

# SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE EASTER OR THE PASSOVER?

Easter is the greatest of all "Christian" observances, closely followed by Christmas. It supposedly celebrates the resurrection of Christ. WHY, then, did Paul command the Gentile Christians to "show the Lord's DEATH" till He come? Jesus Christ Himself celebrated His famous "Last Supper," with His disciples, proclaiming that a bit of unleavened bread represented His body; that a sip of wine represented His shed blood. This was in commemoration of His DEATH for the sins of all mankind. Why is there no command anywhere in the Bible to celebrate His resurrection? Why did not the apostles celebrate it? Is the "Passover" only "Jewish," and therefore not Christian? Should Christians observe Easter? Does the Bible command Easter observance? You will be astonished at the answers! Here, from the pages of your own Bible is the PLAIN TRUTH about EASTER and the Passover!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

**Y**ou were born into a "ready-made" world. You had no voice in how it is structured; its customs, traditions, religions, or politics. It took you about two years to learn the language of your parents; about six years to learn your own indigenous alphabet; about seven or eight years to learn to read simple sentences, and to begin to write.

However, from your earliest years, long before you learned to read or write; long before you learned what "research" or "study" was, you heard about the tooth fairy, Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and watched, no doubt, hundreds of cartoons and kiddy shows on television. From your earliest years on this earth, your parents were inculcating into your mind the traditions, customs, fables, superstitions and assumptions of their own upbringing.

The point is, you first learned of "Easter," or other religious customs through your parents or guardians. You did not research history, carefully weigh the facts, and make a reasoned decision to observe "Easter."

Millions of adults in the western world of professing Christianity have memories of those sleepy mornings when, all excited to be dragged from bed at perhaps 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., they were dressed in frilly little frocks or a new little boy's suit, complete with clip-on bow tie; white patent-leather shoes, greens and yellows—the colors of spring—and trundled off in the family car to an open air coliseum, or perhaps to a hilltop, to join with hundreds or thousands of others in an "Easter Sunrise Service."

You didn't know what "Easter" was. Only that it sounded a little like a point on the compass. Of course, the sun rose in the East. Maybe that was it? Or was it merely the opposite of "Wester"? Most likely, if you are like millions of others, you never became curious enough to go to a major encyclopedia and look up the term. We tend to take our environment for granted.

Have you ever looked into the history and origins of Easter?

Naturally, like Christmas, it comes to all of Protestantism from the Roman Catholic Church. However, the universal church got it from much, much more ancient sources.

Here is what the vaunted *Catholic Encyclopedia* has to say about Easter: "The English term, according to the Ven. Bede (*De temporum ratione*, I, v) relates to Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of the rising light of day and spring...that the Apostolic fathers [the apostles of Christ] do not mention it and that we first hear of it

principally through the controversy of the Quartodecimans are purely accidental" (The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. V, p. 224).

A "Teutonic goddess of the rising light of day and spring"? Well, yes, but much, much more than merely a pagan goddess of the rising light of day and spring. She was, in the demented minds of superstitious pagans, a goddess of sex and fertility; of fecundity and procreativity. Her symbols were, most importantly, the egg, and, secondarily, the rabbit. Of course, rabbits don't lay eggs, but many a child does not learn this until a later age.

Bunnies are cuddly to little children. So are tiny chickens, and gaily-colored eggs. Concerning Easter eggs, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* somewhat reluctantly admits, "The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring [and therefore directly related to SUN-worship], gravitated to Easter. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring...the Easter rabbit lays the eggs, for which reason they are hidden in a nest or in the garden. The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility...In France, *handball playing* was one of the Easter amusements, found also in Germany...The ball may represent the sun, which is believed to take three leaps in rising on Easter morning" (ibid. p. 227).

Dozens of "quaint" customs derived from ancient superstitions and myths. Most revolved around cupidity, and had suggestive fertility rites obvious in their execution. The same source admits, "On Easter Monday the women had a right to strike their husbands. On Tuesday the men struck their wives, as in December the servants scolded their masters...In the northern parts of England the men parade the streets on Easter Sunday and claim the privilege of lifting every woman three times from the ground, receiving in payment a kiss or a silver sixpence. In Neumark (Germany) on Easter day the men servants whip the maidservants with switches; on Monday the maids whip the men. They secure their release with Easter eggs. These customs are probably of pre-Christian origin." (Ibid. p. 227).

These, and many other rituals, were pagan fertility rites, derived from worship of the sun. For example, the same source says, "The Easter Fire is lit on the top of mountains (Easter Mountain, Osterberg) and must be kindled from new fire, drawn from wood by friction; this is a custom of pagan origin in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter...the church adopted the observance into the Easter ceremonies, referring it to the fiery column in the desert and to the resurrection of Christ" (Ibid. p. 227, emphasis mine).

Note that admission carefully, for it lies at the very heart of the matter.

Now, notice the origin of the name "Easter." Hislop says, "It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar" (*The Two Babylons*, Hislop, p. 103).

The "h" was silent, just as in the Assyrian "Astarte," where the last two letters were also silent, giving the identical pronunciation used today, "Easter."

Of course, as millions know and also observe, "Easter" is preceded by forty days of "Lent." But where did "Lent" come from?" Is it the past tense of "to lend"? Is it something found in one's navel? It certainly is not found in the Bible!

Let Hislop answer: "The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent of forty days was held in the spring by the pagan Mexicans, for thus we read in Humboldt [*Mexican Researches*, v. i. P. 404] where he gives account of Mexican observances: 'Three days after the vernal

equinox...began a solemn fast of *forty days* in honor of the sun.' Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt, as may be seen on consulting Wilkinson's *Egyptians*. This Egyptian Lent of forty days, we are informed by Landseer, in his *Sabean Researches*, was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god" (ibid. p. 105).

There is no part of "Easter" which is not rooted in rank paganism. "But we don't do it with those pagan meanings in mind," one might protest. Naturally! That is the whole point! It is the disguise, the deception, the counterfeit which Satan uses to delude and deceive, not a direct admission of the truth.

As Hislop says, "To conciliate the pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated, and, by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity \_now far sunk in idolatry \_ in this as in so many other things, to shake hands" (Ibid. p. 105).

What does God Almighty say about His people "adapting" pagan rituals and ceremonies into their worship toward the true God? "When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, *How did these nations serve their gods?* even so will *I do likewise*.

"Thou shalt *not do so* unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*" (Deuteronomy 12:29-32).

When Israel was gradually expanding from a family into a nation while in slavery in Egypt, the people were surrounded by most vile and degrading paganism. The sun, moon and stars were worshipped, as was the Nile River, and dozens of assorted forms of life from crocodiles to scarabs. As a display of God's wrath, God struck at the "gods" of Egypt with plagues. Not only was this intended to break the back of the world's greatest power at that time, thus forcing the Pharaoh to release his slaves, but it was also to demonstrate God's great superiority over the pagan gods of Egypt.

When Israel was brought out of Egypt, God knew they would encounter many heathen, pagan, sun-worshipping nations such as the Hivites, Amalakites, Jebusites, Edomites, Philistines, Perizzites, and many others. All of them practiced the abominable rites of fertility; sun worship! Human sacrifice was not uncommon, as among the Aztecs in ancient Mexico.

Because they were "amazed" at the progression of the seasons; because they believed their antics and sacrifices caused the "sun god" to begin his journey once more into the temperate zones, thus "conquering" winter and causing the life-sustaining crops to grow once again, they observed the movements of the moon and planets; observed "times" and seasons.

But God warned them, "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or *an observer of times*, or an enchanter, or a witch,

"Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer [one who supposedly foretells the future by communicating with the dead].

"For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

"Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

"For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do" (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

Easter, or "Ishtar," is always observed in the spring, and is replete with fertility symbols! It is nothing less than a carry-over from pagan Babylonian, Greek and Roman sun worship! Its symbols are NOT sanctioned by Jesus Christ or God the Father, but, instead, are CONDEMNED in the Bible!

### *Where Did We Get "Hot Cross Buns"?*

Parades down Fifth Avenue; an Easter-egg hunt on the White House lawn; sunrise services; the colors of springtime, and the pleasant aroma of "hot cross buns" drifting into the street from restaurants and bakeries—a nostalgic time of the memories of springtime, all buried in the remote past; with no knowledge of the utterly pagan origins. Such is the "Easter" of today.

"In Your Easter Bonnet, with all the frills upon it," can be heard as children hide "Easter Eggs" around the lawn, busily eating little chocolate bunnies.

It all seems so "innocent," somehow; so "family" oriented.

Is there a pagan origin of something so innocent-appearing as a "hot cross bun?"

Hislop says, "The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean [Babylonian] rites just as they do now. The `buns' known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens—that is, 1500 years before the Christian era. `One species of sacred bread,' says Bryant, `which used to be offered to the gods, was of great antiquity, and called Boun." (Hislops *The Two Babylons* p. 108).

The origin of the English word is Nordic, and was *Bous*. It stood for "Horus" and "Taurus," or the Bull, and ultimately derived from Nimrod. Even today, millions of farmers call their cows, "boss," or "bossy," completely unaware of the origin of the custom. The *bous* or the *boun* was baked as quite a *family* affair. Notice what Jeremiah, God's prophet, said about it: "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?"

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make *cakes to the queen of heaven*, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

"Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?"

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched" (Jeremiah 7:17-20).

God thunders at rebellious mankind, "*Learn not the way of the heathen!*" (Jeremiah 10:2). The "hot cross buns" are Satan's substitute for the *unleavened bread* to be eaten during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The "cross" or the "X" is an ancient symbol for the "solar wheel" and is a symbol of the sun, and the non-existent "queen of heaven," or Semiramus, the mother-wife of Nimrod. Together, the two of them ushered in the ancient "Babylonish MYSTERY" religion; made the deity into a "MYSTERY" to be worshipped by whimsical pagan rites.

Now, notice the biblical reference to sunrise services: "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz" [Nimrod; the sun god].

"Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

"And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their *backs toward the temple of the LORD*, and their faces toward the east; and they *worshipped the sun toward the east*." The sun is in the east at its RISING! This is nothing less than a "SUNRISE" service—sun worship at the dawning of the sun!

"Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger... Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" (Ezekiel 8:13-18).

This is the only place in the Bible where men are described as turning their backs on God's temple, facing the SUN at its rising, and worshipping the sun!

Any pagan Babylonian who might be brought back to life today would instantly recognize the significance of an "Easter sunrise service."

### ***How The Apostate Church Forced Christians To Abandon The Lord's Supper On The Fourteenth Of Abib***

The Apostles continued to observe the symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood on the fourteenth of Abib, or Nisan, as the first Hebrew month came to be called following the Babylonian Captivity. The word "Easter" appears nowhere in the Bible in any of its earliest manuscripts. However, hypocritical, lying copyists deliberately changed the Greek word for "Passover," which is *Pasch*, from *Pesach* in the Hebrew. The Spanish word, taken from Latin, is *Pascua*.

Notice an example of deliberate tampering with the Holy Word of God found in Acts 12:4. I will include the verses around it for the setting: " Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

"And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

" And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

"And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after *Easter* to bring him forth to the people" (Acts 12:1-4). This deliberate insertion into the King James Translation of the Bible is utterly fraudulent, and those who collaborated in its insertion knew it was. The *Diaglott*, which is a transliteration directly from the original Greek, says, "...and having seized him,

he put him in prison, delivering him to four quarters of soldiers to guard him, intending after the PASSOVER to lead him out to the people."

Here is the *New International* version of the same verse: "After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover."

The *New Revised Standard* has it: "When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover."

Here is each word from the fourth verse in Greek, with the accompanying number from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Notice carefully the word *Pascha* for "Passover": ". . . *piazo*:G4084 . . . *tithemi*:G5087 . . . *phulake*:G5438 . . . *paradidomi*:G3860 . . . *tessares*:G5064 . . . *tetradion*:G5069 . . . *stratiotes*:G4757 . . . *phulasso*:G5442 . . . *bouleuo*:G1011 . . . *meta*:G3326 . . . *pascha*:G3957 . . . *anago*:G321 . . . *laos*:G2992."

Now, notice the definition of the word from Strongs G3957: "3957. *pascha*, pas'-khah; of Chald. or. [comp. H6453]; *the Passover*."

Now, notice the marginal notes from Dr. Bullinger's *Companion Bible*: "Gr. *To Pascha*, the Passover. Easter is a heathen term, derived from the Saxon goddess *Eastre*, the same as *Astarte*, the Syrian Venus, called *Ashtoreth* in the O.T."

God's word pronounces a CURSE on anyone who would do violence to it; who would assay to either insert words into it, or take words from it (Revelation 22:19). Those who conspired to deliberately insert a purely PAGAN word into the inspired text shall bear their own guilt.

Such a deliberate insertion serves to highlight the lengths to which the apostate church went to ENFORCE "Easter" upon professing Christians. However, the enforcement took many centuries! From the earliest writings of the "ante-Nicene Fathers" as they are blasphemously called (Christ commanded, "Call no man your father on Earth" [Matthew 23:9], obviously referring to a *spiritual title*, rather than referring to one's own flesh and blood father), it is obvious that the church Jesus Christ founded continued to observe the Lord's Supper on the fourteenth of Nisan.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: "The dioceses of all Asia, as from an older tradition [note that carefully!], held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should always be observed as the feast of the life-giving *pasch*, contending that the fast ought to end on that day, whatever day of the week it might happen to be" (ibid. Volume V, p. 228).

But there was never any "fast" prescribed by Christ. The ONLY commanded fast in the Bible is that of the "Day of Atonement" (Leviticus 23:27; Acts 27:9). The writer of the article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* obfuscates the important point; i.e., that the early Christians clung to the FOURTEENTH OF NISAN for the Lord's Supper (commonly called "The Passover") by writing about a "fast" which may or may not have been at issue. Any such fast was mere human tradition, and not a biblical command. Of course, the Catholic writers are attempting to build a case for "Lent," which is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible.

Now, notice this blatant admission: "Further, Irenaeus states that St. Polycarp, who, like the other Asiatics [meaning all those in Asia Minor and Palestine], kept Easter [a deliberate insertion! Polycarp had never heard the term, except as *Astarte*, and would have studiously avoided it! The Catholic writer deliberately refers to *Pascha* the Passover, as "Easter"] ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, whatever day of the week that might be, following therein the tradition which he claimed to have derived from St. John the Apostle, came to Rome c. 150 about this very question, but COULD NOT BE PERSUADED BY POPE ANICETUS TO RELINQUISH HIS QUARTODECIMAN [fourteenth] OBSERVANCE" (ibid. p. 228 emphasis mine).

Later, under the article "Easter," the same writer, reporting on the infamous "Council of Nicaea," which took place in 325 AD, said, "...we may safely infer from scattered notices that the council ruled: (1) that Easter must be celebrated by all throughout the world on the same Sunday; (2) that this Sunday must follow the fourteenth day of the paschal moon; (3) that that moon was to be accounted the paschal moon whose fourteenth day followed the spring equinox...this ruling of the Council of Nicaea did not remove all difficulties nor at once win universal acceptance amongst the Syrians...the Roman missionaries coming to England in the time of St. Gregory the Great found the British Christians, the representatives of that Christianity which had been introduced into Britain during the period of the Roman occupation [hence, during the days of the apostle Paul and other apostles!], still adhering to an ancient system of Easter-computation which Rome itself had put aside" (ibid. p. 229).

Again, the term "Easter" is deliberately injected into the article. However, the apostles never heard of the word, except in its ancient application to *Ashtoreth*, or *Astarte*, the "Venus" of pagans, and would have been outraged to have heard anyone attach such a despicable name to the somber and holy observance of the Lord's Supper!

The Catholic writer then admits to many points of "obscurity" in the historical records of the controversy which finally led to the Council of Nicaea attempting to FORCE Christians to discontinue observing the Passover on the fourteenth, as Christ had commanded. He says, "There is, for example, the perplexing doubt whether the crucifixion [sic] of Christ took place on the fourteenth or fifteenth of Nisan. The Synoptists seem to favour the latter, St. John the former date."

But the Synoptists (Matthew, Mark and Luke) did not "favor" the fifteenth at all, and it is because of John's important statement that the Sabbath which fell on the day following the death of Christ was "an HIGH day," i.e., the first Day of Unleavened Bread, that it had to be admitted that the death of Christ took place on the fourteenth!

So it was that the stage was set for the monstrous persecutions which followed. For literally centuries, God's people continued to observe the Lord's Supper on the beginning of the fourteenth of Nisan, just as Christ had set the example. They were labeled "fourteenters," (Quartodecimans) as a derisive term, and were mercilessly hunted down and slaughtered.

*Halley's Bible Handbook* says, under the article "Forerunners of the Reformation," "Albigenses or Carthari in southern France, northern Spain and northern Italy, preached against the immoralities of the priesthood, pilgrimages, worship of saints and images, completely rejected the clergy and its claims; criticized church conditions; opposed the claims of the Church of Rome; made great use of the Scriptures; lived self denying lives and had great zeal for moral purity. By 1167 they embraced possibly a majority of the population of South France; by 1200 very numerous in Northern Italy. In 1208 a crusade was ordered by Pope Innocent III; a bloody war of extermination followed, scarcely paralleled in history; town after town was put to the sword and the inhabitants murdered without distinction of age or sex; in 1229 the Inquisition was established and within a hundred years the Albigenses were utterly rooted out." The histories show that the "Carthari" (meaning "Puritans" or "pure ones") were also influenced by the Bogomils in Bulgaria.

History shows that many thousands of believing Christians throughout Europe and the British Isles clung to the fourteenth of Nisan as the true date for the observance of the Lord's Supper; that it required many hundreds of years for this practice to be stamped out. Even today, remnants of the "Waldenses" exist in Italy, and are the largest Protestant group in that country. Their name is variously determined as coming from Peter Waldo, or their habit of dwelling in the valleys of remote alpine regions in northern Italy, Switzerland, and France.

*Halley's Bible Handbook* says, "Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, South France (1176), gave his property to the poor and went about preaching; opposed clerical usurpation and profligacy; denied the exclusive right of the clergy to teach the Gospel, rejected masses, prayers for the dead and purgatory; taught the Bible as the sole rule of belief and life; their preaching kindled a great desire among the people to read the Bible. They were gradually repressed by the Inquisition except in the Alpine Valleys southwest of Turin where they still are

found, the only medieval sect still surviving, a story of heroic endurance of persecutions. Now the leading Protestant body in Italy" (P. 785). The Bogomils, Albigensians, Petrobrusians, Arnoldists, Vaudois, and a large number of other sects, mostly named by their enemies, and mostly termed "heretics," included many who were "Sabbatarians," and who kept God's annual Sabbaths as well.

This was why the "Quartodeciman controversy" raged for so many centuries, as many continued to observe the symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood on the fourteenth of Nisan, as Christ Himself had commanded.

By no stretch of the imagination did the apostles of Christ ever celebrate "Easter" (*Ishtar*), or urge it upon others!

***Why Do Christian Ministers Refuse to Teach  
the Rich Meaning of God's Seven Annual Holy Days?***

Today, millions of professing Christians receive "communion" each morning, or each week. On the other hand, thousands of sincere believers in Jesus Christ observe the "Lord's Supper" each year, which many commonly call "the Passover." Should Christians observe "communion" every Sunday morning, or should they heed Christ's instruction, "This DO as I have done unto you," when He had washed the disciple's feet, then offered them a piece of broken unleavened bread and a sip of wine?

WHY do millions ignore the rich meaning of the seven annual holy days of God, called the "feast" days? Each one is CHRIST centered; contains many types, shadows, and analogies to Jesus Christ. Christ is pictured as the lamb which was slain for the Passover; is pictured as the "bread which came down from heaven" in the eating of unleavened bread; is pictured as the FIRST of the "firstfruits" in the Feast of Firstfruits, or "Feast of Sabbaths," which is now called "Pentecost." It was Christ who sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and it was Christ who was depicted by the "wave sheaf offering" during the weekly Sabbath of the Days of Unleavened Bread, exactly 50 days before Pentecost. "Pentecost" means "fiftieth," and has become attached to the "Feast of Sabbaths," or weeks, merely because the Israelites were told to count seven weeks, so as to arrive at the "morrow after the seventh Sabbath" and so determine the day on which the "Feast of Sabbaths" (Pentecost) fell.

Christ is the central figure of the "Feast of Trumpets," which heralds His prophesied return to this earth. He is the atoning sacrifice pictured on the Day of Atonement. Christ "tabernacled" in human flesh for 33 and one-half years, and is a prominent type in the "Feast of Tabernacles." He is the great JUDGE who will reign during the "Last Great Day," which pictures the judgment day; the second resurrection, following the millennial reign of Christ over the earth for 1,000 years.

Since Jesus Christ of the NEW Testament is the central figure in ALL the annual Sabbaths given to Israel, WHY do so many thousands of "mainstream" professing Christian ministers UTTERLY IGNORE God's holy days?

WHY HAVEN'T YOU HEARD the rich, CHRIST-centered types associated with the annual holy days?

Think about it. A pastor of a Sunday-observing church might tell his congregation, "I am going to deliver a seven part sermon for the next seven weeks, featuring all the types and shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ which are found in the annual holy days given to Israel." If he did so, such a pastor would be wise to add, "We will leave aside, for the next seven weeks, whether observing such annual holy days is incumbent upon Christians today. Instead, we will investigate each Feast day on its own merits; learning how each one pictured the plan of God; the coming of the Savior; His death, burial, and resurrection, and His promised return to this earth."

I dare say any such pastor would find his audience growing week by week; would find his parishioners hanging on every word! The trouble is, he would also very quickly find his parishioners beginning to ask him WHY THEY DO NOT KEEP those holy days!

You have not heard such sermons in your religious upbringing. WHY?

There is no Old Testament holy day more replete with types of Christ; of God the Father; of His plan for human kind than the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread!

Sadly, to many a professing Christian minister, it would be RANK HERESY to return to the teaching of Christ himself! Church TRADITION is more important to most!

Now, notice the rich, Christ-centered shadows and types contained in that first Passover so long ago in Egypt.

### *The First Passover In History -- Utterly Unique!*

The first Passover was an utterly unique occasion in all history. It was a *once only* occurrence; a time of great and punishing miracles from God against Egypt; a time of suffering and death; a time of great escape for God's people.

For centuries, Israel had been a nation of slaves. Knowledge of annual seasons, the weekly cycle, the seventh day Sabbath had become lost in an avalanche of pagan superstition and idolatry. The Israelites in Egypt were completely ignorant of God's sacred calendar. It was not until the events preceding the first Passover that God revealed to Moses and Aaron which month was the first month of the Sacred Calendar. It was then that God began to reveal His annual holy days and their deep significance, as well as the weekly Sabbath, to Israel.

Notice, "And the Eternal spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." God called the name of the first month "the month of green ears." Its name was Abib (Exodus 13:4) and was later called Nisan (Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7).

This marked the beginning of the sacred year of the Hebrew calendar, commencing with the month of the spring barley harvest, hence, the "month of green ears."

God's time had come to save His people from slavery; to establish the Israelites as His own chosen nation; to place His name among them. He caused them to endure a time of trial and testing for forty years in the wilderness of Sinai. The older generation FAILED that forty years of testing and trial. Their constant carping, griping, complaining (called "murmuring" in the Bible) resulted in their deaths in the land. Even Moses died in the wilderness, though he was allowed to see the promised land from a distance. Eventually, God caused the progeny of the Israelites to inherit the promised land of Palestine.

This has great spiritual significance, not only for the Days of Unleavened Bread and that original Passover, but for the entire plan of God, with special significance at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Just as a "new creature in Christ" is begotten in each person at the time of baptism and the laying on of hands (2 Corinthians 5:17), so a "new creature" was begotten in the womb of each Israelitish mother WHILE SHE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS. The land of Egypt was a type of this evil world, in which we live, often as "slaves" to our own carnal natures; to our ethnic, cultural, historical, linguistic, educational, political and social backgrounds. We are a PART of our "ready-made" society, having been brought up in it.

The older generation which perished in the wilderness is a type of our "old man" (Ephesians 4:22), which is to perish in the baptismal pool, which typifies the death and burial of the old self. The younger generation, which never knew Egypt, but which were born in the wilderness, pictures the "new creature in Christ" begotten within each of us as we come up out of the waters of baptism, and have hands laid on us for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit.

God BEGETS us with His Spirit, making us HIS CHILDREN. At that moment, a "new creature in Christ" is begun! That new spiritual creature will inherit eternity, while the old physical body will perish, or be instantaneously changed at the time of Christ's return (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

There are many rich spiritual types connected with the Passover in Egypt. Notice more of them:

The Israelites were instructed to single out an unblemished lamb or kid (Exodus 12:3-5) from their flocks, keeping it "...until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening" (Exodus 12:6). Is anything more helpless than a tiny newborn lamb? When I was a boy, a neighborhood friend had a lamb he fed with a baby bottle, holding it in his arms. The innocent, perfectly shaped, unblemished lamb was a type of Jesus Christ. At the baptism of Jesus, John said "Behold, the Lamb of God." Christ is called the "Lamb" repeatedly in the book of Revelation (see Revelation 14:1, 4, 10; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9).

God instructed them, "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

"Eat not of it raw, nor sodden [boiled] at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

"And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire" (Exodus 12:6-10).

Obviously, since they were to eat the flesh "in that night" (that is, the night following the slaying of the lamb "in the evening") the lamb had to be killed a sufficient period of time prior to its actual eating to allow for its preparation according to God's explicit instructions.

God told Moses and Aaron to instruct the Israelites that this unusual meal was to be eaten as if in great haste, with trepidation, as if poised for immediate flight!

It was the usual practice to allow an animal to hang in a cool place after being slaughtered; the aging and then the butchering of the meat perhaps coming several days or even a week or more later depending upon the climate.

Thus, the eating of this lamb (or kid of the goats) within only hours of its slaughter, was obviously a very hasty meal; something unusual, symbolizing a meal eaten during a time of emergency.

The Israelites were told "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hands; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Eternal's Passover.

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Eternal.

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will PASS OVER you, and the plagues shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:11-13).

The girding of the loins was accomplished by tucking the skirt-like apparel worn during that day into a leathern girdle, or thick belt. It was always done just prior to running, or walking rapidly. It was an unusual command to eat the meal with their shoes on their feet, for shoes were not generally worn indoors. Such a custom prevails to this day in Middle Eastern and Oriental countries. Footwear was worn out of doors, but, upon entering a

dwelling, was left outside, or in a foyer. As is evidenced in the later custom of foot washing (in connection with the celebration of Jesus Christ of His last supper) servants would provide water and wash the feet of important guests, who would then slip their feet into slippers or sandals, or perhaps go barefoot on the skins or carpet on the floor of the domicile.

A staff, cane, or walking stick would normally be left near the door, or perhaps in the foyer. However, they were explicitly commanded to eat this meal one-handed, with their walking staffs in their hands, as a symbol of great haste!

Consider all the elements of this meal: It was to be eaten very soon after the slaughter of the animal (extremely unusual); their canes or walking sticks in their hands (very unusual); they were not to take time to visit, enjoy a drawn-out meal like a family occasion, but were to eat the food quickly, all which showed an extremely hastily-eaten meal done as if in trepidation, prior to immediate flight!

As will be seen later, the chronological events leading up to and concluding in the famous "last supper" of the Lord Jesus Christ are positively established. There is no question whatever concerning the time of the Lord's Supper; its relationship to the Passover, and the time when the paschal lambs were slaughtered.

However, because some have assumed the Israelites did not exit Egypt on the same night of the eating of the paschal meal; after the passing over of the death angel; because it is further assumed that the Israelites spent the entirety of the following day spoiling the Egyptians, and that the Exodus commenced the following night, many have become confused about when the Exodus occurred, and when the paschal meal took place.

For example, those who knew they were partaking of the *New Testament* symbols of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ (unleavened bread and wine) coincident with the ancient Passover supper began to believe there were *eight* days of unleavened bread, not seven! Their confusion stems from their assumption that the New Testament observance of Christ, His famous last supper, coincided exactly with the ancient Egyptian paschal meal! But, as you shall see clearly, it did not!

Following this assumption, many have partaken of the symbols of unleavened bread and wine on the Passover (Lord's supper), and then wondered about the custom of eating leavened foods during the following daylight portion of the fourteenth of Nisan, prior to insuring all leavening is out of their homes by sunset prior to the fifteenth. Having once eaten unleavened bread in connection with the ceremonies commemorating Christ's death, they feel strange eating anything leavened on the following daylight part of the fourteenth of Nisan - prior to the actual beginning of the SEVEN days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

But God said "seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread!" He said "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, UNTIL the one and twentieth day of the month at even!" (Exodus 12:18). Obviously, if you count inclusively (commencing with the fourteenth day—meaning at its beginning) you are dealing with eight days!

But if you are commencing the eating of unleavened bread "at even" on the fourteenth, meaning just before the going down of the sun; meaning that your meal, while it may have commenced just barely before sunset, continues on into the night time hours, or the BEGINNING of the fifteenth, then there is no problem whatever! You have SEVEN full days and perhaps a couple of hours—not eight days.

The problem for many sincere persons was in their misunderstanding of the truly *New Testament* character of Christ's famous last supper!

That there are only *seven days of unleavened bread* is perfectly clear. (Exodus 12:15, 19).

That the ancient Israelites were to eat the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread "IN THAT NIGHT" (Exodus 12:8), meaning on the *beginning of the fifteenth* is also clear! To understand the sequence of events on the very first Passover, one has but to read the scriptures carefully, comparing all relevant scriptures, and avoid erroneous assumptions. Now, from the pages of your Bible, let's see what happened during that first Passover; let's come to understand WHEN the exodus occurred!

### ***"Between The Two Evenings"***

God instructed the Israelites, "And ye shall keep it [the paschal lamb] up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening... and they shall eat the flesh in that night..." (Exodus 6-8).

Wide differences of opinion have obtained resulting from the use of the Hebrew expression "in the evening" which, technically, means "between the two evenings." Some, including Lightfoot, took the expression to mean after the going down of the sun, but prior to full dark. If they were in error, they had thus placed the slaying of the paschal lamb and the eating of the Passover meal at the close of the thirteenth, and at the beginning of the fourteenth! Remember, God begins the days with sunset. Thus, if they were to kill the paschal lamb on the fourteenth "between the two evenings," and IF "between the two evenings" meant after sunset but prior to full dark, then the paschal lamb would have been eaten in the late evening after the thirteenth, just after the beginning of the fourteenth!

Speaking of the precise meaning of the phrase "between the two evenings," *Kitto's Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature* says "Tradition... interprets the phrase between the two evenings to mean from afternoon to the disappearing of the sun, the first evening being from the time when the sun begins to decline from its vertical or noontime point toward the west; and the second from its going down and vanishing out of sight which is the reason why the daily sacrifice might be killed at 12:30 p.m. on a Friday (*Mishna, Pesachim*, v. 1; *Maimonides, Hilchoth, Korban, Pesach.*, 1.4). But as the paschal lamb was slain after the daily sacrifice, it generally took place from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. We should have deemed it superfluous to add, that such faithful followers of Jewish tradition as Sandia, Rashi, Kimchi, Ralbag, etc., espoused this definition of the ancient Jewish canons, were it not for the assertion which is made in some of the best Christian commentaries and which is repeated in the excellent article Passover in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, that 'Jarchi and Kimchi hold that the two evenings were the time immediately before and immediately after sunset so that the point of time at which the sun sets divides them.' Now Rashi most distinctively declares, 'From the sixth hour (12 o'clock) and upwards is called between the two evenings because the sun begins to set for the evening. Hence, it appears to me that the phrase between the two evenings denotes the hours between the evening of the day and the evening of the night. The evening of the day is from the beginning of the seventh hour (immediately after noontime), when the evening shadows begin to lengthen, whilst the evening of the night is the beginning of the night' (Commentary on Exodus 12:6). Kimchi says almost literally the same thing: 'Between the two evenings is from the time when the sun begins to incline towards the west, which is from the sixth hour (12 o'clock) and upwards. It is called between the two evenings because there are two evenings, for from the time that the sun begins to decline is one evening, and the other evening is after the sun has gone down, and it is the space between which is meant by between the two evenings' (Lexicon s. v.)...

"Eustathius, in a note on the seventeenth book of the *Odyssey*, shows that the Greeks too held that there were two evenings, one which they called the latter evening at the close of the day; and the other the former evening, which commenced immediately after noon" (Vid. Bochart Hierozoic, Part I, lib. ii. cap. I, oper., tom. ii. p.559, edit. 1712).

The term "evening" merely means "leveling." Because of popular use, many people say "good evening" when encountering friends in the very early part of the night, or the very late part of the afternoon. But popular usage of English terms does not indicate the true meaning of Hebrew terms which were extant thousands of years before the English language came into existence. The term "between the two evenings" actually meant any time

from the zenith, or the "leveling" of the sun at its highest point, as it began its decline, until the moment of the "going away of the sun," or sunset. This is why the sacrificial lambs were sacrificed from about 2:30 p.m. onward, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

But we need not speculate about language or custom, for there is irrefutable internal biblical proof about what time of day is meant by the phrase "between the two evenings," translated "in the evening" in Exodus 12:6.

God said, "...and they shall eat the flesh *in that night*" (Exodus 12:8) proving that the killing of the lamb (or kid) took place a few hours prior to the going down of the sun. The paschal meal was concluded in the early hours of the fifteenth of Nisan (within only a few hours after sunset). "SEVEN DAYS shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day shall ye put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day [obviously counting inclusively; seven days in all], that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15). To embrace only seven days, the Days of Unleavened Bread HAD TO BEGIN ON THE FIFTEENTH, and the process of putting leavening out of their houses had to be completed ON THE FOURTEENTH, prior to the preparation for the paschal meal.

Otherwise, if the original Passover had taken place just after the thirteenth, just at the beginning of the fourteenth, you have EIGHT DAYS of Unleavened Bread!

But the Bible says there were to be only SEVEN DAYS of Unleavened Bread!

Notice further proof: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT EVEN, he shall eat unleavened bread, UNTIL the one and twentieth day of the month at even." If you begin counting WITH the fourteenth or at the end of the thirteenth, including the whole day, you would have eight days, not seven. It follows that the expression "on the fourteenth day of the month at even" means AT THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH, just as the fifteenth is about to BEGIN, or there would be EIGHT days of Unleavened Bread.

The first Day of Unleavened Bread is the FIFTEENTH, not the fourteenth. But the paschal meal was to be in preparation, including the putting away of leavening, and the killing of the lamb (or kid) very late on the fourteenth! Therefore, the Israelite's homes would be unleavened for a full SEVEN DAYS, plus only a few hours, late on the fourteenth, prior to the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the PURPOSE of the "preparation" day. Remember that phrase! Christ was on the stake until mid afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, and died at the precise moment when the high priest slew the first of the Pashal lambs! They HASTED to bury Him! Why? "The Jews therefore, BECAUSE IT WAS THE PREPARATION, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross [Greek: *stauros*, meaning upright pale, or stake, often translated "tree"] on the Sabbath day, (*for that Sabbath day was an HIGH day*), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31). An "high day Sabbath" was an annual holy day! The holy day which came immediately after Christ's death was the FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan!

Notice further, "There [in the new tomb at the foot of Golgotha] laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jew's PREPARATION day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand" (John 19:42).

Millions of sincere, church-going, professing Christians know NOTHING about this scripture; do not know anything about the true events of the week in which Christ died. If they did, they would know that Christ was put to death on a WEDNESDAY; that he was entombed on that late WEDNESDAY afternoon; that He was in the tomb exactly 72 hours; three days and three nights, just as He said, and that He was resurrected late on a Sabbath afternoon!

Notice! "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). Notice also that this would be the ONLY PERENNIAL SIGN Christ would leave the world as to His true Messiahship! He said, "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but

the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matthew 12:39), and then said He would be exactly THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS in the "heart of the earth," or the tomb!

Now, COUNT! From "Good Friday" sunset to Sabbath sunset is one night and one day. From sunset Sabbath to Sunday sunset is two nights and two days. From Sunday sunset to Monday sunset is three nights and three days!

Some, trying to ARGUE around the truth of God, have tried to insist that Christ only meant PART of a day or PART of a night! But this is nonsense, and the fact that He specifically said "DAY" AND ADDED "NIGHT" proves He was speaking of our normal 24-hour period of a day and a night!

Some try to argue that Jesus used a "Greek idiom" when He said three days and three nights. But He referred to the "sign of the prophet *Jonas*," and the book of Jonah was written in *Hebrew*, not in Greek! Men will do anything to avoid obeying the plain commandments of God, in order to cling their to own human-devised traditions!

The "Good Friday" Easter Sunday morning tradition is utterly false! Christ was not entombed on a Friday, but the previous Wednesday, prior to the HIGH day Sabbath, which fell on Thursday. Then came the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, Friday, and then the regular weekly Sabbath when, EXACTLY three days and three nights after His death, Christ was resurrected.

Now, back to the meaning of the term, "between the two evenings" during that very first Passover in all history:

God said, "SEVEN DAYS shall there be no leaven found in your houses" (Exodus 6:19).

Notice further proof: "Observe the month of Abib [green ears], and keep the Passover unto the Eternal thy God: for in the month Abib the Eternal thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt BY NIGHT. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the Eternal thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Eternal shall choose to place His name there.

"Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; SEVEN DAYS shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt IN HASTE:... and there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there anything of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day AT EVEN remain all night until the morning" (Deuteronomy 16:1-4).

Here is further proof that the sacrificing of the lamb was LATE ON THE FOURTEENTH, just before the going down of the sun beginning the fifteenth—which was the first day of seven days of unleavened bread.

Notice the Bible usage of the term "day" in relation to the phrase "at even."

"And ON THE DAY that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and AT EVEN there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire UNTIL THE MORNING.

"So it was always: the cloud covered it BY DAY, and the appearance of fire by night" (Numbers 9:15, 16).

### ***When Was The Exodus?***

We know without a shadow of a doubt that the Israelites exited their houses in Goshen to journey from Rameses to Succoth (Numbers 33:4, 5) BY NIGHT!

Remember, God begins the days at sunset. Thus, the nighttime portion of a day is the first part of the day, commencing the previous sunset. Now, on what day of the month of Abib did the Israelites depart Rameses?

"And they departed from Rameses in the first month (Abib), on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow AFTER THE PASSOVER the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians" (Numbers 33:3).

Thus, it is clear they went out of Egypt ON THE FIFTEENTH, and AT NIGHT! That means they exited Egypt sometime during the nighttime hours of the fifteenth of Abib, "on the morrow" following the passing over of the death angel!

Remember the original Passover instructions: "And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening [of the fourteenth!]. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night [AFTER sundown, during the dark hours of the late evening, following the sacrificing, or killing of the lamb `at even' meaning late on the fourteenth], roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

"Eat not of it raw, nor sodden [boiled] at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

"And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hands; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Eternal's Passover" (Exodus 12:6-11).

To kill, prepare, and eat a hasty dinner of roast lamb would require at least a few hours. It would be difficult for hundreds of thousands to do so in less time, especially when the killing of the paschal lamb involved some degree of ceremony, such as selecting a killing ground, carefully gathering the spilled blood in basins, going through the ritual of dipping branches of hyssop into the basin, carefully painting the door posts and lintels with the blood.

The animals were only to be "field dressed," not completely butchered; notice that they were to be roast with "the head and the purtenance thereof" meaning that the animals were not to have been carefully quartered, or butchered in any fashion, but roasted whole.

Since the killing was to take place "in the evening" or the waning hours of the afternoon, and the roasting to begin soon thereafter, it would have been but a matter of a couple of hours or so after starting the roasting fires that the animals would have been ready for hasty consumption.

God intended that the Israelites eat as if in a great emergency! They were to eat (in the case of males who carried walking staffs) with their shoes on their feet, their skirts tucked into their leathern girdles as if ready for instant flight, and to eat one-handed, with their staff in their hand, and partaking of the roast meat with the other hand! They were to eat it in trepidation, in fear, and in great haste!

Notice further, "And it came to pass, that at midnight (on the FIFTEENTH!) the Eternal smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

"And Pharaoh rose up *in the night*, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

"And he called for Moses and Aaron *by night* (note! The death angel had already passed! Now, even though Moses and Aaron had been included in the command that they were not to go out of their doors until 'the morning' following the passing of the death angel to insure they were not themselves slain, Pharaoh calls for these two leaders, as representatives of all the people. They obeyed, for the danger was now passed-over! They exited their homes, and went to Pharaoh's palace!) and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Eternal as you have said.

"Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone, and bless me also.

"And the Egyptians were URGENT upon the people, that they might send them out of the land IN HASTE; for they said, We all be dead men.

"And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

"And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed [had borrowed; see Exodus 3:21-22; 11:2] of the Egyptians' jewels of silver, and jewels of gold and raiment;

"And the Eternal gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they lent [gladly gave] unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

"And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.

"And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were THRUST OUT of Egypt, and COULD NOT TARRY, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual! (Exodus 12:29-39).

This was the logical consequence of a meal eaten as if poised for instant flight! For, within a few hours after midnight, they were IN GREAT FLIGHT! Notice the words of the Holy Scriptures! The Egyptians were "urgent" upon them. They were "thrust out." "Neither could they tarry." "They had prepared themselves no victuals." They were to eat "in haste."

God did not intend that the Israelites "playact" in preparing an extremely hasty meal, eating it with their loins girded as if in preparation for instant flight; virtually eating it with one hand, while the other clutched a walking stick or cane; eating it in trepidation and fear as if they were to leave at any moment—and doing all of this in vain, knowing full well they were going to spend the entire daylight period of the following day, more than twelve long hours, in "spoiling" the Egyptians!

No, the language used in scripture such as being "thrust out," and the Egyptians being "urgent" upon them to leave PROVES, conclusively, that the Israelites left Rameses during the early pre-dawn hours of the nighttime on the fifteenth of Abib!

Obviously, the command not to exit their doorways "until the morning" was lifted after the death angel had passed! The plague was now over. Moses and Aaron, as a type of the whole nation of Israel, were hastily summoned to Pharaoh's palace. Though they were indoors, in their own respective homes, having eaten of the

paschal lamb as had all the others, with the blood clearly sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of their houses, it was now perfectly safe to exit their homes, since the death angel had now passed over and was gone from the land!

Notice the language of Numbers 16:1: "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Eternal thy God; for in the month of Abib the Eternal thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt *by night*."

With the systematic organization of the tribes according to various elders (Exodus 6:9-27); with repeated announcements that at any moment Pharaoh was going to let them go into the wilderness; expecting such a decree to be issued from moment to moment for the better part of a week, surely rapid communication through the elders to the lowliest individual could be accomplished in a matter of very few minutes, at the most, perhaps an hour or so!

### *The New Testament Passover*

Just as the first Passover was *unique* in all history, so was the "Last Supper" of Jesus Christ a completely *unique* occasion. The histories refer to the original Passover as the "pre-exilic" Passover, since there were marked differences in the manner in which the Passover was observed following the Israelite's expulsion from Egypt, and then slight differences again once they had reached the promised land, and a temple had been built.

From His earliest boyhood, it is obvious Jesus Christ observed the Passover with His parents. Notice the account according to Luke: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

"And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it" (Luke 2:41-43). Then follows the account of how, as a boy, Jesus was confounding the learned elders in the temple; how he said to His parents He needed to "be about His father's business."

The most complete account of the events of Christ's final Passover on earth—the Passover He MISSED, because HE WAS the Passover sacrifice that year—is found in John's 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. Here are major portions: "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." Notice this supper of which we are to read took place BEFORE the Feast of the Passover, which was on the fifteenth of Nisan!

Also, notice that Jesus KNEW it was the time of His impending death; KNEW He would soon "depart out of this world unto the Father." Some years ago, another of the tiresome, perverted, ridiculous "Jesus" movies was produced which pictured Jesus Christ as a disturbed young man, searching for His identity! According to the perverted story, He was constantly wrestling with inner conflicts; did not know His true place in life! But God's word is clear that Christ KNEW of His pre-existent state with His Father! He said to the Jews, "...before Abraham was I AM!"

"And supper being ended ["during supper" according to all other translations; the *Ivan Panin*; *Schofield*, *RSV*, *Critical Commentary*, etc.], the devil having now put into 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, and laid aside his 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.

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

"Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

"Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

"For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; *ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

"For I have *given you an example*, that *ye should do* as I have done to you" (John 13:1-15). Jesus did not say that Peter should wash the other's feet, or that Peter should wash one person's feet as in a pompous ceremony! No, he said they should WASH ONE ANOTHER'S feet!

Now, *WHEN?*

The disciples did not immediately turn around and begin to wash one another's feet that same night! No, Christ had set them an example that, when the next Passover season arrived, they were to emulate what He had done! He had set them an EXAMPLE, and commanded them to DO as he had done unto them!

Notice further, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

"If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye *do* them" (John 13:16, 17). Do you know of any churches who practice the Christ-ordered custom of foot washing when the time of the Lord's supper arrives? I do. There are several; all of them Sabbath-keeping churches who believe in God's word; His laws; the annual Sabbaths and Holy Days, and who believe Christ *meant* it when he said, "This DO as I have done unto you."

The very *first opportunity* Christ's disciples would have had to imitate Christ in the foot washing ceremony would have been the following year!

Now, notice what else transpired at that last supper: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). It is immediately obvious that Christ was indicating that the bread was *symbolic* of His body. Misguided men have tried to infer from this very obvious example some "mystery" (as God's prophets warned they would \_ turning the truth into a "mystery" religion!) wherein the bread actually *became* the body of Christ! The doctrine of "transubstantiation" is utterly false!

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:26-30).

Never before in history had such a thing occurred. In this entirely NEW and UNIQUE supper, Jesus Christ pointed to the unleavened bread as symbolic of His body, which was to be "broken" (no bones were broken; He was severely beaten, with deep lashes, and a spear wound) and the wine, as a symbol of His blood, which would be shed for the sins of all mankind.

This supper occurred approximately 17 to 24 hours BEFORE the killing of the Passover lambs!

Now, let's trace the activities of Jesus Christ during the final six days prior to the Passover.

You read of Jesus' approach to Jerusalem commencing with Luke 19:1-28, where He met Zacchaeus, told him He would stay with him that night. and delivered the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:1-10). We read, "And when He had thus spoken [the parable of the pounds] He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem" (Luke 19:28). At this point, it is necessary to shift to Matthew's account (Matthew 21:1-7) and read of Jesus' instructions to His disciples concerning the colt He would ride in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. All these events took place on the sixth day before the Passover, which would have been the ninth day of Nisan, corresponding to our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset.

After His cleansing of the temple (Matthew 21:12-16) He returns to Bethany that night (Matthew 21:17; John 12:1).

"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead" (John 12:1). The following day, Jesus spent the Sabbath in Bethany, and after sunset that evening (which would have been our Friday sunset, the fifth day before the Passover, which would have been the tenth day of Nisan), the first of three suppers occurred, very likely at the house of Lazarus. On this occasion, we read (John 12:2-8) of how Mary anointed His feet.

On the next day, Jesus starts from Bethany toward Jerusalem, is met by a large multitude, weeps over the city, and enters the temple. (See Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.)

All of these events took place on the fourth day before the Passover, the eleventh of Nisan, corresponding to our Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset.

The following morning, the third day before the Passover, the twelfth of Nisan, corresponding to our Sunday sunset to Monday sunset, Jesus returned to Jerusalem, cursed the fig tree as an example to the disciples of the penalties for the lack of bearing fruit (Matthew 21:18-22) and enters the temple.

"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, my house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? But ye have made it a den of thieves."

This so outraged the priests and the scribes that they "...sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine.

"And when even was come, He went out of the city" (Mark 11:12-19).

Probably, Jesus returned to Bethany after departing Jerusalem on this occasion.

The next day was the second day before the Passover, the thirteenth of Nisan, corresponding to our Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset.

"And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

"And Peter calling to remembrance saying unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

"For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

"And they come again to Jerusalem: and as He was walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders" (Mark 11:20-27).

See also Matthew 21:23-29 and Luke 20, the entire chapter, and Luke 21:4-38 for additional details of this second day before the Passover.

It is during this day that Jesus delivers His two great prophecies, commencing with the first, in the temple (Luke 21:5-36) and continuing with His second great "Olivet Prophecy" delivered on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:1-51).

We are clearly told "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these "sayings [the Olivet Prophecy and His warnings of Matthew 25] He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days is [the feast of] the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matthew 26:1, 2).

The events of this one day fill many pages, including the 26th and 27th chapters of Matthew, the 14th and 15th chapters of Mark, and Luke 22 and 23, together with John 13 through the 19th chapter.

We begin with the account of Judas' betrayal and the preparation for the last supper.

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

Mark's account (Mark 14:10, 11) is almost identical. At this point, it is necessary to remember that by the time of Jesus Christ the custom of searching through Jewish homes for the slightest bit of leavening "in preparation" for the Passover which commenced on the fourteenth of Nisan, became to be called, in common usage, "the first of the unleavened," even though it was not in fact one of the SEVEN Days of Unleavened Bread. Since it was the day of the search for leaven, and the putting out of leavening from each home, it came to be referred to as the "first of the unleavened." Also, the term "Passover" had developed into far broader usage than its original implications.

As you have seen, the original "Passover" was a unique historical EVENT. It was the "passing over" of the Israelites by the death angel who slew the first born of Pharaoh.

However, the term became attached to the ceremony itself, including the killing of the lamb.

Eventually, it became attached to the entire season, embodying the preliminary search for leavening, the putting of leavening out of one's home, the paschal supper, or *pesach*, and all seven days of unleavened bread.

This is indicated in Luke's account of Judas' betrayal. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is CALLED the Passover" (Luke 22:1). In spite of the fact that the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover were two distinct occasions, general collective language had long since come in usage.

The apostle John's lengthy account of Jesus' famous last supper is unique among the four gospels.

You may read the parallel accounts in Matthew 26:26-29 and Mark 14:22-25.

For a thorough understanding of the events during the entire "preparation day," the fourteenth of Nisan, or the day before the Passover, look up and read the following scriptures:

### **Events During the Last Day Before the Passover Nisan 14th-"The Preparation Day" (John 19:31) The Day of Jesus' Death**

(Corresponds to our Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset)\*

#### **Judas' plot to betray Christ:**

Matthew 26:14-16, Mark 14:10, 11, Luke 22:1-6

#### **"Preparation" for Last Supper:**

Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16, Luke 22:7-13

#### **"The even was come"; plot for betrayal:**

Matthew 26:20, Mark 14:17

#### **The last supper; foot washing:**

John 13:1-20

#### **Announcement of betrayal:**

Matthew 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21, John 13:21-30

#### **Supper eaten; "New Covenant" proposed: bread and wine instituted:**

Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-23

**First prophecy of Peter's denials:**

John 13:31-38

**Strife over greatest:**

Luke 22:24-30

**Second prophecy of Peter's denials:**

Luke 22:31-34

**They go to Gethsemane:**

Matthew 26:30-35, Mark 14:26-29, Luke 22:39, John 18:1

**Third prophecy of Peter's denials:**

Mark 14:30-31

**Agony in garden:**

Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:40-46

**Christ arrested:**

Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-50, Luke 22:47-54, John 18:2-11

**Lazarus escapes:**

Mark 14:51, 52

**Trials - all through Tuesday night:**

Matthew 26:57; 27:31, Mark 14:53; 15:19, Luke 22:54; 23:25, John 18:12; 19:13

**"Sixth hour" (our Tuesday midnight) Pilate's speech: "Behold your king."**

John 19:14, 15

**Christ led away to be killed:**

Matthew 27:31-34, Mark 15:20-23, Luke 23:26-31, John 19:16, 17

**Discussion with Pilate about inscriptions:**

John 19:19-22

**Dividing of garments:**

Matthew 27:35-37, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23-34

**"It was the third hour and they crucified Him" (Our 9:00 a.m. Wednesday)**

Mark 15:25, 26

**"The sixth hour" (our Wednesday noon) and darkness:**

Matthew 27:45-49, Mark 15:33, Luke 23:44, 45

**"The ninth hour" (our Wednesday 3:00 p.m.) Christ cries out, dies on stake.**

Matthew 27:50, Mark 15:34-37, Luke 23:46, John 19:28-30

**Many subsequent events:**

Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:47-49, John 19:31-37

**Christ buried IN HASTE, BEFORE SUNSET** (our Wednesday about 6:00 p.m.) BEFORE THE "HIGH DAY" (The first day of unleavened bread, an annual Sabbath); our Wednesday sunset:

Matthew 27:57-66, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:31-42

\* After *Bullinger's Companion Bible*, Ap.156, 157, 158.

Now, review what you have learned. As is clear from the Bible, they were making haste to complete the burial of Jesus Christ prior to the beginning of the "high day" Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! (John 18:31). This annual Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread, fell on the fifteenth day of Nisan, and corresponded to our Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset.

This was the first night and the first day during which Jesus lay in the tomb!

There is every reason to believe that the Passover lambs were being sacrificed at the very moment Christ died! Since Christ IS "our Passover who was sacrificed for us," and knowing the manner in which God always does things ON TIME, it completes the perfect typical picture; Christ, uttering His last words just as the High Priest slays the first of the Paschal lambs!

Dr. Bullinger's *Companion Bible* says, "It follows, therefore, that the Lord being crucified on 'the preparation day' could not have eaten of the Passover lamb, which was not slain until the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan (i.e., afternoon). On that day the daily sacrifice was killed at the sixth hour (noon) and offered until about the seventh hour (1:00 p.m.). The killing of the Passover lambs began directly afterwards. Thus it is clear, that if the killing of the Passover lambs did not commence until about four hours after our Lord had been hanging upon the cross (sic), and would not have been concluded at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) when He 'gave up the ghost' (i.e., expired); no 'Passover lamb' could have been eaten at the 'last supper' on the previous evening."

It is an irrefutable FACT of scripture that the "high day" of John 19:31 was the FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST! That day HAD to fall on the fifteenth of Nisan, according to the scriptures!

The second day of the feast, the sixteenth day of Nisan, corresponding to our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset was the second night and second day in the tomb. The third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the weekly Sabbath, the seventeenth day of Nisan, corresponding exactly to our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and represents the third night and third day in the tomb!

Since Christ was buried very late on that Wednesday afternoon, exactly three nights and three days later would bring us to very late on the afternoon of the weekly Sabbath or "the third day" of Matthew 16:21, and succeeding verses.

The following morning, according to the scriptures, the women came to the sepulchre "*while it was yet dark,*" and "*...as it BEGAN to dawn toward the first of the week*" (Matthew 28:1), and found Jesus was *already gone*.

Notice! "On the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

"Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.

"Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

"So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

"And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

"Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

"And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

"Then went in also the other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he *saw, and believed.*

"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

"Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

"And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:1-17).

Luke's account says, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

"And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

"And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

"And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they saith unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

"He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

"Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

"And they remembered His words,

"And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest" (Luke 24:1-9).

Again, you see that while it was yet dark on Sunday morning Jesus Christ was already risen! He did NOT rise on "Easter" Sunday morning; it was not yet sunrise, but still quite dark, and the tomb was empty!

Notice Matthew's account: "In the end of the Sabbath [the word for Sabbath is Sabbaton, with a plural ending, and should better be rendered "Sabbaths," to include both the high day Sabbath, the fifteenth of Nisan, or the first Day of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath which fell two days later!], as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

"And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

"His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

"And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

"He is not here: for He is risen [this is past tense: He had already been resurrected many hours earlier], *as He said* [and what He SAID was that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb!], Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

"And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you.

"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word" (Matthew 28:1-8).

The angel said "He is not here, for He IS RISEN!" That was a *past act*, an accomplished fact, something which had *already happened*! Of course! He had actually risen from His tomb in the very late afternoon of the previous day, "as He said!" (verse 6).

The "Easter sunrise" tradition is wholly *false*! It is PAGAN to the core; a carry-over from ancient sun-worship, deliberately superimposed over the real TRUTH of God about Christ's last days as a human being; obfuscating the ONLY SIGN He said He would leave succeeding generations—that sign being the length of time He would be in the tomb! By rejecting that SIGN, they reject the REAL Jesus Christ!

### ***Jesus Christ IS The Passover!***

Christ has *become* the Passover. He IS the Passover. Therefore, when we partake of the symbols He instituted of His broken body and shed blood, *we are not keeping* the Old Covenant Passover. We are IMBIBING OF THE SYMBOLS OF CHRIST'S DEATH! Paul wrote, "Purge out therefore the old leaven [spiritually], that ye may be a new lump, *as ye are unleavened* [physically]. For even *Christ our Passover* is sacrificed for us:

"Therefore *let us keep the feast* [of Unleavened Bread!], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

This powerful statement was written to the GENTILE church in Corinth, approximately THIRTY YEARS after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ! These were not "Jews." Paul was the apostle to the *Gentiles*, not the

Jews! Unless this passage was read DURING THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, it is in direct contradiction within its own words! He could not have chided them so vigorously about being "puffed up" spiritually (1 Corinthians 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2) and then said "as ye are unleavened," unless he had meant they were observing the Days of Unleavened Bread! He was urging them to become *unleavened spiritually*, just as they HAD already become unleavened *physically*!

God commanded Israel to eat unleavened bread for the seven days of the feast. There is rich, CHRIST-centered meaning in doing so. Notice! "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. *I am that bread of life*. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. I AM THE LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day [this is obvious symbolism], For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him" (John 6:44-58).

This was such a "hard saying" that many of His disciples LEFT Christ!

They had never heard such language! They were offended! Christ turned to Peter and asked if he would leave also. Peter said "Lord to whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life!" (John 6:68).

When Christ indicated that the bread and the wine were symbolic of His body and blood, He initiated a ceremony absolutely UNIQUE in all history! His "Last supper" with His disciples was NOT the Jewish Passover, as you have seen proved, but a completely UNIQUE occasion; a NEW Testament ceremony, instituted by Christ Himself! It includes the foot-washing ceremony, together with the partaking of the deeply symbolic bread and wine.

When we partake of this completely NEW TESTAMENT ceremony we do not look back in history beyond the time of Christ. We look to the time of HIS DEATH—NOT to the ancient exodus and the captivity in Egypt, except as interesting history and background.

Jesus Christ instituted a NEW TESTAMENT CEREMONY! He had that right! He had that authority! He said, "This DO as I have done unto you!"

Paul told the Gentile Corinthians, "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.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:23-30). The term "unworthily" does not refer to the character of present spiritual condition of penitent believers who partake of the bread and wine. Instead, it refers to the abominable disgraces being committed by some in Corinth, who were turning the "Lord's supper" into a Bacchanalian orgy of sorts; stuffing themselves with food, and even drinking enough to become drunk! Paul wrote, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

"For in eating every one taketh before other [on a "first come, first served" basis, some were gluttons, leaving no food for late comers] his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not" (1 Corinthians 11:19-22). This was what Paul meant by partaking of the Lord's supper "unworthily." It had nothing to do with whether or not we, as Christians, feel "worthy" to partake of such solemn and meaningful symbols, for not one of us could ever become "worthy" of a single drop of Christ's shed blood on our own strength.

God's church has known from the first century that these symbols of His broken body and shed blood are to be received at precisely the same time Jesus Christ instituted them—on the BEGINNING of the fourteenth of Nisan!

Following Christ's example and commands, God's church gathers together on the beginning of the fourteenth of Nisan, after the sun has set and the thirteenth day is over, in a solemn service traditionally (and erroneously) called "The Passover." The term, while a misnomer, has been carried over through the years. Actually, it is NOT "the Passover," since Christ HAS BECOME our "Passover" which has been sacrificed for us!

### ***Every True Christian Will Observe The Lord's Supper***

Surely there is no ceremony during the course of the year that is any more important than the LORD'S SUPPER! It is that one annual festival which symbolizes, more than any other, the very WAY TO SALVATION! Without the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ; without our deepest repentance, and the humble, grateful acceptance of Christ's shed blood to atone for our own sins, we cannot be saved!

By our reaffirmation each year of our acceptance of His broken body and shed blood, we continually reconfirm our faith in Jesus Christ, and in Him ALONE, for salvation! If you truly expect to enter into the soon-coming, glorious kingdom of Almighty God; if you hope to be one of those who will live and reign with Christ for one thousand years on this earth (Revelation 20:4; 5:10) then you need to KEEP THE LORD'S SUPPER year by year.

We have a MERCIFUL God! He says, "For I will be *merciful* to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:13). This year, and every year of your remaining sojourn on this earth in this human flesh, you need to partake of the symbols of the body and blood of your Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is your soon-coming KING!

For information about "Passover" (Lord's Supper) services this year with others of God's people, either in one of our chartered churches, or unchartered fellowship groups, call or write to us about the services closest to your home.

For those who cannot meet with other brethren because of health or distance, we can provide you with instructions on how to keep the Passover in your own home. For those hosted fellowship groups who do not have a minister present, please ask for a videotape of the Passover services.

May God inspire you to submit to Him in humble obedience and deep gratitude as you partake of the symbols of your Savior's sacrifice each year!

-End-

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