ceremony and dinner to a different night before the Passover. Rather, He just introduced these new symbolical meanings to the cup of wine and the unleavened bread which had always been observed by the people of God as the "KIDDUSH" ceremony -- that is, the blessing of the bread and wine ceremony! This ceremony goes back to Abraham and Melchizedek, when the high priest brought forth "bread and wine" after Abraham rescued his nephew Lot from captivity (Genesis 14:18).

In essence, Jesus gave NEW MEANINGS to this ancient ceremony, explaining just what the bread and wine always truly represented and symbolized -- His body and blood! In no way was He attempting to change God's eternal LAW, or move the Passover celebration to a different night than the Law prescribed! Remember, God's law is ETERNAL, and God CHANGES NOT (Psalms 111:7-8; Mal.3:6).

There is NO HISTORICAL CHURCH DOCUMENT OR RECORD THAT STATES JESUS CHANGED THE PASSOVER FROM NISAN 15 TO NISAN 14! He could not do that, because the Passover was ordained as a festival of God on Nisan 15 for all time!

God Almighty commanded: "THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS; ye shall keep it a feast BY AN ORDINANCE FOR EVER" (Exo.12:14). The Hebrew word for "forever" is *olam* and means "concealed, the vanishing point, time out of mind" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance). It means "eternity, always, forever, eternal, continuous, perpetual, without end."

The Passover was always to be observed along with the other festivals of God only "AT THEIR APPOINTED TIMES," and at *no other time* (Lev.23:4, NIV).

Jesus did not change the time or manner of observing the Passover. He merely changed the MEANING of two elements of the traditional "Kiddush" or "bread and wine ceremony" which the Jews had done, customarily, whenever they held a fellowship banquet or supper. This ceremony was done with regular bread -- *artos* in the Greek language -- the kind of bread Jesus used at the last supper. This was not *azumos* -- that is, unleavened bread. All the gospel accounts use the word ARTOS for this bread, signifying regular leavened bread! This, once again, PROVES this last supper was NOT the "Passover," at which leavened bread was forbidden!

This fact puts the final "nail" in the coffin of the so-called "New Testament" Passover being at a different time or celebrated differently than the original Passover!

Paul's Instructions

Paul wrote in I Corinthians, about Jesus' last supper with His disciples. Paul said that meal was "NOT THE LORD'S SUPPER" (I Cor.11:20). Rather, it was simply the "bread and wine" ceremony, which Jesus instituted as a MEMORIAL of His death and sacrifice!

How do we know this was not the Passover Paul was talking about? First of all, as we have seen, this he said occurred "the night Jesus was BETRAYED" – *NOT ON THE PASSOVER, which was two nights later!* Jesus could not very well have given these new emblems to His disciples at the REAL time of the Passover celebration, on the night of Nisan 15, because Jesus was DEAD AND BURIED at that time.

Therefore, what was this SPECIAL observance He introduced? Let's let Paul explain it. Notice carefully! Paul explained it thus: "The Lord Jesus, on the NIGHT HE WAS BETRAYED, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, AFTER SUPPER he took the cup, saying, 'This cup [not the previous cups] is the new covenant in my blood; do this, *whenever you drink it*], in remembrance of me'" (I Cor.11:23--25).

Notice! Paul said, "WHENEVER YOU DRINK IT"! This ceremony can be held at any time, throughout the year! It is part of a festival or fellowship meal! It can be done at any special celebration. It is often performed at the New Moons, or on Festival feast banquets. It does not necessarily have anything to do with the Passover, except that, like the Passover, it symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! Remember, however, it is done with ARTOS – LEAVENED BREAD! Remember, also, Jesus said that He is the "bread [*artos*] of life" that came down from heaven (John 6:48). Therefore, this ceremony symbolizes Him in a very special way, throughout the year. The expression, "as oft as you drink it," or "whenever you drink it," is the very same expression found in Revelation, where we read that the two witnesses of God, during the Great Tribulation, will strike the earth with plagues "as often as they will" (Rev.11:6).

Therefore, in I Corinthians 11, Paul is not even speaking of the "Passover," and nowhere does he use that word to identify the ceremony he proceeds to describe!

Let's understand this, and get it straight!

Paul did not say here that Jesus changed the Passover from the night of the 15th of Nisan to the 14th. That would be absurd! God's laws are eternal, and the date of the Passover has NEVER been changed from Nisan 15! Rather, Paul simply pointed out the obvious fact that it was the night Jesus was actually BETRAYED that He gave these new symbols of the bread and wine ceremony which we are to use THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, whenever we celebrate fellowship meals, *REMEMBERING HIM as we do so!* This was in essence a new interpretation and meaning placed on an ancient custom dating back to at least Abraham's time

Paul went on, "For *whenever* you eat this bread and drink this cup, you PROCLAIM the

Lord's death until he comes" (verse 26). In other words, at each observance of the "Kiddush," when we participate in the wine and bread ceremony, we remember and proclaim that we accept and honor and cherish the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, and accept and worship Him as our Saviour, Redeemer, Messiah and coming King!

Let's Celebrate the TRUE Passover!

Let's understand this! The true Passover celebration is NOT a celebration of the DEATH of the Son of God – not at all! We are saddened that our Saviour had to DIE to pay the penalty of our sins. But we REJOICE in His gift of salvation and deliverance from the power of sin, which this annual occasion represents for us! Even as ancient Israel rejoiced at Passover for their deliverance from the clutches of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, so we rejoice in our deliverance from the grasp of Satan and this evil world and its power!

The night many say they observe as a "New Testament Passover" is not only nothing of the kind, what they think they are observing is really the "night of betrayal" of the Son of God! Now who would really want to celebrate that? The one who would celebrate that grisly, horrible event is none other than Satan the devil, the prince of darkness. That was his supreme hour, his greatest conquest, his most notable victory in the history of the world! Only SATAN would proclaim a "holy celebration" on the night of the BETRAYAL of the Son of GOD!

Yes, only SATAN would celebrate the terrible "Night of Betrayal," the supposed evening when Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and led him to treacherously betray and turn traitor to the Son of God! That evening was "Satan's night" – certainly NOT a night that true Christians and believers in the Messiah would want to celebrate or honor!

The true Passover was never changed. It has always been observed on Nisan 15, the evening after the Passover lambs were slain in ancient Israel. It was never intended to be a commemoration of the DEATH of the sacrificial lambs in Old Testament times. Rather, it was a celebration of LIBERTY AND DELIVERANCE from Egypt, which symbolizes the power of sin and Satan's world (Exo.12:12-14). The ancient "Passover" was celebrated the night God actually "PASSED OVER" the Israelites and did them no harm, but destroyed their enemies, the gods of Egypt, and the firstborn of all the Egyptians.

Likewise, the true New Testament Passover is celebrated at the VERY SAME TIME as the original Old Testament Passover. It celebrates our VICTORY OVER SIN through the shed blood of Christ! We do not celebrate the DEATH of God's Passover Lamb as such, but realize that it took the DEATH of His Son for our sins to be forgiven! WE thank God in awe that He was willing to pay such a price for redeeming us, and we thank Christ that He was willing to give up His life for us. But we do not celebrate the death of the lamb itself, any more than the Israelites celebrated at the killing of poor innocent lambs.

It is the DELIVERANCE WROUGHT, the TRIUMPH over our enemies, including our own flesh, Satan and his demons, and the world around us, that we celebrate, through the shed blood of Christ, and His indwelling Spirit power that He gives to us for accepting His shed blood and broken body in our behalf! Through Jesus Christ we can be OVERCOMERS -- we can

TRIUMPH over all our enemies, and inherit the Kingdom of God!

Strangely, in a bizarre and mysterious fashion, those who observe what they call the "Passover" in the beginning of Nisan 14, BEFORE the actual slaying of the lamb occurred the following afternoon, are actually celebrating a Roman Catholic, Babylonish type of mystery-religion. The little tiny piece of "unleavened bread" they partake of is reminiscent of the Roman Catholic MASS, which stems directly from Babylonian Paganism!

This strange ritual, when hundreds and thousands of people gather together somberly, without laughter or rejoicing, and partake only of a piece of unleavened bread and a tiny thimble of wine, has NOTHING WHATEVER REMOTELY to do with the true PASSOVER, which was a FULL COURSE DINNER CELEBRATION OF GREAT JOY for the entire family, or several families together! (Exo.12:3-4). It was a time for careful rehearing of the History of Israel and God's redemption and providence for the benefit of the children (Exo.13:14-15; 12:26-27). It was intended to be a joyous FAMILY AFFAIR!

WHY then do modern churches, such as Worldwide Church of God, Church of God International, and others, PROHIBIT CHILDREN from the "Passover"? Thus they drive one more wedge between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. Instead of reconciling families, they drive them apart (see Malachi 4:5-6).

The true Passover of God is not a solemn, mysterious "mass," but a JOYOUS FAMILY CELEBRATION OF LIFE, FREEDOM, JOY AND LIBERTY THROUGH CHRIST!

The Death of Christ

Do you see the difference? That is why we do NOT celebrate the Passover at the 3:00 PM time when Jesus actually expired on the stake or tree. That horrible death needs no celebration or commemoration. We do not rejoice that God had to die. That Christ had to die was a horrible reality, necessitated by our sins. He was nailed to that stake for us. We do not rejoice in that horrifying event.

We do rejoice, however, in the wonderful deliverance wrought through the death of the Son of God in payment for our sins. As Paul wrote, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor.5:21).

Paul expressed it this way: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be SAVED BY HIS LIFE" (Rom.5:6-10).

The truth is, God never commanded the Passover to be observed on Nisan 14, whether in the beginning portion as night fell, or whether in the afternoon, around 3:00 PM, when the

Messiah died. Those events were simply preparatory for the true Passover celebration, which has always been celebrated and is to be celebrated during the NIGHT of Nisan 15! The Passover is, therefore, "*a night to be much observed* unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is THAT NIGHT OF THE LORD TO BE OBSERVED of all the children of Israel in their generations" (Exodus 12:42).

God commands us: "And this day" -- PASSOVER -- "shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a FEAST TO THE LORD throughout your generations; ye shall KEEP IT A FEAST BY AN ORDINANCE FOR EVER" (Exodus 12:14).

If you would like more information on how to properly observe the Passover this coming year, then be sure to write for our articles, "When Should the Passover Be Observed?", "A New Look at the Passover," "Luke and the Passover," "Do You Observe a Pagan Passover?", "The Passover Plot," "Wonderful New Truth about the Passover!", "Hidden Mysteries of the Passover," and our booklet, "The Christian-Messianic Passover Haggadah.." The last item gives you the full details on how to observe the Passover, and its incredible meaning – together with the proper format, place settings, instructions, and even recipes, for a proper Passover seder. Write also for our special in-depth 4 Bible Course lessons on the Passover.

May God bless you as you observe His one and only *true* Passover!