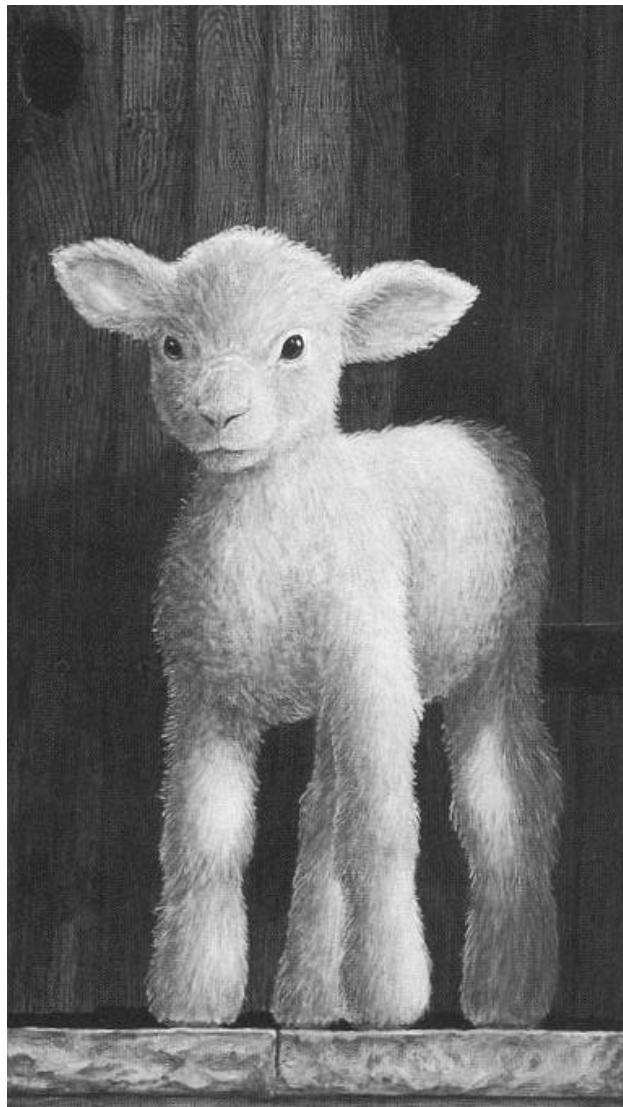


TRIUMPH  
PROPHETIC  
MINISTRIES

# BIBLE

## CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



The Passover Lamb pictures the Messiah

A New Look at the New Testament  
Passover & Lord's Supper

Lesson 16

## An Open Letter from the Staff

Jesus Christ observed the Passover throughout His life, and with His disciples. On an evening before His crucifixion, He observed a “Last Supper” with His disciples. Many have thought this “Last Supper” was actually the Passover. Was it? How could it have been, since He – our Passover Lamb – was not “sacrificed” until much later?

Exactly when did the “Last Supper” actually occur? Was it a true Passover meal – called a “seder”? If so, why is no lamb mentioned, and why did they eat “artos” – leavened bread? “What did Jesus mean when He said, “With desire have I desired to eat *this* Passover with you,” if the Passover was not that same evening? And why, if that *was indeed* the Passover, did the apostle John say that it occurred ‘**before** the feast of the Passover’ (John 13:1)?

Why, also, do the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke differ somewhat from the account given in the book of John?

And, if that meal was a true Passover, then WHY did it occur several days BEFORE the Jews ate the Passover?

And finally, WHEN did the early Church observe the Passover?

All these questions deserve – in fact, DEMAND – an answer – an answer that can be PROVEN TRUE!

What is the PLAIN TRUTH about the NEW TESTAMENT Passover? Did Jesus Christ CHANGE the day and time of eating the Passover? Was the “Lord’s Supper” identical with the Old Testament Passover? It’s time we understood the TRUTH about the NEW Testament Passover!

## TRIUMPH PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

### **BIBLE** CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 16

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**About Our Cover.** . . The Passover lamb had to be faultless, without blemish, and was sacrificed on afternoon/evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, roasted, and eaten that same night after sunset. It pictures Jesus Christ “our Passover,” sacrificed for us (I Cor.5:7). Our cover picture shows such an innocent, flawless lamb, a symbol of our Messiah.

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## A New Look at 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 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? Is it when the "Lord's Supper" occurred? Or at the beginning of Nisan 15?

In Proverbs 18:13 we read, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

Many people today think the "Lord's Supper," is the "Christian Passover." Yet it was actually prior to the historical Passover, which the Jews observed.

The Lord's Supper, as it has been called, 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.

Then what was meant by the special symbols Jesus introduced at His "last supper"? Let's understand this!

### ***The Old Testament Passover***

**1.** When should we observe Passover? Exo.12:6.

**COMMENT:** God's original 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). As we have already proven, this was in the late afternoon of Nisan 14.

**2.** Where was the Passover to be slain? Deut.16:2, 5-6.

**COMMENT:** 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).

**3.** Does this slaying of the lambs perfectly represent the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, who was slain for our sins? I Cor.5:7; II Cor.5:20-21. Did Jesus expire on the stake about 3:00 PM in the afternoon of Nisan 14? Matt.27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44.

**4.** But when was the Passover actually to be eaten, and partaken of, as a meal? Exo.12:7-14.

**COMMENT:** 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.

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).

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!

We have studied the PROOF that the original Passover was celebrated from the end of Nisan 14, in the afternoon, when the lambs were slain, through the beginning of Nisan 15, when the lambs were roasted, and eaten, and when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain.

But did Jesus Christ CHANGE the time Passover was to be observed? Did He move it to the time of the "Last Supper"?

In order to understand this, let's go carefully through the events of that final preparation period for the Passover, the week before Christ was crucified.

### **Luke and the Passover**

Luke mentions the 'Passover' often in chapter 22. In Luke 22:1, 7, 8, 11, and 13 we read of "the Passover," and in verse 15, "this Passover." What was Luke talking about in these verses? What is "the" Passover, and "this" Passover? Does the word "Passover" have several different meanings

Obviously, there is great controversy over these verses, as to whether the dinner Jesus had that night was "the Passover," or a "going away banquet" or even a "graduation banquet" which He gave for the disciples since they had finished a course of "instruction" with Him which lasted three years.

A key to Bible study is to always begin with the clear, obvious verses, and then to proceed to the unclear, nebulous ones. This rule helps prevent many mistakes

in interpretation. Another important rule is to always be sure to get the "context" of the verses in question. Understand the over-all picture. A third valuable rule could be put this way: NEVER ASSUME.

Just what is the scene pictured in the 22nd chapter of Luke? Let's go back and look at this chapter, verse by verse, and match these ~~verses~~. However, God never commanded us to part easily understandable verses, so we can "prove" the truth, carefully, as we go along, taking nothing for granted.

**1.** Does Luke call the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread "the Passover"? Luke 22:1.

**COMMENT:** Notice! Luke explains what he means by "the Passover" in *this verse*. He writes, "Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, *which is called the Passover.*" Thus in Luke's terminology, the term "Passover" sometimes refers to the *entire feast of Unleavened Bread!*

**2.** Does Luke also speak of the Passover as something to be killed? Luke 22:7.

**COMMENT:** Now notice verse 7: "Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the *Passover must be killed.*" In this verse the "Passover" which must be "killed" has to refer obviously to the "Passover lamb" which was killed.

Obviously, then, we have proved that the word "Passover" itself can have several different meanings. It clearly does *not always refer to the dinner itself* where the Passover lamb is eaten! That much we have proven already!

The word "Passover" itself is interesting and important to understand, then Strong's Concordance points out, in its definition of the Greek word *pascha*, from which we get the English word "Passover" in the New Testament, that this word means or signifies: "the *Passover* (the meal, the day, the festival, or the special

*sacrifices connected with it).*"

In the Old Testament, the word "Passover" is translated from the Hebrew word *pesach*, from *pasah*, a primitive root meaning "to hop, i.e. (fig.) skip over (or spare)." *Pesach* itself means "a prepermission, i.e., exemption; used only tech. of the Jewish Passover (the *festival* or the *victim*)."

Thus, when the term 'Passover' is used, it can refer to several different aspects of the Passover Feast -- the seven-day Festival itself, the Passover seder meal observed at the beginning of the 15th of Nisan, the Passover lamb sacrificed during the afternoon of Nisan 14, and the other sacrifices killed during the Festival. In effect, *anything connected with the Festival could be called "the Passover," as it would constitute PART of the Passover.* The season of the year is even called the "Passover season," meaning the Spring, the time of the year when the Passover is observed!

**3.** What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? Luke 22:8.

**COMMENT:** Jesus sent Peter and John telling them, "Go and prepare *the Passover* for us, that we may eat." In context, then, He is telling them to "*Prepare* for the coming Passover Feast" -- all the seven days of "Passover" (verse 1). They had to prepare -- that is, obtain unleavened bread, and all the things necessary for observing the Passover for seven days. That is why this PERIOD of time was called the "Preparation of the Passover." Jesus was telling His disciples to PREPARE for the up-coming Passover -- that is, to GET READY and make preparations.

Actually, Nisan 14, when the Passover lambs are killed, in the afternoon, between 3 and 6 PM, is the final "preparation day" for the Passover Festival! The "preparation days" begin on Nisan 10, when the lambs are selected (Exodus 12:3).

It was actually on the morning of Nisan 12 when Jesus told His disciples to "go and prepare the Passover."

The preparation period for the Passover, then, was from Nisan 10 through the 14th, when the lambs were killed in the afternoon -- at the very time Jesus Himself, our Passover Lamb, died on the cross (I Cor.5:7). Killing the lamb was just *the final part* of the preparation needed to properly observe the Passover Feast.

During the preparation period, all leaven had to be put out of the homes of the people, and gotten rid of, and preparations had to be made for the obtaining of unleavened bread, wine, groceries, rooms had to be cleaned and or rented, and other preparations for the Passover dinner on Nisan 15, and the rest of Passover week, had to be made.

Thus the days from Nisan 10 to the 14th of Nisan was a very busy, sometimes hectic, time of "preparation." Finally, on the afternoon of the 14th, the lambs, themselves, had to be taken to the Temple, and inspected by the priests to be sure they were "kosher," and had no blemishes, and then had to be killed during the afternoon of Nisan 14, between roughly 3 and 5 o'clock, as Josephus the Jewish historian states.

**4.** Were the disciples to prepare for the upcoming Passover celebration? Luke 22:8-11. Did they do so? Verse 13.

**COMMENT:** Thus the time came when the Passover must be celebrated, and Jesus at this time told His disciples to go into the city of Jerusalem, find a man bearing a pitcher of water, follow him into his house, and inquire about the guest-chamber where Christ and His disciples could "eat the passover" (verse 11) -- that is, celebrate the upcoming seven day Passover Feast! This in no way "proves" the Passover would be that very evening! Rather, it was a general instruction to prepare for the coming festival period of

seven days called ‘Passover’!

*IF* that very evening was the time they were going to eat the Passover, and if that instruction was given at the beginning of Nisan 14, just after sunset, as many suppose, then wasn't Jesus asking them to do the well-nigh impossible? Would it not have been a little late to think about beginning preparations if it was already after sunset, beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan? What about the lamb? What about taking the lamb to the Temple, having it properly approved, then killed, and roasted? There is no way this could have occurred at sun set at the start of Nisan 14! We will discover the actual time this occurred later in this lesson.

### *A Harmony of Final Events*

It was probably early afternoon, or the daylight portion of Nisan 12, Tuesday.

1. What did Jesus do – did He send His disciples to make preparations for the upcoming Passover? Luke 22:7-13.

**COMMENT:** The word “day” in verse 7 is the Greek word *hemera* and can mean “a period of opportunity for service,” or “a period of undefined length marked by certain characteristics” (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, part 2, page 146). It can be translated “period” or “time.” This was the “preparation time” for the Passover – so Jesus was telling His disciples to begin preparation for the upcoming Feast! As the account shows, they then proceed to do so. Preparations for the Passover Festival are made, according to Jesus’ instructions. NOWHERE does it say that the meal which they then ate together THAT NIGHT was the Passover!

2. During the meal that night, did Jesus make a statement which has confused many people? Luke 22:15-16.

**COMMENT:** This was not the actual Passover, which would not be eaten for another 48 hours, but it would be a final

meal together, before His crucifixion. It could not have been the Passover since Jesus would be dead and in His tomb during the normal 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). Luke is the only gospel writer who records this statement, and he wasn’t there at the time. Matthew and John were, and Mark wrote his gospel based on the personal first-hand account of Peter. None of them record this statement. What did Jesus mean here?

Jesus is merely expressing a wish or desire -- not an actual fact! He is saying that He really desired to eat this upcoming Passover meal with His disciples BEFORE He suffered and died -- but that was going to be impossible! His suffering and death would occur first! Therefore, Jesus is merely expressing His desire -- not an actual event. He was not calling the meal He had on that night the “Passover.” Everybody knew better than that. He was merely indicating how much He had wanted to eat the upcoming Passover with them -- but that was going to be impossible, under the circumstances!

In actual fact, Jesus used a very unusual word here, translated in the NIV as “eagerly desire,” and in the King James Version as “desire.” The Greek word He used is *epithumea* and means, according to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, “a longing (especially for what is *forbidden*),” and can even be translated “lust after.”

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. That meal itself had no particular significance other than being their last meal together.

### ***Jesus' "Last Supper"***

But now let's go back to John's account of the "Last Supper." Let's go back to the time when Jesus sat down with His disciples for a final dinner before He was apprehended by the Jewish authorities.

1. What does John refer to Jesus' last meal with His disciples as? John 13:1-4. Does he two times refer to it as simply a "meal" or "supper"? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** Notice carefully! The *New International Version* makes this plain. John explicitly wrote, "It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening MEAL was being served . . . so he got up from the MEAL, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet" (John 13:1-5).

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! Furthermore, it was not even CALLED the Passover – just a "MEAL"!*

2. What about Matthew, Mark and Luke? Do they also actually corroborate this account in John's gospel? Matt.26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-20. Does Luke refer to this meal also as a "supper"? Verse 20.

**COMMENT:** There is no contradiction in the so-called synoptic gospels. They do not refer to the "Last Supper" as Passover either!

Notice the facts about that final dinner, as revealed in the Scriptures. The last meal Jesus had with His disciples was not the "Passover." It was merely a "last supper," often called "The Lord's Supper." Nowhere in Scripture does God command us or tell us to commemorate or observe this last supper which Jesus had at the beginning of Nisan 13 with His disciples. 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. John plainly calls it a "supper" – not "Passover."

### ***John's Account Continued***

Now, let's review the sequence of events in the book of John. Remember, "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:10), and the gospel of John IS part of divine Scripture!

**1.** When was the "Lord's Supper," anyway? John 13:1. Was this BEFORE the Passover? Same verse.

**2.** What happened DURING the "Lord's Supper"? Did Judas Iscariot go out and betray Christ? John 13:21-30.

**3.** What happened AFTER the "Lord's Supper"? John 18:2-12. Was Jesus arrested that very night? Verse 12. Where was He taken? Verse 13. Was Annas the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest? Same verse.

**4.** Where was Jesus taken NEXT? John 18:24. Did Caiaphas also interrogate Him that same night? Matt.26:57-75. Did Caiaphas accuse Him of blasphemy? Verses 63-65. Was Jesus abused and mistreated? Verses 66-67.

**COMMENT:** Notice! This was the night following the Lord's Supper!

**5.** What happened at daybreak, or early the next morning? Did the Jewish Sanhedrin, or Supreme Court, meet, to decide the judicial fate of Jesus? Matt.27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66.

**COMMENT:** Note that this occurred in the "EARLY morning." In Jewish reckoning, morning is the hours between 6-12 AM, and early morning would be from 6-9 AM, close to daybreak or soon after sunrise. After being interrogated at night at the homes of Annas and Caiaphas, Jesus was then brought before the entire Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of Jewish Law, soon after sunrise - in the early morning, not during the night!

**6.** After the whole Sanhedrin condemned Christ, where was He taken? Matt.27:2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John

18:28. Had the Jews observed the Passover yet? Same verse. After Pilate began to interrogate Jesus, did he say he found no fault in Him? Luke 23:2-4; John 18:33-38.

**7.** What did Pilate discover? Luke 23:4-7. Did he send Jesus to king Herod, since He was from Galilee? Verse 7. Did Herod also interview Christ at length? Verses 8-11. Did he then send Jesus back to Pilate? Verse 11.

**8.** This time Jesus once again appears before Pilate's judgment seat. He is put on trial for His life. What time is this? John 19:14. Was it "about the sixth hour"? Same verse. Was this still the "Preparation of the Passover"? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** The Passover still had not arrived! Yet the "Lord's Supper" had occurred 18 hours previous to this moment - around 6 o'clock the previous evening. How, then, could the "Lord's Supper" be the same as the Passover? Answer? It couldn't. When we put all the Scriptures together, the "Lord's Supper" was NOT the "Passover"! Therefore, those who claim to observe it AS the 'Passover' are seriously mistaken and in grievous ERROR!

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). Jesus had been 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*: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John 19:14). The Passover still had not arrived!

**9.** After Jesus was crucified, and died, were the Jews still preparing for the Passover? John 19:31. Did Jesus' body have to be placed in a tomb before the "high day" began? Verse 42. Did a "high day" begin that very evening? John 19:31. What is a "high day"?

**COMMENT:** A "high day" itself was an ANNUAL SABBATH or HOLY DAY. That evening was the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an annual "Sabbath" day! It was the time the Passover meal was eaten, the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan! The Passover would not be partaken of until that evening, after sunset. Nisan 14 was the last day of "the preparation," and the body of Jesus had to be laid in the tomb before sunset (John 19:42), when the High Holy Sabbath -- the first day of Unleavened Bread, would begin.

### ***About the SIXTH HOUR***

"And it was the preparation of the passover, AND ABOUT THE SIXTH HOUR: and he said unto them, Behold your King!" (John 19:14).

Notice! John tells us "it was the *preparation* of the Passover." This plainly tells us that the Passover *was not yet -- it had not yet arrived!* Notice also! John does NOT say "it was the preparation DAY" of the Passover. He does not use the word "day" at all. Therefore, he is telling us that this was done during the preparation period of time before the Passover itself. The Passover was slain on Nisan 14, "between the two evenings" (Exo.12:6), or late afternoon on Nisan 14. However, the Passover lambs were selected on Nisan 10 and kept up until Nisan 14 (Exodus 12:3-6) -- therefore, all these days from Nisan 10-14 belonged to the *time of preparation*.

In this verse, John is not telling us it was Nisan 14, the day the lambs were killed --but rather the "preparation" period before that final event. It could not have been the final day of "preparation," that is Nisan 14 itself, for reasons we shall soon see.

The actual Greek of this verse states "And it was preparation of the Passover, hour and about (the) sixth, and he says to the Jews, Behold the king of you." Notice that there is no article "the" before the word "preparation." Thus this was referring to the

time of preparation, not to a particular day itself!

The time Jesus appeared before Pontius Pilate the final time was "about the sixth hour." What time of day was this? Rather than conjure up human opinions, let us let the Bible itself do the explaining. What does Scripture itself say about the definition of the expression "the *sixth hour*!"

This is crucial. Many believe that this event's timing was based on ROMAN time, and that this final appearance of Christ before Pilate occurred at 6:00 AM in the early morning!

However, we have already shown that such a scenario is absolutely IMPOSSIBLE! You *cannot logically* compress all the events of that previous night and morning -- the appearance of Christ before Annas, and Caiaphas, and in the morning the full Sanhedrin, and then Pilate the first time, and then Herod, and then Pilate once again, the second time -- *all before 6 A.M. in the MORNING!* That is utter rubbish and preposterous nonsense!

Certain churches -- such as Worldwide, United, Global, Philadelphia, and many other offshoot ministries --would have you believe that this final appearance of Christ before Pilate occurred on the SAME DAY AS THE CRUCIFIXION! But this is impossible! Why?

1. What time was Jesus nailed to the stake? Mark 15:25. What hour did He appear before Pilate? John 19:14.

**COMMENT:** According to the book of Mark, "And it was the THIRD HOUR [9:00 AM], and they *crucified him*" (Mark 15:25). It should be obvious that the "third hour" comes before the "sixth hour." Since Christ was already nailed to the stake at the *third* hour, or 9:00 AM in the morning, it is obvious that He could not appear before Pilate at the *sixth hour* --three hours later --*on the very same day!*

2. Was Jesus actually ON the stake at the "sixth hour"? Mark 15:33-37.

**COMMENT:** We read that while Christ was hanging on the stake or tree,

"And when the SIXTH HOUR [12:00 noon] was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the NINTH HOUR [3:00 PM]. And at the NINTH HOUR Jesus cried with a loud voice. . . And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost [died]" (Mark 15:33-37).

Judging from the crucifixion account itself, we see that the "sixth hour" clearly refers to NOON-TIME! Since Christ was on the cross at the "sixth hour," on the day of His crucifixion, therefore the "sixth hour" when He made His final appearance before Pilate *had of necessity to be on the PREVIOUS DAY!* Since He was crucified on Nisan 14, the very day the Jews were killing their Passover lambs, and died at the very time in the afternoon when the Passover lambs were being slain, then the "sixth hour" when He appeared before Pilate for final sentencing had to be the "sixth hour" of Nisan 13 -- the previous day!

This means that the "Last Supper," or final meal Jesus had with His disciples, had to be the *previous* evening -- that is, *during the beginning hours of Nisan 13 -- and NOT Nisan 14, as so many churches and ministers claim!*

Therefore, when such people hold their "Passover" at the beginning of Nisan 14, basing it on the "Last Supper" Jesus held with His disciples, *they are INCORRECT! They are holding their "Passover" 24 hours' BEFORE THE JEWS, and 24 hours AFTER the true time of the "Last Supper"! Either way, therefore, they are IN GROSS ERROR!*

### **How JOHN Used the Expression "The Sixth Hour"**

But does the expression "the sixth hour" in the Bible always mean NOON? Could John in John 19:14 possibly have been using some other hour counting system? What about "ROMAN time"? This idea has been suggested by some in an attempt to get around the plain Jewish usage of the term "sixth hour." What are the

facts? Could this be possible?

What about it? John was a devout Jew. When he referred to time, and the hour of the day, he always used the common Hebrew counting system --the Jewish time system. Throughout the book of John itself, John always uses Jewish time reckoning of the hours of the day, and the term "sixth hour" to refer to noon. Let us go through the book of John, in case after case, chronologically, and see how he reckons "time."

**1.** First, did John the Baptist tell his disciples that Jesus was the Lamb of God? John 1:29, 35-36. Did they go to Christ and introduced themselves, asking where He dwelt? Verses 38-39. What hour of the day was it? Verse 39.

**COMMENT:** When was the "tenth hour"? Says noted New Testament conservative scholar F. F. Bruce in his book *The Gospel of John*: "The 'tenth hour' (reckoning from sunrise) was about 4 p.m., when men began to leave their work for the day" (p.56).

F. F. Bruce in a footnote reference to this time, at the end of the chapter, explains why this is the correct interpretation. He asserts: "Some writers say that John followed the Roman reckoning and counted the hours from midnight. Pliny the Elder is sometimes cited in support of this view. But what Pliny says is that the Romans (like the Egyptians) defined the civil *day* as lasting from midnight to midnight (*Natural History* 2.79.188). They divided the period of daylight (from sunrise to sunset) into twelve *hours*, and the period of darkness (from sunset to sunrise) into four *watches*" (p.66).

Notice! The truth is, the Romans themselves also divided the "day" into twelve hours, beginning the count from sunrise or daybreak!

**2.** In chapter 4, do we read the story

where Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well in Sychar, between Jerusalem and Galilee? Where was He journeying? John 4:3-7. What time of day did He meet her at the well? Verse 7. Was it the "sixth hour"? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** After walking all morning, Jesus stopped at Jacob's well in Samaria, to rest and be refreshed. John noted the time as being "the sixth hour." Says F. F. Bruce about this passage in John: "Samaria lay between Judaea in the south and Galilee in the north; anyone, therefore, who wished to go from Judaea to Galilee had to pass through Samaria, unless he was prepared to make a detour through Transjordan, with its largely Gentile population. Jesus on this occasion took the direct route from south to north. . . .

*"The sixth hour, reckoned from sunrise, would have been noon --a natural time of the day for a weary traveler to seek rest and refreshment"* (Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p.101-102).

3. Later on, in this same chapter, did Jesus heal the son of a nobleman, without even visiting the child? John 4:49-50. Did the nobleman then go home, and find his son alive, just as Jesus said he would be? Verse 51. What time of day was the child healed? Verse 52.

**COMMENT:** When was the "seventh hour"? F. F. Bruce says: "The cure had taken place suddenly, at the seventh hour --that is, about 1 p.m. Probably the father could have got home the same day, but his confidence in Jesus' word was so strong that all anxiety left him and instead of hurrying home he completed some other convenient business" (*The Gospel of John*, p.118-119).

It should be obvious that John in his gospel consistently used Hebrew time reckoning. Therefore, for consistency's sake, when John used the expression, "the sixth hour," in John 19:14 in reference to

Jesus' final appearance before Pilate, *he was using the VERY SAME hour reckoning system! The "sixth hour" had to mean NIGH NOON!*

The scholar F. F. Bruce has a very important commentary on the expression "the sixth hour" in John 19:14. He writes: "As for the time of day, it was getting on towards NOON. Despite Westcott's arguments, no evidence is forthcoming that at this time, whether among Romans, Greeks or Jews, hours were EVER reckoned otherwise than from SUNRISE" (*The Gospel of John*, p.364).

F. F. Bruce concludes, saying: "And in the fact that these words were spoken towards MIDDAY on Passover Eve he implies something else: *Jesus is the true paschal lamb, about to suffer death at the appropriate hour of the appropriate day for the life of his people*" (p.365).

There is simply no evidence that John ever used anything but "Jewish time" in his reckoning in his gospel, which is in many respects the most "Jewish" of all the four gospels! There is no evidence whatsoever to support any other interpretation of "the sixth hour" as being anything but "noon" or "midday."

4. How many hours did Jesus Himself say are in a "day"? John 11:9. Twelve? Same verse. Doesn't this imply, then, that the first hour would be six AM, or sunrise, and so the sixth hour would be 12 NOON, as we reckon time?

**COMMENT:** John himself quotes Jesus as saying, "Are there not TWELVE HOURS IN THE DAY" (John 11:9). Thus in a normal day-time portion of a day, there are twelve hours between sunrise and sunset. Since the first hour would begin at sunrise, *the sixth hour of a twelve hour day would have to begin at NOON!*

The daylight portion of a day, or "DAYTIME," begins at dawn, and ends at sunset --a period of about 12 hours. The

first hour would be at dawn (about 6:00 AM in the morning), the THIRD hour at 9:00 AM, and the SIXTH hour would be at 12:00 AM --HIGH NOON --and the twelfth hour would be sunset, at the end of the day (about 6:00 PM in the evening).

John himself knew this --and he used God's time --Biblical time --Jewish time --when he referred to the "sixth hour."

Think about what this means! The "SIXTH HOUR" when Jesus was condemned by Pontius Pilate to be crucified, had to be about NOON-TIME ON WEDNESDAY, the day before the crucifixion occurred! *It could not have been NOON on Nisan 14, because Jesus was hanging on the cross from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM on that day! Therefore, it had to be the previous day, NOON on Nisan 13!!!*

### ***The Parable of the Vineyard***

Now notice! Here is clinching proof that the "sixth hour" refers to noon-time.

**1.** Did Jesus give a parable about a man who hired others to work in his vineyard? Matt.20:1-7.

**COMMENT:** Notice how time was reckoned by Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah Himself, in the story: "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out *early in the morning* to hire laborers for his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the THIRD HOUR [9:00 AM], and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out ABOUT THE SIXTH [12:00 PM] AND NINTH HOUR [3:00 PM], and did likewise. And about the ELEVENTH HOUR [5:00 PM], he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them,

*Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard: and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive" (Matt.20: 1- 7).*

Jesus Christ Himself then explains the true meaning of the "sixth hour" to us. In this passage, He clearly points out that according to the customary Jewish reckoning, which He Himself used, the "third hour" refers to the third hour of the day, which would be 9:00 AM by modern reckoning. The "sixth hour" was twelve noon, by our reckoning, today; and the "eleventh hour" would be late in the day, or 5:00 PM, by today's reckoning.

These facts really should not be difficult to understand. So why do so many people stumble, and fall flat on their face, when it comes to understanding this simple, clear Scripture? Could it be that they simply are stubborn, and refuse to admit that they are wrong? Are they so *wedded* to observing some kind of "Passover" or "Lord's Supper" or religious observance of some kind, on the eve or beginning of Nisan 14, that they refuse to separate from it, and cling to it as if it were a "baby" they refuse to part with?

*The expression "SIXTH HOUR" clearly refers to HIGH NOON! Jesus appeared before Pontius Pilate for His final sentencing about 12:00 NOON -- in the middle of the day! Therefore the "Lord's Supper" had to be the PREVIOUS DAY -- at the END of Nisan 12 and BEGINNING of Nisan 13 -- not the beginning of Nisan 14, when He had been judged and sentenced by Pilate, and was in the dungeon, awaiting His crucifixion early the next morning!*

Understanding this, the whole problem is solved, and there is no contradiction left! Every piece of the puzzle fits snugly and perfectly -- like hand-in-glove.

### **What Does This Mean?**

I know this new truth must seem shocking, incredible, mind-boggling, to many. But we cannot deny the facts! Even when new truth is explosive in nature --we must be willing to accept the truth, love the truth, and embrace the truth!

Many have taken for granted for decades that the Last Supper was on the evening of Nisan 13, after sunset, when Nisan 14 began. They have assumed this was the case. They have been taught this. And they have observed this date and time for years and years, as the appropriate time for the "Last Supper," "communion," or their so-called "New Testament Passover." They simply didn't know any better.

However, as we have seen, the solid evidence from the New Testament itself puts the LIE to this custom and practice. The last supper could not have occurred on Nisan 14 at all. It had to be in the evening of the beginning of Nisan 13. The next day, on the daylight portion of Nisan 13, at high noon, Jesus was standing before the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate for the final time.

What happened after Jesus was condemned by Pilate? We have to put the pieces of the story together, like a jigsaw puzzle.

1. Did Pilate deliver Jesus to be beaten and scourged? Mark 15:15. Was He also led away to the Praetorium, and the whole garrison called together to mock, and humiliate and abuse Him? Verses 16-17. Did they strike Him on the head, and further mock Him? Verse 18.

**COMMENT:** The garrison of Roman soldiers numbered about 600 men. Apparently, they all participated in abusing, mocking, kicking, punching, and beating Christ. How long did it last? Perhaps all afternoon, and then that evening He spent in prison – the dungeon. He was carried

out to be crucified the next morning, and was nailed to the stake at the "third hour," or 9 AM. That evening was the evening of Nisan 13, and that night was the night hours of Nisan 14. He was in the Roman dungeon, having been beaten, whipped, and scourged by Roman soldiers -- a whole "band" of them, numbering as many as 600 men.

If we count the time from Jesus' abduction by the armed guard of the Jewish leaders, from about about 11:00 PM of Nisan 13, till His final agony on the stake at 3:00 PM in the afternoon of Nisan 14, when He died, we have a total of 40 *hours* that He suffered -- 40 hours of imprisonment, judgment, trial, mocking, buffeting, lashing, whipping, scourging, and painful waiting for final crucifixion.

Can we begin to even imagine it?

2. Did Isaiah the prophet foretell the enormous suffering of the Messiah? Isaiah 52:14-15. Did he prophesy of the great grief He would experience? Isa.53:3-5.

**COMMENT:** No wonder Isaiah foretold, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:3-5).

### **Jewish Law**

Those who believe that Jesus had His last supper with His disciples at the beginning of Nisan 14, and that He was arrested that night, and condemned by the full Sanhedrin the next morning -- Nisan 14 --and then also condemned by Pontius

Pilate on the same day -- have a very serious problem. Why? Because, according to Jewish law, the Sanhedrin of the Jewish high court was prohibited from both judging and condemning a man *on the same day!*

That is to say, in a capital case, where the death penalty was going to be issued, the court by law had to hear the case and *render* judgment on one day, but the execution had to occur on the following day! This was an iron-clad rule of Jewish jurisprudence.

The *Mishnah* states in very plain language regarding the Sanhedrin: "In property cases they *try* the case by day and complete it by night.

"In capital cases, they *try* the case by day, and complete it [by] day.

"In property cases they come to a final decision on the same day [as the trial itself], whether it is for acquittal or conviction. In capital cases they come to a final decision *for acquittal on the same day, BUT ON THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR CONVICTION*" (*Sanhedrin* 41, *The Mishnah, a New Translation*, by Jacob Neusner, page 590).

In other words, in ancient Judaea, civil cases of law were *tried during the day* and may be completed at night. However, criminal cases were tried *during the day* and must be completed during daytime. If the accused is acquitted, and found innocent, the criminal trial may be completed on one and the same day, and he could go free. But if he is found guilty, then the court is *adjourned to the next or following day, on which judgment will then be pronounced.*

Therefore, it would have been absolutely contrary to Jewish practice for the Sanhedrin to accuse, condemn, and crucify Jesus Christ, all on one day! Such a thing was counter to their every instinct and custom. By their own standards of judicial

practice, they stipulated in the very *Mishnah* that *two days were required* in all capital cases where a man was determined to be "guilty," for him to be sentenced. Therefore, since the Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty early in the morning, soon after sunrise (see Matt.27:1-2, Luke 22:66), they would not have been able to execute Him until the **FOLLOWING DAY!**

Therefore, if Jesus Christ was brought before the Sanhedrin on Nisan 14, by Jewish law itself, His crucifixion could not have occurred until Nisan 15 -- the next day. But this is impossible, since the Scriptures tell us He was put to death BEFORE the high holy day -- the 15th of Nisan -- arrived (see John 18:28; 19:14, 31). Jewish law would have required that they at least hold Him over to the next day, following their determination of His guilt, before they could carry out the sentence. But, since He was plainly condemned on a preparation day BEFORE the high holy day, this requires that His final appearance before the Sanhedrin be the **PREVIOUS DAY** -- on Nisan 13th -- and that He was condemned by Pilate on Nisan 13 -- and executed the next day, on Nisan 14!

Furthermore, the Jewish *Mishnah* is even more explicit in explaining when criminals in capital cases could and could not be tried and sentenced. We read in the same tractate, *Sanhedrin* 4:1, part "L": "Therefore they DO NOT JUDGE [CAPITAL CASES] either on the EVE of the Sabbath or on the EVE OF A FESTIVAL" (*The Mishnah, a New Translation*, by Jacob Neusner, p.590).

This fact alone is devastating to those who want to argue that Jesus' last supper was on the eve of the Passover, at the beginning of Nisan 14, and that He was arrested that very night, and condemned the following morning, early, and sentenced to death and nailed to the cross by 9:00 AM that same morning! This fundamental

principle of ancient Jewish jurisprudence and legal requirements completely *destroys* the notion that Christ was tried, judged, condemned, and crucified all on the same single day -- Nisan 14.

Since Jesus was put to death on Nisan 14, at the very time the Jews were killing their Passover lambs, and since He was nailed to the cross at 9:00 AM in the morning (Mark 15:25), His trial and sentencing had to have been on the *previous day* --that is, on Nisan 13. This also explains how He could have been standing before Pilate, receiving His final sentence, at "about the sixth hour" (John 19: 14) -- which, by Hebrew reckoning, was 12:00 NOON by our western time standards.

When all the facts are carefully examined, we see that Jesus must have held the "last supper" on Nisan 13, Tuesday evening, was arrested that night, was sentenced by the Sanhedrin Wednesday morning, and finally was condemned to death by Pilate at Wednesday noon, still Nisan 13, whereupon He was scourged, whipped and beaten, and remanded to prison --the dungeon --until Thursday morning, when He was led out to the Mount of Olives and crucified. All the technical requirements of the "law" were fulfilled, according to the Mishnah's stipulations -- except one -- they condemned and executed *an INNOCENT MAN who was guilty of no crime whatsoever!* Be sure to read our new article "*How Long Was Jesus in the Grave?*" for a clear presentation of these events.

### ***What Jesus Really Instituted***

If the "Lord's Supper" is not the Passover, then what was it? What were the special "symbols" Jesus gave His disciples about the "bread and wine"? Let's understand this amazing symbolism!

1. What did Jesus tell His disciples

regarding partaking of "bread and wine"? Matt.26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20. Does the apostle Paul also speak of this special ceremony? I Cor.11:23-25.

**COMMENT:** At the last supper, Jesus took bread and wine, and told His disciples that these were symbols which represented His body and blood, given for us. His body was broken for us, and His blood was shed for us, as payment for our sins. The bread used was the Greek *artos*, meaning leavened, normal bread. Remember, this was two nights before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread!

2. Did Jesus tell us that He is the "bread of life" which came down from heaven? John 6:32-33, 35, 41, 48-51.

**COMMENT:** Again, in this chapter the word for "bread" is *artos*, meaning regular bread. Jesus was the "bread from heaven," which gives everlasting life -- the true "manna." We are to EAT of the bread that represents His LIFE!

3. How often are we to partake of this special bread and wine ceremony? I Cor.11:25-26.

**COMMENT:** Note the words, "AS OFTEN AS," in both these verses! This does not mean just once a year! It means OFTEN throughout the year, as part of a fellowship supper or meal eaten together by God's people -- whether in small family groups or larger groups!

4. How often will the "two witnesses" smite the earth with plagues during the days of their ministry? Rev.11:3, 6. As "OFTEN as they desire"? Verse 6.

**COMMENT:** Even so, we are to partake of the "bread and wine" ceremony throughout the year, especially on Holy Days, Sabbaths, and festive occasions where fellowship meals are appropriate!

5. Does this ceremony hearken back to Old Testament times? Genesis 14:18-20.

**COMMENT:** Melchisedek gave bread and wine to Abraham, setting an

example of this special fellowship ceremony. Jews do this every Sabbath, partaking of bread and wine. This is a special, unique ceremony, which we are commanded to observe, OFTEN, through the year, as "memorial" of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! He invested this ancient ceremony with NEW meaning and profound significance! As we do this, we "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (I Cor.11:26). Therefore, we are urged to do it "worthily," and to "examine" ourselves, so that we properly discern the Lord's body (verses 27-31).

### ***The Eternal Passover***

Consider for a moment: When God instituted the Passover, He said, "So *this day* shall be to you a *memorial*; and you shall *keep it a FEAST to the LORD throughout your generations*. You shall *keep it as a FEAST by an EVERLASTING ORDINANCE*" (Exodus 12:13-14).

God never intended that one-time-only event of the "Last Supper" to supplant and to replace His annual Passover. Can you imagine? For 1,500 years God's people kept the Passover on Nisan 15. The lambs were slain in the waning hours of Nisan 14. Christ died at the precise time they were being killed. Once this historical pattern was fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ, *do you think God would immediately CHANGE the day and time of observance of the Passover?* That makes no sense at all! There is only one perpetual, everlasting, immutable Passover -- the one which God originally ordained!

Jesus Christ declared, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, *one jot or one tittle will BY NO MEANS pass from the law till ALL is fulfilled*" (Matt.5:17-19).

Would God change the time and observance of His Passover? In Malachi we read: "For I am the LORD, *I do not change*" (Malachi 3:6). In Hebrews we also read of Christ: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Heb.13:10).

What occurred during that last evening did not do away with the true Passover celebration which must be observed, year after year, "at the appointed time" of Nisan 15. Jesus Himself said, "DO NOT THINK that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to FULFILL. For assuredly, I say to you, *till heaven and earth pass away, ONE JOT [Greek, IOTA, Hebrew, yod, the smallest letter] OR ONE TITTLE [the smallest stroke in a Hebrew letter] will by NO MEANS pass from the law till ALL is fulfilled*" (Matt.5:17-18, NKJV).

It's high time we WAKE UP! It's high time we FACE THE FACTS!

Don't let any man lead you astray, or convince you that the Passover has been done away, or changed, or replaced by the 'Lord's Supper.' Such is not the case. God's laws – and His Festivals – are appointed to be celebrated for all generations, *forever!*

If you would like help in keeping the Passover, write for our free Christian-Messianic Passover Haggadah, and our literature which explains the Passover, how to observe it properly, and its great symbolism and mysteries. Also, write for our article, "Are We Neglecting the Sacred Fellowship Meal?," and the explanation of the "Kiddush," the bread and wine ceremony.

The Passover is a greatly neglected Feast of God – especially so since most Christians who claim to observe it, observe it on the wrong day and in the wrong manner; and since most Jews fail to understand its relevance to the true Messiah, Yeshua Ha Moschiach – Jesus Christ!

