

What Do You Mean, “Artos”?

Seven Proofs the “Last Supper” was *not* the Passover!

Was the “Last Supper” of Christ the Passover? Many churches seem to think so. They claim the evidence is conclusive and the bread used was “unleavened bread.” Therefore, they assert, the Jews keep the Passover on the WRONG DAY – a day late – every year! But what are the facts? What do the Scriptures really say about this? What is the truth?

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Let’s do a comparison of this final “Lord’s supper” with the Passover:

There are very significant differences between the “Lord’s Supper” and the Passover celebration in ancient Israel. Most people have overlooked these striking differences, to try to “morph” the ancient Passover into the last supper Christ had with His disciples. Several factors mitigate against this erroneous conclusion, however. In fact there are SEVEN reasons for us to conclude the Passover was not the “Last Supper”!

How can we distinguish this final meal from the Passover celebration itself! How can we prove it was NOT the Passover?

The Timing – Proof #1

First of all, it was clearly held before the Passover. The apostle John says, plainly, “Now BEFORE the feast of the Passover . . . and supper being ended,” that Jesus “arose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself,” and began to wash the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-5). This was the night of the last supper. Note that it was “BEFORE” the feast of the “Passover”!

What could be plainer than that?

Once we comprehend this single fundamental difference, then others differences seem to crop up in spades!

Proof #2 – No Lamb

Secondly, in none of the gospel accounts -- Matthew, Mark, Luke or John -- is there any hint or mention of any *lamb* being eaten at the last supper – and yet lamb is an integral part of a traditional Passover – it was the CENTRAL FEATURE of the ancient Passover meal.

God commanded Israel, “On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a LAMB . . . a lamb for a household” (Exo.12:3).

The Passover absolutely required the serving of the center piece – the sacrificial Lamb – to be a true Passover! It was only because of the “blood of the lamb” that the children of Israel were “passed over” the night the angel of death struck the firstborn of all Egypt!

But there is no mention whatsoever of lambs being sacrificed or eaten for the “supper” which was Jesus’ last with His disciples before His death!

Proof #3 – No Bitter Herbs

Thirdly, there is no mention of bitter herbs, at the last supper – another absolute requirement for the Passover! God commanded His people, “Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire with unleavened bread and with BITTER HERBS shall they eat it” (Exo.12:8).

If what they celebrate is really the Passover, why do so many churches leave out the ‘BITTER HERBS’? God Almighty says, “You shall not add to the words which I command you, *nor take from it*, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD . . .” (Deut.4:2).

Proof #4 – the “Hagaddah”

Fourthly, at a traditional Passover, the command was for the story of the Passover to be explained and told in detail. God commands, “And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households” (Exo.12:26-27). God instructed Israel, “So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast.” (Exo.13:14-15).

But the story of the Passover is something not even alluded to at the famous “Last Supper”! Why? Because it was not an integral function of that particular evening meal!

God Himself tells us how to observe the Passover, and it is plain that the “Lord’s Supper” did not “follow the rules” – it did not fulfill the necessary requirements – it did not “ADD UP” to a true Passover celebration!

Proof #5 – No Joy!

Also, proof #5 we must remember that the Passover was a time of special joy and rejoicing, a celebration of deliverance and freedom from abject slavery and bondage. It is a thrilling, exciting, joyous occasion to be celebrated with great joy and happiness!

But at the Last Supper, there was a heavy feeling of sadness, anxiety, concern, even remorse, as Jesus brought up the subject of His betrayal and upcoming death. Rather than being a celebration of great joy, there was a palpable sense of concern and sadness, since He tells them He will be delivered to His enemies, and won't partake of the Passover with them again *until the Kingdom of God*.

Let's see if we can get the complete picture.

This final meal Jesus ate with His disciples was eaten in anticipation of the events to soon occur. It was eaten before the regular Passover. Therefore, it could not have in any manner been the true “Passover”!

Regardless of the terminology we use, this final meal was *not a true Passover* -- too many elements of the traditional Passover were missing, *and it was at the wrong time, on the wrong day, for the Passover!*

And *where was the JOY?*

Proof #6

Sixthly, what about the bread served at the last Supper?

At the Passover, God commanded that UNLEAVENED BREAD ONLY could be used. It had to be served with “unleavened bread” (Exo.12:8). In fact, God commanded, “SEVEN DAYS you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For *whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be CUT OFF from Israel*” (Exo.12:15).

No leaven at all was allowed at the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread! The penalty for disobedience was to be “cut off” – DEATH! “Leaven” was a type of “sin,” a symbol of sin, pride, wickedness, and evil. As the apostle Paul wrote, “For indeed, Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the FEAST, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice or wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Cor.5:7-8).

Passover was the beginning of the “Feast of Unleavened Bread,” so the bread

served had to be “unleavened.” The Hebrew word for “unleavened bread” was *matzah*. Leavened bread, or bread in general, was *lechem*.

The Greek word for “unleavened bread” was *azumos*. The word for bread in general, was *artos*.

What kind of bread was served at the ‘Last Supper’?

A New Look at the Bread

The word for “bread” in all the gospel accounts is the Greek word *ARTOS* which according to *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, signifies: “(a) ‘a small loaf or cake,’ composed of flour and water, and baked, in shape either oblong or round, and about as thick as the thumb; these were not cut, but broken . . . (b) ‘the loaf at the Lord’s Supper’, e.g. Matthew 26:26 (“Jesus took a loaf,” RV. marg.) . . . (c) ‘bread of any kind,’ Matt.16:11; (d) metaphorically, “of Christ as the Bread of God, and of Life,” John 6:33, 35; (e) ‘food in general,’ the necessities for the sustenance of life, Matt.6:11; 2 Cor.9:10, etc.”

The word *artos* generally refers to regular LEAVENED BREAD, the kind that we eat throughout the year (Matt.4:4; Luke 4:4). It is used of Christ who is the “bread of life” (John 6:33, 35, 48). It is #740 in Strong’s Concordance and simply means “bread (AS RAISED) or a loaf.” *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon* defines *ARTOS* as signifying “bread. 1. *food composed of flour mixed with water and baked*; the Israelites made it in the form of an oblong or round cake, as thick as one’s thumb, and as large as a plate or platter. . . hence it was not cut but broken. . . . 2. food of any kind.”

The word translated “*unleavened bread*” throughout the New Testament is always *azumos*, which simply means “unleavened.”

Since the word for the “bread” that Christ broke at the “last supper” was *artos*, and there is no reference in the Last Supper passages at all to *azumos* (“*unleavened*”), the implication is clear that the bread Christ used as a symbol of His body was REGULAR LEAVENED BREAD -- similar to the “Sabbath bread” Jewish people eat every Sabbath day in celebration of the manna from heaven and the “bread of life”!

Why did He do this? Here is a vital truth overlooked by ALL OF THE END-TIME CHURCHES OF GOD!

Luke 24

If *artos* – the bread eaten at the Last Supper – means regular “bread,” and not unleavened bread as such, then how do we explain the events of Luke 24, when Christ sat down with two disciples and “brake bread” with them on the day following the resurrection? The word used there is *artos*, and the day was during the Days of Unleavened Bread!

Would they have eaten leavened bread during the Feast?

How then do we explain the event in Luke 24 where Jesus meets two of His disciples, on Sunday, the day He was resurrected, as they travel to Emmaus? That evening – while it was still the Days of Unleavened Bread – they sat down to a meal.

We read: “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took *bread [artos]*, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight” (Luke 24:30-31).

Let’s be fair. Since the word *artos* is a generic word and can refer to any kind of bread, in this passage it could refer to “bread in general,” and since these were still the Days of Unleavened Bread, the bread in this case could well have been unleavened. The point is, for the purpose of the account, in Luke’s mind, the salient fact is that Jesus broke “bread,” in a similar fashion to what He did on the night of the “Last Supper.” Luke isn’t stressing what kind of bread was being broken – just that the Messiah broke “bread.”

On the other hand, it is also possible that this bread could have been regular leavened bread, being served in the inn where the two men planned to spend the night. It was dinner time. Regular bread may have been served for the meal, as not everybody in Judea at that time was an observant Jew and keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

If so, then Jesus picked up the loaf, and blessed it, *just as He had done on the evening of the Lord’s Supper, before His crucifixion!* This would have been a “sign” to them, and when He did it, their eyes suddenly popped open, as it were, and they remembered the act, and realized that this person was the Messiah Himself!

In this case, He never intended for them to eat the bread, but was merely drawing their attention to who He really was. Notice, too, the account does not say that they *ate* the bread, only that Yeshua picked it up and blessed it – to refresh their minds to what He had done at the Last Supper.

Proof #7

What is the most important reason that the “Lord’s Supper” could not have been the true Passover?

It is simply this: Jesus Christ ate the Last Supper with His disciples. It was the eve of the 13th of Nisan, according to latest research – a day before the eve of the 14th of Nisan, when most people think it occurred (see our article “Jesus’ Last Week” for proof).

Yet as the apostle Paul wrote, “For indeed Christ OUR PASSOVER WAS SACRIFICED FOR US” (I Cor.5:7).

Christ being our Passover Lamb, HAD TO BE KILLED AT THE PRECISE TIME

THE PASSOVER LAMBS WERE BEING SLAIN IN ISRAEL, ACCORDING TO GOD'S COMMANDMENT! Otherwise, He would have been a FALSE and a COUNTERFIT Passover Lamb!

The Jews always ate the Passover meal the evening AFTER all the Passover lambs were slain in Jerusalem!

The Jewish historian Josephus, a leading Pharisee and Jewish general of the first century, and the greatest Jewish historian of ancient times, wrote concerning this subject. In his book *Wars of the Jews*, he declared: "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 . . ." (*Wars*, Bk. VI, ix, 3).

Now consider carefully! Since the Passover was sacrificed between 3-5 PM, BEFORE SUNSET, on Nisan 14, IT HAD TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE END OF NISAN 14, AS THE DAY WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE! If it had been sacrificed between 3-5 PM just before the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, it would have been sacrificed on NISAN 13! That, of course, is preposterous! God did not command the Passover to be killed on the 13th of Nisan -- He said very plainly, "ye shall KEEP IT UP UNTIL THE FOURTEENTH DAY" -- and then "KILL IT IN THE EVENING" (Exodus 12:6).

Notice carefully! In terms of Roman time, or today's Roman calendar, this means that the JEWS in ancient times sacrificed the Passover from 3:00 PM in the afternoon until 5:00 PM -- on Nisan 14, the day before the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They killed the lambs obviously BEFORE SUNSET, and then roasted them, to have them ready for eating as the 15th of Nisan began, at sunset -- which was the beginning festival meal of the seven-day FEAST of Unleavened Bread!

In order for Christ to be our Passover Lamb, therefore, He had to be Sacrificed AT THE VERY SAME TIME! And the true Passover meal had to FOLLOW that earth-shaking, mind-boggling, stupendous event!

There are no "if's," "and's" or "but's" about it!

There is NO WAY Jesus could both EAT the Passover and BE the Passover Lamb that year! He did not "eat" Himself!

Edersheim on the Passover

Alfred Edersheim in his excellent book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Service*, in his chapter on "The Paschal Feast and the Lord's Supper," makes an excellent comment showing why this final meal Jesus held with His disciples *could not possibly be the "Passover."*

Alfred Edersheim was born in 1825 and died in 1889. He was born to Jewish parents in Vienna and was converted to Christianity as a young man. He studied

theology in Edinburgh and Berlin and was one of the leading authorities of his time regarding the doctrines and practices of Judaism in the centuries preceding and during the time of Christ and the early Christian era.

Edersheim states in blunt and incontrovertible terms:

“there is this one conclusive answer, that, except on the evening [latter part] of the 14th of Nisan, NO PASCHAL LAMB COULD HAVE BEEN OFFERED IN THE TEMPLE, AND THEREFORE NO PASCHAL SUPPER CELEBRATED IN JERUSALEM” (P.193).

Therefore, if the final meal Jesus held with His disciples was, as we believe and have proved, was *HELD BEFORE the evening (ending) of Nisan 14*, and the Passover lambs would be sacrificed during the late afternoon of Nisan 14, it would have been literally *impossible* for Jesus and the disciples to have eaten a Passover lamb at the last supper!

Therefore, it is IMPOSSIBLE that the “Lord’s supper” was in any regard the true Passover!

If the "Lord's Supper" is Not the Passover, Then What IS It?

We read of the ceremony Jesus introduced after His final supper with His disciples, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it (or, drink all of ye of it); for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt.26:26-28).

What is the meaning of this special newly inaugurated ceremony, and when should it be observed?

The bread represents the body of Christ. As Jesus said in John 6, "I am the bread of life. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the BREAD that I will give is MY FLESH, which I give for the life of the world" (John 6:48-51). The word for "bread" in these verses is the Greek word *artos* and means regular raised or leavened bread -- a simple loaf of bread!

The flesh of Jesus is symbolized by "bread." We are to "eat" His flesh, this spiritual "bread." We are to "partake" of Christ, and consume Him, His essence, His truth. Remember, Jesus was the "Word" of God (John 1:1-3). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). When we partake of Jesus' flesh, therefore, it means we partake of HIS WORD -- HIS TRUTH. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The cup of wine, which was divided up among the disciples, represented Christ's

shed blood (Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:20). This cup of wine symbolized the death of Christ on the cross, whereby He gave up His life to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind, so that none need perish, but all may have an opportunity for eternal life! As John records, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

As the apostle Paul wrote, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . 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, 8-10).

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all our sins. He covered them with His shed blood. Therefore, by this new symbolism of the bread and wine ceremony, we memorialize the death and penalty paid by our own true "Passover lamb" -- Christ Himself! As Paul wrote, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor.5:7).

Paul explained, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or, creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath *reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us this ministry of *reconciliation*; to wit, that God was in Christ, *reconciling* the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of *reconciliation*" (II Cor.5:17-19).

Was the sharing of bread and wine a NEW ceremony?

An Ancient Ceremony

Jesus gave the disciples bread, representing His body, and wine, representing His blood, that evening, as a special ceremony to do in remembrance of Him. Was this the Passover? No, it was not! This was done *before* the Passover. What was it, then? Modern Jews speak of it as the *Kiddush* or "Blessing of the bread and wine." It is an ancient tradition observed on Sabbaths and Holy Days, and often partaken of after synagogue services each Sabbath.

In truth, this practice dates back to the time of Abraham and Melchisedek! We read in Genesis 14, "And Melchisedek king of Salem brought forth *bread and wine*: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand" (Gen.14:18-20).

What Jesus did, then, was invest NEW MEANING to these ancient symbols -- this ancient ceremony of the bread and wine! The Jewish people partake of the bread and

wine often after synagogue services, not understanding its real meaning. They also often partake of it at the Sabbath dinner on Friday nights, as a family affair -- still not knowing or understanding what they are doing. They do it as "tradition," without recognizing the true symbolism of the bread and the red wine.

How often should we partake of this precious ceremony, which Christ commanded?

The apostle Paul tells us, ". . . this do ye, *AS OFT AS ye drink it*, in remembrance of me. For *AS OFTEN AS YE eat this bread and drink this cup*, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor.11:25-26).

The "Kiddush" is a precious ceremony by which we remember Christ's sufferings and death, and the price He paid for our sins. The "Kiddush" is a ceremony where we use leavened bread, what the Jewish people call "Challah," a special Sabbath bread which is "broken" at the table, and eaten. The "leavened" bread pictures the fullness of Christ, the Spirit-filled Christ, the Son of God, and His life-giving properties as the "Word" of God, and the "bread of LIFE" (Matt.4:4; John 1:1-4; John 6:48).

This "Kiddush" ceremony is to be observed "OFTEN" throughout the year. Jesus was not instituting a New "ordinance" to be performed *annually*, each year. If He was, then He would have made it perfectly clear. He would have left no doubt it was to be an annual observance. However, the apostle Paul, who ought to know, plainly said we are to observe it "*as often as*" we have the opportunity. The Greek expression translated "as often as" in I Corinthians 11 is also found in Revelation 11. There, John says the two witnesses of God during the tribulation will smite the earth with plagues "*as often as they will*" (Rev.11:6).

We should not read into the Word of God what simply is not there. Nor should we take it upon ourselves to institute a yearly observance called "The Lord's Supper" when Jesus Christ never told us to do such a thing! That would be "adding to" the Word and ordinances of God, something which God Himself condemns outright (Deut.4:1-2). It is something that may "seem good" to a man, but the "end" thereof are the ways of DEATH (Prov.14:12; 16:25).

Rather, we should observe the Kiddush "often" throughout the year! Write for our article, "Are We Neglecting the Sacred Meal?"

The Passover Lamb of Aries

Josephus the Jewish historian of the first century wrote in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, "In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called Nisan, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, *when the sun is in Aries*, (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians,) the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice . . . which was called the Passover" (bk.3, 10, 5).

Eliyahu Kitov, in *The Book of Our Heritage: The Jewish Year and Its Days of Significance*, states: “God likewise chose not to give the Torah in Nisan or in Iyar, for the *mazal* – astrological sign – of Nisan is a lamb and the sign of Iyar is an ox” (vol.3, page 794).

Bullinger in his excellent book *Witness of the Stars* points out, “Owing to the precession of the equinoxes, the sun, at the time of the Exodus, had receded into the sign of Aries, which then marked the *Spring Equinox*” (page 106). The sign of Aries is “a ram, or lamb, full of vigour and life” (p.105). The Hebrew name is *Taleh, the lamb*. The Arabic name is *Al Hamal, the sheep, gentle, merciful*. The Syriac name is *Amroo*, as in the Syriac New Testament in John 1:29 – “Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

As Bullinger shows, the sign of Aries and its star constellations all picture the Lamb of God being crucified. The ancient Akkadian name for the sign was *Bara-ziggar*, where *Bar* meant “altar” or “sacrifice” and *ziggar* meant “righteousness,” so the full name meant “sacrifice of righteousness.” The chief star in the sign of Aries, in the forehead of the lamb, is named *El Nath*, or *El Natik*, which means “wounded, slain.” The second chief star, in the left horn, is called *Al Sheratan*, meaning “the bruised, the wounded.” The star next to it is called *Mesartim*, “the bound.”

As Bullinger says, “How is it there is no conflicting voice? How is it that all the stars unite in one harmonious voice in testifying of the Lamb of God, slain, and bruised, but yet living for evermore, singing together, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing’ (Rev.5:12)?” (*Witness of the Stars*, p.106).

Signs in the Heavens Portray Christ Our Passover

In the very year of the crucifixion, the sun stood in the heavens at the very spot marked by the star *El Nath, the wounded, pierced, or slain*, and the star *Al Sheratan, the bruised or wounded!* Says Bullinger: “God so ordained ‘the times and seasons’ that during the noon-day darkness the sun was seen near those stars which had spoken for so many centuries of this bruising of the Woman’s Seed – the Lamb of God.”

Bullinger continues: “Was this design? Or was it chance? It is far easier to believe the former. It makes a smaller demand upon our faith; yes, we are compelled to believe that He who created the sun and the stars ‘for signs and for cycles,’ ordained also the times and the seasons, and it is He who tells us that ‘when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son’ (Gal.4:4), and that ‘in due time Christ died for the ungodly’ (Rom.5:6)” (page 107).

The Hebrew year begins with Nisan, the first month of Spring, at the new moon nearest to the spring equinox. The sign of Aries is the lamb or ram, which begins with the spring equinox. The signs of the Zodiac, from most ancient times, begin with the sign

of Aries, the lamb, in the Spring, and continue, twelve signs for the twelve months (in general).

Says Bullinger, "They have been known amongst all nations, and in all ages, thus proving their common origin from one source" (p.16). In later times, the twelve signs were identified with the twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph sees the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing down to himself (Jacob, Leah, and his eleven brothers, Gen.37:9). It is more than probable that each of the twelve tribes bore one of these signs in its emblem or standard, as ancient Jewish sources relate. Joseph was the ox or bull (Taurus), Judah was the lion (Leo), Dan was the Scorpion, Levi was the Scales of Justice (Libra), Reuben was the Man (Aquarius), and Gad was the Ram (Aries).

The four chief signs, which marked the four sides of the camp of Israel in the wilderness also mark the four quarters of the Zodiac. They are the same four forms which describe the cherubim around God's Throne – the faces of the lion, the ox, the eagle, and a man (see Ezekiel 1:10, 10:14-21). In this case, the Eagle was substituted for the Scorpion.

These ancient star-pictures of the Zodiac proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God – from the birth of the Messiah, in the sign of Aries, the Lamb, to the second coming of the Messiah as King of kings and Lord of lords at the end of this age, in the sign of Leo, the Lion. The entire Zodiac reveals the Plan of God through the Ages. The sign of Aries the "Lamb" pictures Yeshua's first coming as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev.13:8).

Truly, as David wrote, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1, NRSV).

Early Church Passover Practice

The history of the early church, during the first few centuries following the time of Christ and the apostles, shows that true Christians and Jewish Christians continued to observe the "Jewish" Passover -- that is, Christians and Jews alike celebrated the Passover with an instructive "Passover service" on the night of Nisan 15.

Scholar Samuele Bacchiocchi asserts: "Moreover we know from the Quartodeciman's sources (i.e. those who kept Passover on Nisan 14 according to the Jewish reckoning), which APPARENTLY REPRESENT A DIRECT CONTINUATION OF THE CUSTOM OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, that the *PASCHAL FEAST WAS INDEED OBSERVED BY CHRISTIANS*. Its celebration, however, did not take place on Sunday . . . but rather, as well stated by J. Jeremias, 'at the *SAME TIME AS THE JEWISH PASSOVER*, that is, *on the night of the 15th of Nisan*, and by the date rather than the day'" (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.81).

Notice these incredible words! The Christians observed Passover at the very same night as the Jewish people -- that is, on the night of the 15th of Nisan! This is the

record of scholarly research. This constitutes a powerful answer to those who attempt to observe Passover on the previous evening of the 14th of Nisan, that is, at the beginning of the 14th! Bacchiocchi adds to this statement, by J. Jeremias: "In a passage we shall later examine, Epiphanius (ca. A.D. 315-403) suggests that *until A.D. 135 CHRISTIANS EVERYWHERE OBSERVED PASSOVER ON THE JEWISH DATE, NAMELY, ON NISAN 15*, irrespective of the day of the week" (*ibid*).

Three pages later in his book, Samuele Bacchiocchi asserts, "The . . . Passover . . . initially celebrated Christ's passion and was observed by the FIXED DATE OF *NISAN 15* rather than on Sunday . . ." (p.84).

Do we see the striking importance of these witnesses? In other words, the early Church observed Passover at the very same time as the JEWS -- at the ending of the 14th, "at even," and the beginning of the 15th (after sunset, which determined the beginning of the new day in Biblical reckoning).

During the time of the Roman emperor Hadrian, says Epiphanius, controversy over the correct date of the Passover, first arose. He wrote,

"The controversy arose [literally, "was stirred up"] after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision [A.D. 135] and it has continued until our time." According to Epiphanius, the fifteen Judaeo-Christian bishops who had administered the Church in Jerusalem up to 135 A.D. had, up to that time, practiced the Quartodeciman Passover -- the *Jewish* Passover. They based this observance on a document known as the "Apostolic Constitutions." According to that document, the following commandment is given: ***"You shall not change the calculation of time, but you shall CELEBRATE IT AT THE SAME TIME AS YOUR BRETHREN who came out from the circumcision. WITH THEM OBSERVE THE PASSOVER."***

This is quoted in Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.161. I strongly suggest all readers who are concerned with this issue, read Bacchiocchi's book and especially this section dealing with the early church!

This document is cited by Epiphanius in his work *Adversus haereses*. It constitutes overwhelming evidence that the early Jewish Christians, directly descended from the very headquarter's Church in Jerusalem, observed the ancient PASSOVER at the historically correct time, and did not change the calculation of the time. They did not keep it a day early, a night early, or every year on a Sunday, or invent any other new calculation. *They observed it WITH and at the SAME TIME as their brethren, the JEWS!* Could anything be clearer?

But remember -- these words were written by a Catholic church leader and historian -- not as a friendly commentary, but as a diatribe, accusing them of following Jewish customs! Epiphanius was merely pointing out that the Nazarenes, descended from the primitive headquarter's church in Jerusalem, celebrated Passover at the same time as the Jews! This, to him, was an abominable heresy! He was merely commenting on the fact. As far as he was concerned, Christians should have nothing whatever to do with Passover. He wasn't arguing for observing it a day or night earlier. Not at all! He

was merely stating an observed "fact."

Note that he condemned them for observing the Passover *with the Jews!* If they had been observing it differently from the Jews, or on another day, he may not have condemned them at all!

Since Epiphanius clearly says the controversy over Passover arose "after the time of the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision" from Jerusalem in 135 A.D., he clearly implies that "prior to that time the Quartodeciman reckoning was UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWED," points out Samuel Bacchiocchi (p.162).

Bacchiocchi continues:

"The fact that the controversy over the Passover date arose not prior to but at the time when the new anti-Judaic policy of the Emperor caused a reconstitution of the Jerusalem Church with Gentile members and leaders suggests, first, that up to that time the Church, composed primarily of Judaeo-Christians, had been *LOYAL TO BASIC JEWISH RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS PASSOVER AND THE SABBATH*; and secondly that certain changes, particularly in the liturgical calendar, were occasioned by the new repressive measures taken by the Emperor against Jewish religious practices."

The early Christians **KEPT** the faith! They observed Passover along with the Jews, eating the Passover meal on Nisan 15th, as Jesus and the apostles had done!

What about YOU?

When we carefully study the Word of God, we see that the true Passover was always held on Nisan 15, after the Passover lambs were slain on the afternoon of Nisan 14. This ordinance or statute of God was ordained "forever," and to "every generation." To fail to observe it properly, at the appointed times, constitutes SIN -- transgression of the laws of God (I John 3:4).

We also learn that during the spring when Christ died for our sins as our "Passover lamb," He and His disciples held a final dinner, where they ate regular leavened bread (*artos*). That final dinner was a regular "supper" (*deipnon*) and was in no way the true Passover. Since Jesus was finally condemned by Pilate at "noon" (John 19:14), and since He was nailed to the stake at 9:00 a.m. on Nisan 14 (Mark 15:25), Thursday, then the final condemnation had to be at "noon" on Nisan 13 (Wednesday). *This means the "Lord's Supper"* and final arrest and imprisonment of Christ, must have occurred at the beginning of Nisan 13, Tuesday night! If modern churches insist on observing the "Lord's Supper" annually, *then they ought to be doing it a night earlier than they observe it!*

But for those who really wish to do that which is right, then let us "earnestly contend [fight, struggle] for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of *death*" (Prov.14:12). Isn't it time we stop following mere *men*, and begin to follow Christ?