

*On What Day Was Jesus Judged, Condemned, and
On What Day Was He Crucified?*

John 19:14 -- What Do You Mean, “About the Sixth Hour”?

A vital key and pivotal Scripture has been studiously ignored, misinterpreted, seriously misunderstood --and yet it holds the VITAL KEY to the date and time of the crucifixion and the sequence of events during the last few days of Jesus Christ upon this earth, before His crucifixion! This truth exposes a glaring error of many who attempt to keep a "Passover" at the beginning of Nisan 14 -- the very time Jesus Christ was imprisoned by the Romans, and awaiting His crucifixion the next morning.

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What difference does it make? To most people, not a whole lot. To most people, it would merely be a matter of academic interest, because they do not really claim to be "Christian," and to desire to live in obedience to God's commandments, and by "every word of God" (Matt.4:4; Luke 4:4).

To true Christians, however, it makes a great deal of difference! Why? Because a true understanding of the last few days of Christ on earth pinpoints the TRUTH about when and how Christians should observe the true Passover --and it reveals and exposes for all to see the ERROR of those who insist on changing the Passover from its original appointed time --the end of Nisan 14 and beginning of Nisan 15 --to a night 24 hours earlier!

A true understanding of this one Scripture --John 19:14 --smashes forever the very idea that Jesus Christ CHANGED the Passover ordinance, or that He observed the "Passover" at the *beginning* of Nisan 14, during what most people refer to as "the Lord's Supper" !

Is it really possible that thousands of people have been misled? Is it really possible that hundreds of ministers have been teaching error and falsehood concerning the Passover, and the "Lord's supper"? Are we willing to investigate these matters honestly, objectively? Let's carefully study into this pivotal Scripture, and see what it really says. First, let's notice the background, leading up to this key Scripture.

First, let us notice John's account of Christ's "last supper." Notice the striking comments that John makes concerning this final evening meal, or supper, that Jesus Christ held with His twelve disciples. As we read this account, ask yourself: "Was this *The Gospel of John and the Last Supper* evening meal the Passover, as some churches teach?" Now notice exactly what John declared!

"NOW BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

"And supper being ended [Greek, "supper being served" is a better translation-- see many new translations or any commentary or lexicon], the devil having now put in the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper [supper was still in progress], and laid aside his [outer] garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. ..." (John 13:1-5).

Now plainly John says this final "supper" was "*before*" the Passover! Therefore it could not have been the "Passover"! The fact that the "Passover" had not yet come is also proved by the fact that the Jews were still *waiting for Passover* even when Jesus was later taken before Caiaphas the high priest, and then taken to appear before Pontius Pilate (John 18:28). The next day, following the "Lord's Supper," was still called "the *preparation of the passover*" (John 19:14); and it was still the "preparation" when Jesus was taken down from the cross (John 19:31).

Therefore, when we understand it, there is absolutely NO PROOF that the "last supper" was actually the "Passover" itself, as so many people *assume*.

That conclusion has been the erroneous *ASSUMPTION*, of countless scholars, who believe the gospel accounts *contradict* themselves, and who simply *assumed without proof* that the "last supper" was the Passover itself. To achieve this conclusion, many scholars have claimed that this "last supper" actually occurred on the night of Nisan15, when the Jews ate the Passover. Others have claimed that it occurred on the night before Jesus' crucifixion, or the eve of Nisan 14. Both conclusions, however, are baseless, incorrect, and without Biblical basis --both are WRONG!

Jesus plainly said, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Since John plainly tells us that the Passover had not come yet, shouldn't we believe him? He makes it very plain!

The question is, then, when was this final meal Jesus held with His disciples? On what day did it occur? Was it at the beginning of Nisan 14 – after sunset? Or was it on the previous evening – the beginning of Nisan 13? How can we know for sure?

"After Supper"

Let's pick of the rest of the story. What happened next, that night of the "last supper"? Jesus handed the sop to Judas, who then left the table to go and betray Him (Matt.26:25; John 13:21-30). "He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night" (John 13:30). Toward the end of the supper, however, something else occurred. Notice! We read in Luke's account:

" And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup AFTER SUPPER, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22: 19- 20) .

The Word "Artos"

Matthew and Mark both say that this new ceremony was instituted " as they did eat" (Mark 14:22), and "as they were eating" (Matt.26:26). The word for "bread" in all three synoptic gospel accounts is the Greek word *ARTOS* which signifies

" 1. *artos* ...'bread, , (perhaps derived from *aro*, 'to fit together , , or from a root *ar--*, 'the earth'), 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 and consecrated to the Lord every Sabbath and called the 'shewbread' (loaves of presentation) ...(b) 'the loaf at the Lord's Supper,' e.g., Matt.26:26 ('Jesus took a loaf,' RV, margin); the breaking of 'bread' became the name of this institution. ..(c) 'bread of any kind,' Matt. 16:11. ..

2. *azumos* ...denotes 'unleavened bread,' i.e., without any process of fermentation; hence, metaphorically, 'of a holy, spiritual condition,' I Cor.5:7, and of 'sincerity and truth' (v.8). With the article it signifies the feast of unleavened bread" (*Vine's' Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words'*, "Bread," page 77, Greek portion).

The word *artos* generally refers to regular BREAD, the kind that we eat throughout the year --which is leavened (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."

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 relevant 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" ! In this sense, "leaven " becomes a type of the Holy Spirit of God, and the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus Himself said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto *leaven*, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" Matt;13:33). Leaven, obviously, in this usage, refers to the wonderful changes wrought by God's Holy Spirit in our lives, bringing us into the character and perfection of God.

The fact that Jesus used ARTOS at the "Last Supper" shows that this final meal He had with His disciples was not and could not have been a "Passover, at which only UNLEAVENED BREAD ("AZUMOS") could be eaten!

The fact is, the "bread and wine" ceremony which Christ used to teach His disciples the real meaning of the "bread" and "wine" is an ancient ceremony which goes all the way back to Melchizedek, who brought forth "bread and wine" before Abraham (Gen.14:18). The importance of this fact is that *every time Jewish people or any others celebrate the KIDDUSH --the "blessing of the bread and wine" --they are in effect SHOWING THE LORD'S DEATH, whether they realize it or not!*

The apostle Paul plainly shows that this custom --which some may refer to as "Communion" --is something which ought to be celebrated and observed "OFTEN" -- not once a year as an annual memorial. His exact words are: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

" After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, ,This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, AS OFT AS YE DRINK IT, in remembrance of me.

"FOR AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor.11:23-26).

This ceremony or ritual has absolutely nothing directly to do with the annual PASSOVER observance, which is an altogether different observance! This is a ceremony which is to be done "OFTEN" --the Jews partake of the bread and wine every Sabbath in many synagogues. We at Triumph Ministries do this the first Sabbath of every month, besides on Holy Days and other special occasions.

The *Jamieson, Faucett, Brown Critical Experimental Commentary* says of this expression as found in I Corinthians 11:25, 26 -- "as **oft** as --*as many times soever*; for it is an ordinance *often* to be partaken of."

After the "LAST Supper"

After Jesus concluded His final "going away" meal with His disciples, a true "love feast," as it were, a very touching, emotional dinner in which He expressed His deep love for them, over and over, He gave them the new symbolism of the "bread and wine" ceremony, by which they were to remember Him throughout the year. After this, He gave them many encouraging and comforting words.

After this final meal Jesus held with His disciples, we read, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt.26:30).

As they walked to the mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples that they would all forsake Him that night, saying, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt.26:31-32).

The last supper probably lasted from about 6:00 PM until about 8:00 PM. Jesus then spoke His final messages to the disciples (John 14-16), words of encouragement. He then prayed for them, and those who would believe on Him because of their witness (John 17), a prayer that they would be protected from evil (v.15), and be united together as one, even as He and the Father are "one" (John 17:17-23). These final words of comfort probably were made from about 8:00 or 8:30 PM and lasted till 9:00 or 9:30.

Night of the Inquisition

After praying in the garden of Gethsemane, for probably a couple of hours, from about 9:00 PM to 11:00 PM, Jesus was taken prisoner approximately 11:00 PM that Monday night. First, we are told in John's gospel, that He was taken to the house of Annas, the former high priest who was still highly influential and powerful.

"Then the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus. and bound him, and led him away to ANNAS *FIRST*; for he was father in law to Caiaphas. which was the high priest that same year" (John 18:12-13).

While standing before Annas, Peter was accused by a damsel that kept the door of being one of Jesus' disciples, and he denied it --his first denial (John 18:17-18). Jesus' appearance before the interrogation of Annas must have been from about midnight till 1:00 or 2:00 AM in the morning. Then Annas sent him to his son-in-law, Caiaphas the high priest: "Now ANNAS had sent him bound unto CAIAPHAS the high priest" (John 18:24).

The interrogation before Caiaphas at his home was more extensive, and probably lasted from about 2:00 AM to 4:00 AM. Both of these events occurred in the middle of the night. He appeared before Annas the high priest, and then Caiaphas the high priest, during the middle of the night.

Take note of the fact that none of the false witnesses agreed with each other -- the whole trial was fast becoming an obvious "set up" --and a disaster for the chief priests since no credible witness against Jesus could be found. Finally, exasperated, Caiaphas arose and demanded as high priest that Jesus tell them whether He was the Christ or not. Jesus answered in the affirmative, saying in effect that He was indeed, whereupon the high priest "rent his clothes."

This "kangaroo court" probably took another couple of hours, that very night. This of course occurred that very same night, before Jesus was brought to trial, which would be the next morning. Notice!

Early in the Morning

Early the next morning, Jesus was summarily brought before the ENTIRE Sanhedrin, for final summary judgment. Matthew tells us:

"WHEN THE MORNING WAS COME, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against JESUS to put him to death: and when they had bound Jesus, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matthew 27:1-2).

The gospel of Mark adds:

" And straightway [IMMEDIATELY] in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the WHOLE COUNCIL, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate" (Mark 15:1).

This was the next morning --a new day. Morning is generally considered from about 6:00 AM and lasts until noon. This was obviously early morning when the *full Sanhedrin* considered the case against Jesus and condemned him to death. This may have taken from 6:00 AM until 7:00 AM.

Judging by the combined gospel accounts, it is obvious that the meeting of the Sanhedrin that condemned Christ was held early in the morning, "the next day," which would be no earlier than about 6:00 AM in the morning, at daybreak or dawn!

The Scriptures clearly state that it was already the next MORNING when the Sanhedrin gave their final decision. They then took Jesus before Pilate.

However, many *assume* that Jesus must have been brought before Pilate during the night! However, that is not what the Scriptures state. Morning is morning --not night. Remember, Pilate was a Roman governor who had no love for Jews but was like most Romans an anti-Semite at heart. He was an imperious, proud, arrogant Roman. How likely would you think it would have been that he would have gotten up in the middle of the night just to accommodate a bunch of Jewish priests and religious

leaders? Pilate was a Roman governor. For him to hold court at night time itself *would have been CONTRARY TO ROMAN LAW!*

However that may be, the Scriptures clearly state that first the Sanhedrin met together, in full assembly, "the next morning," which would have been after sunrise --no earlier. After they formally condemned Christ, they brought Him before Pontius Pilate for final sentencing.

Nevertheless, all these events obviously took considerable TIME! The Scriptures plainly state that it was already morning when Jesus was brought before Pilate. During the court appearance, Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean and belonged to king Herod's jurisdiction. Therefore, rather than appease the Jews clamoring for Christ's blood, Pilate sent Him over to Herod for judgment (Luke 23:1-7). This would have taken considerable more time.

From Pilate's audience, Jesus is remanded to the jurisdiction of Herod, the king. This was after Pilate had heard his case, and interviewed Him. If Pilate saw Jesus and heard the complaints of the chief priests and elders of the people against Him about 8:00 AM, this would have probably taken about an hour, before Pilate discovered Jesus was a Galilean, and sent Him over to Herod.

Luke's account goes on:

" And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves" (Luke 23:8-12).

Herod probably began his "interrogation" and "questioning," and his abuse and mistreatment of Jesus the Christ, about 9:00 or 9:30 AM and finished by about 10:00 or 10:30 AM, when he and his soldiers had had enough "sport" with Him, and then sent Him back to Pilate.

Jesus appeared before Pilate, then, a second and final time. This would have probably been roughly about 11:00 AM to 12 noon !

Luke goes on to describe what happened next in the sequence of events. Picking up the story:

" And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found *no fault in this man* as touching those things whereof ye accuse him. I will therefore chastise

him and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder. was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

" And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23: 13-25; see also Matt.27: 15-26).

Pilate was really in a spot. Yet, being weak-willed and shallow in character, he supinely caved in before the Jewish mob, the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and all the enemies of Jesus who were jealous and envious of Him.

Now, when did this final appearance before Pilate occur? When was it that Jesus was finally condemned to death, and taken by the Roman soldiers to be whipped, scourged, and tortured, and later to be crucified?

John 19 --The KEY to Understanding

We read in the gospel of John the following record of events:

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber" (John 18:37-40).

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. ,

"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate said, Behold the man!

"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him" (John 19:1-6).

Pilate sought to release Jesus, but his attempts were to no avail. The Jews were vehement, and insisted that Jesus had to be crucified, and put to death. Pilate knew that Jesus was an innocent man. John goes on:

" And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a King speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha" {John 19: 12-13}.

Now exactly *when* did these events occur? Notice carefully!

“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 talking and 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! This was the explanation in the Worldwide Church of God for many decades. I was taught this in "Freshman Bible" at Ambassador College in 1959-60. It was simply taken for granted. Nobody stopped to question it.

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! As the old expression goes, "Give me a break!"

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? Because 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! IMPOSSIBLE!*

But notice even further. 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. And I mean "ALWAYS"!

Let us go through the book of John, in case after case, chronologically, and see how he reckons "time."

First, notice that when John the Baptist told his disciples that Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29,35), they went to Christ and introduced themselves, asking where He dwelt.

" And he saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was *about the tenth hour*" (John I :38-39).

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!

In chapter 4, we read the story where Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well in Sychar, between Jerusalem and Galilee, where He was journeying. Notice the account!

"He [Jesus] left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was *ABOUT THE SIXTH HOUR*. *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. . .*" (John 4:3-7).

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 traveller to seek rest and refreshment" (Bruce, The Gospel of John, p.101-102).

Later on, in this same chapter, Jesus healed the son of a nobleman, without even visiting the child (John 4:49-50). The nobleman then went home, and found his son alive, just as Jesus said he would be (verse 51). The account continues:

"Then inquired they of them the hour when he began to mend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the *seventh hour* the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house" (John 4:52-53).

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!*

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."

Furthermore, 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 NISAN 13, 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. Jesus gave a parable about a man who hired others to work in his vineyard. 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.

How Much Do YOU Value the TRUTH?

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. That evening of Nisan 13, and the beginning of Nisan 14, He was in the Roman dungeon, having been beaten, whipped, and scourged massively 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? No wonder Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah: "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isaiah 52: 14-15). 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).

As Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the *truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). This *is* the truth. What are you going to DO with it?

On What Day Was Jesus Condemned to Death?

Many believe that Jesus was tried, judged, condemned and put to death --all on the same day --that is on the day of the crucifixion Yet the Gospel of Mark says He was nailed to the stake at 9:00 AM in the morning (Mark 15:25). And the Gospel of John says He was finally judged by Pilate and condemned at about "the sixth hour" -- that is, twelve o'clock NOON (John 19:14)! Could Jesus really have been condemned by the Sanhedrin and Pilate, and put to death all on the SAME DAY --on Nisan 14, the eve of the Passover?

William F Dankenbring

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 with the truth 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.

The common idea is that Jesus was arrested at night; appeared before Annas the former High Priest, then Caiaphas the current High Priest (John 18:13, 24), then before the whole Sanhedrin at daybreak (John 18:28; Matt.27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66), and then they led Him to Pilate (Luke 23:1-2; Mark 15:1-2; Matt.27:2), who sent Him to king Herod (Luke 23:6-12), who examined Him and then returned Him to Pilate (Luke 23:13-16). All this required TIME. It was not done in a mere "instant."

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 guilty of no crime whatsoever!*