

Why We Keep the
**“LORD’S
SUPPER”**
In the Early Hours
of the 14th



This booklet is a free educational service
in the public interest, published by
The Church of God, International,
P. O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

Copyright © 1997 The Church of God, International, Tyler, Texas
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.



Why We Keep the
**“LORD’S
SUPPER”**

**In the Early Hours
of the 14th**

It happens every year. As the Passover season approaches, the question of when to keep the Passover comes up. Should we keep it in the night of the 14th of Nisan (Abib)? The afternoon of the 14th? The night of the 15th? Just when should we keep it? Does it really matter? Despite the condemning accusations of some, our practice is based on a careful, open-minded study of the Scriptures—*not* love of “tradition”!

by Vance A. Stinson

When people ask, "Why don't you observe Passover in the night of the 15th of Abib?" I usually reply, "In a sense, I do."

Surprised? Don't be—for when I say "Passover," I am not speaking of the annual commemoration of Christ's death that we often call the "Lord's Supper." Rather, I am speaking of the "night to be much observed," which was the night the ancient Israelites ate the Passover lamb. The Lord's Supper and the Passover, though related, are two separate observances.

Of course, we have traditionally referred to the Lord's Supper as "Passover," and will likely continue to do so. There is certainly nothing wrong with using this term when speaking of the commemoration of Christ's death, but we should understand that the Lord's Supper (when we take the bread and wine, which symbolize Christ's flesh and blood) is *not* a slightly adjusted continuum of the ancient Passover. The Feast of the Passover takes place the following evening, so when we gather for the "night to be much observed," we are, in a sense, "observing the Passover"—though we do not sacrifice a lamb, and there is no reason to think that we are required to eat lamb on that evening.

We have explained in numerous publications, sermons, and

Bible studies that the ancient Israelites killed the Passover lamb in the *end* of the 14th—not the beginning, as many of us previously believed—and ate the lamb that night, which was the early part of the 15th, or beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (If you haven't studied this subject, write for your free copy of Mr. Armstrong's booklet, *The Passover—is it for Christians?*)

God said that the night of the Passover feast—the 15th, the same night Israel was liberated from Egypt—was to be “a night to be much observed...of all the children of Israel in their generations” (Exodus 12:42).

The Passover feast and the “night to be much observed” are one and the same. The Israelites observed this night “for bringing them out from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:42). We observe it as a celebration of our deliverance from “spiritual Egypt”—the same reason we observe the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, we have “observed the Passover” on the 15th for all these years—whether we understood it or not.

Christ, typified by the Passover lamb, died and was placed in the tomb at approximately the same time the Jews in Jerusalem were preparing their Passover lambs for the upcoming “night to be much observed.” And just as the Jews gathered on that night to celebrate their forefathers' liberation from Egyptian bondage, we gather on the same night to celebrate our liberation—made possible by the sacrifice of Christ our Passover—from the bondage of sin.

So, when we gather for the “night to be much observed,” we are, in a sense, observing the feast known as “Passover.” But does this mean that we should partake of the symbols of the body and blood of Christ on that night, as some insist?

The Lord's Supper

In I Corinthians 5:7,8 Paul uses the word “Passover,” showing that he knew what the word meant and was not afraid to use

it. Yet, interestingly, in chapters 10 and 11, where he devotes considerable space to the proper observance of the commemoration of Christ's death, Paul does not use the word “Passover” at all! Rather, he uses words such as “communion” (I Corinthians 10:16), “cup of the Lord,” “Lord's table” (verse 21), and “Lord's supper” (11:20).

Why did Paul choose such terms? Why didn't he simply say, “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to observe the Passover”? He used the word “Passover” in chapter 5; why not in chapter 11?

The probable answer is that “Passover” was something that was observed in the night of the 15th—and all the Corinthians knew it. The Corinthians themselves probably assembled on the night of the 15th, and perhaps on each day of the seven-day festival—and they probably called it the “Feast of the Passover.” (The entire seven-day festival was called the “Feast of the Passover” during the time of Christ and the apostles.)

But Paul was not speaking of the “Feast of the Passover”; he was speaking of the special commemorative occasion that took place in the night of the 14th, the night of Jesus' betrayal—the night He instituted a *brand-new* observance.

The Night of Christ's Betrayal

Having admonished the Corinthians for the improper way in which they were observing the Lord's Supper, Paul pointed to the example of Christ. Notice: “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus *the same night in which He was betrayed* took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's

death till He come" (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

Some claim that Paul's mention of *when* Christ instituted the new commemoration is totally unrelated to the question of *when* we should partake of the bread and wine.

But keep in mind that Paul's instruction is *corrective*, and in correcting the Corinthians in their observance of the Lord's Supper, he points directly to the example of the Lord who instituted the Supper. He not only points out *what* Christ did; he points out *when* He did it!

Paul surely knew that, since his instructions were strongly corrective, his mention of the *time* Christ gave bread and wine to His disciples would have been taken as correction had the Corinthians been observing the Lord's Supper at any time other than the "night in which He was betrayed."

Moreover, Paul points out that the Lord's Supper is a *commemoration* of Christ's sacrifice. This is very important, for since we know that a commemoration of an event takes place annually on the date of the event, the question now before us is:

When Did Christ's Sacrifice Take Place?

Some apparently think that the "sacrifice of Jesus Christ" took place in a moment of time—specifically, the moment of His death. For this reason, some commemorate Christ's sacrifice in the afternoon of the 14th.

But when the Bible speaks of the "death of Christ" and of Christ as a "sacrifice," it is not speaking of that single sliver of time when His bodily organs ceased to function and His consciousness faded into oblivion. The truth is, the "sacrifice of Christ" entails far more than that! It includes His *suffering*, which began *in the night of His betrayal!*

Yes, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ began in the very night He gave His disciples bread and wine and said "This do in remembrance of me." *How appropriate that we should commemorate His sacrifice in the very night His sacrifice began!*

Just as the children of Israel were to commemorate the Exodus in the night the Exodus began, so we are to commemorate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the night His sacrifice began. (Note: While the actual departure from their Egyptian homes may not have begun until the next morning, the Israelites' freedom was declared that night—thus, technically, the Exodus began in the night of the 15th. See Deuteronomy 16:1.)

Everyone knows that we commemorate events on the calendar date of the original event. For instance, if Christ's sacrifice took place in the 14th, then we should commemorate it in the 14th, *not* the 15th!

Moreover, we should realize that the Lord's Supper is *not* a slightly adjusted Passover. True, it is a "Passover" of sorts, but it is much more than that!

More Than "Passover"

When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, He drew from scriptural/historical imagery *other than* the sacrificial lamb of the Passover feast. Consider the following:

When Christ gave His disciples the cup, He said, "Behold, the blood of the *New Covenant*" (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20, paraphrased). Notice that Jesus was not drawing from the imagery of the Passover sacrifice; He was drawing from the imagery of the *covenantal sacrifice* that took place at the foot of Mount Sinai quite some time *after* Israel departed Egypt and entered the wilderness (see Exodus 24:8).

The blood of the lamb (in Egypt) provided protection from the plague wrought by the death angel, but Israel did not enter into covenant relationship with God until the covenant was set forth, agreed to, and ratified with blood—and that took place several weeks *after* the Passover event.

Of course, the Synoptics clearly tie the Last Supper to Passover, but the point is that the Supper represents not only Christ as He is seen in the Passover (Exodus 12), but Christ as

He is seen in the covenantal sacrifice (Exodus 24), and Jesus' own words make that truth as plain as day.

So, yes, the elements of the Lord's Supper *do* represent Christ our Passover, but they also represent Christ as He is seen in *all* the sacrificial offerings of the Old Covenant. The sacrifice of Christ was portrayed in each sin offering (Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 13:10-12), including the offerings of the Atonement sacrifices (Leviticus 16; cf. Hebrews 9), in the Passover sacrifice (I Corinthians 5:7), in the covenant-ratifying sacrifice that took place at Mount Sinai (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:17-20), and in the other sacrifices.

We need to realize that *the Lord's Supper is a New Covenant symbolization of the Truth portrayed in ALL these sacrifices, not just Passover.*

The Lord's Supper is not an exact continuum of the Old Testament Passover. Christ did not merely "change the symbols" of Passover and move it to a new time (in much the same way Protestants claim the Sabbath was reinterpreted and moved to a new time). No, He instituted something *brand-new*—a ceremony that powerfully expresses the same Truth of the Gospel that was expressed in all the sacrifices, offerings, and Levitical ceremonies of the Old Covenant (and without the geographic, ethnic, and cultural limitations of those sacrifices—thus, most appropriate for an international church).

Once we understand that the Lord's Supper is a New Covenant symbolization of the Truth foreshadowed by *all* Old Testament offerings and sacrifices, then perhaps we can see why the Lord's Supper *precedes*, and thus begins, the yearly festival cycle. We do not offer sacrifices throughout the festival year; rather, we begin the festival cycle—on the evening before the Passover/Unleavened Bread festival—by observing a ceremony that brings together the main point of all the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings. It is my opinion that this concept was held by the early church, and is reflected in early

(post-apostolic) references to the "Eucharist" as a "sacrifice."

Passover or Lord's Supper?

Some claim that Paul's admonition (I Corinthians 11:20) was against coming together to eat a full meal he called "the Lord's supper." He wrote, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is *not* to eat the Lord's supper." Those who hold this view claim that the Corinthians were trying to imitate the Last Supper by eating a full meal as Christ and His disciples did. This, they argue, was the "Lord's supper" Paul had in mind, and which he said the Corinthians were *not* to attempt to imitate.

Further, they argue that a small piece of bread and sip of wine cannot be described as a "supper," so Paul (when he used the phrase "Lord's supper") must have been speaking of a full meal rather than the symbols of the Lord's flesh and blood.

However, a closer examination reveals that this theory simply does not stand on firm theological ground.

Taken in isolation, verse 20 could be interpreted in the way suggested above, but when the verse is read in context—both its immediate context and the larger context—the above interpretation becomes extremely doubtful.

First, "Lord's supper" is contrasted with "his own supper" (verse 21). Paul's admonition is against the Corinthians coming together, supposedly to eat the Lord's Supper, but each taking his *own* (not the Lord's) supper instead. Paraphrased, Paul is saying, "When you come together, it is not the *Lord's* Supper you are eating because each of you is eating his *own* supper." Do you see how "Lord's supper" and "own supper" are contrasted?

Paul speaks of the "cup of the Lord" and the "Lord's table" (I Corinthians 10:21), and says that the cup and the bread we take represent our "communion" with Christ (10:16). These terms are "meal" (i.e. "supper") terms. The "table" is where the meal

took place, and those who sat down at the table together had communion.

In the ancient world, a master normally didn't invite his slaves to dine with him, just as pious Jews didn't invite uncircumcised non-Jews to sit at meal with them. Why? Because, in that world, a person was identified with those he dined with (recall that Christ was criticized for eating with publicans and sinners). Our Master has invited us to sit at His Table and partake of His Supper. Do you understand the tremendous implications of this?

When a master invites his slaves to sit at his table, he is saying, in effect, "You are no longer mere slaves; you are my friends." Interestingly, *that's exactly what Jesus Christ said to His disciples that night* (John 15:15)! How tragic that some place so much importance upon the meanings of terms (such as "supper") that they miss the most significant truths of all. To eat at the Lord's Table, to drink of His Cup, to partake of His Supper, is to enter full fellowship with Him (and thus with each other), and is to join Him in the "fellowship [communion] of His suffering" (Philippians 3:10).

His suffering began the very night He gave His disciples the bread and the wine. When we take the bread and the wine the same night—the 14th, the night of His betrayal—we express our faith in the fact that His suffering was for us, His death was for us; and we show our willingness to "drink of His cup" by suffering and laying down our lives for His sake.

When we understand the connection between "supper" and "fellowship," and the tremendous implications of a master inviting his slaves to sit down and eat with him, then we should have no difficulty in understanding why Paul called the commemorative service the "Lord's Supper." We might reason that a little piece of bread and tiny sip of wine could hardly be described as a "supper," but that wasn't Paul's point at all. He wasn't speaking in terms of the amount of food and drink con-

sumed; he had in view the *fellowship* that is implied in the terms "table" and "supper."

The Fellowship of His Suffering

Paul wrote: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the *fellowship of His sufferings*, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:8,10).

The word translated "fellowship" in this passage is the Greek *koinonia*, which means "communion, fellowship, sharing in common" (W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 420). The same word is translated "communion" in I Corinthians 10:16: "The cup of blessing which we bless [i.e. in the "Lord's Supper"], is it not the communion [*koinonia*] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion [*koinonia*] of the body of Christ?"

Thus, by partaking of the elements of the Lord's Supper, we are symbolically sharing in Christ's suffering and "being made conformable unto His death." His suffering, which began on the night of the 14th and culminated in His death the next afternoon, was certainly a part of His sacrifice. By taking the symbols of His body and blood on the same night of the year (the 14th) He gave them to His disciples, we symbolically join Him in His sacrifice!

Paul wrote that Christians are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so that we suffer with Him" (Romans 8:17). He stated: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him..." (II Timothy 2:11,12). Do you see how our suffering for His sake is linked with Christ's sacrifice, which includes both His suffering and His death?

To have salvation, we must accept the *whole* sacrifice of

Jesus Christ. We not only "accept" it, we *participate* in it, symbolically, when we take the symbols of His body and blood in the same night of the year in which He experienced the pain of betrayal, of denial, of rejection, of physical and mental torture and abuse. Paul wrote, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

One point that is often neglected is that none of the animal sacrifices that prefigured Christ's sacrifice involved prolonged suffering. Yet, suffering was absolutely essential to the sacrifice of Christ! This fact, coupled with the fact that God's people are participants in Christ's suffering, casts serious doubt upon any theory that places the commemorative event at any time other than the night in which Christ instituted it.

Over the years we have heard sermons on how the "blood of the Lamb" is applied to the "doorposts of our hearts" so that death may "pass over" us. While this is a valid analogy, its limitations may lead a person to think that the symbols of the body and blood of Christ should be consumed *after* the time corresponding to His death. However, as we have seen, the Lord's Supper is not a slightly adjusted continuation of the Passover, and the symbols of the Supper reflect far more than the imagery of the Passover sacrifice.

Unfortunately, nothing in this article will change the minds of those who have already "made their stand" by pointing the finger of condemnation toward us and accusing us of loving tradition more than truth. But perhaps the contents of this short article (and *much* more could be said about this subject) will help prevent some from being hoodwinked by the deceptive lure of the sensationalists who would like for you to believe that they have been sent to "restore all things."

The significance of the night of the 14th can be seen by reviewing the things Christ suffered on that fateful evening, and

by comparing the Gospel accounts of His suffering with prophecies concerning the "suffering servant" of God.

The Suffering Servant

Consider the things Christ had to endure on the evening of the Last Supper:

1. No doubt, the knowledge that Judas Iscariot—who had sat at Christ's feet, witnessed His miracles, and been among His closest friends for three and one-half years—had betrayed Him was a source of deeply felt pain for Jesus on that night.

2. Jesus knew His excruciatingly painful death was approaching. He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). He prayed fervently, and with deep sorrow and anguish of spirit. This was part of the suffering He had to endure—part of the *sacrifice* He had to offer.

3. He endured the ordeal of a bogus trial, of being spit upon, slapped, buffeted.

4. He experienced the pain of having His closest friends forsake Him, of hearing Peter, who had vowed to follow Him even unto death, deny Him.

5. The ordeal continued all night and into the next day, ending with His death in the afternoon of the 14th.

All of these things were essential components of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His suffering was foretold many years before.

Concerning the suffering servant of God, Isaiah wrote: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But He was wounded [tormented] for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes [bruises] we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:3-7).

Read the entire prophecy of Isaiah 53, and see if you think the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was restricted to the moment of His death. In truth, His sacrifice was a life-long experience, but His final offering, commemorated in the Lord's Supper, began in the evening He was taken from His disciples.

Each year, when we gather at the Lord's Table to partake of His Supper, let's think deeply of the suffering He endured on that fateful evening, of the agony He experienced as the weight of our transgressions bore down upon His shoulders; and let's remember that we are called upon not only to accept His sacrifice, but to willingly participate in it—"That [we] may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...." □

Did Jesus Have an Early Passover?

A careful study of the chronology of events as presented in the book of Exodus leads to the conclusion that the "fourteenth day of the month at even"—the time the Passover sacrifice was to take place—was in the *end* of the 14th, not the beginning. The Passover lambs were eaten that night—the "night to be much observed." This agrees perfectly with John's account of the events leading to the arrest of Jesus.

If we had only the Old Testament and John's Gospel, there would probably be little disagreement over when the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed and eaten. The problem arises when we consider the wording of the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper. These accounts seem to say that Jesus and His disciples had the Passover approximately twenty-four hours earlier than the usual time.

Notice the following passages:

Matthew 26:17-19: "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to *eat the Passover*? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; *I will keep the Passover* at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and *they made ready the Passover.*"

Mark 14:12-16: "And the first day of unleavened bread, *when they killed the Passover*, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest *eat*

the Passover?... [Jesus said] say ye unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where *I shall eat the Passover* with my disciples?...And His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and *they made ready the Passover.*"

Luke 22:7-16: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and *prepare us the Passover*, that we may eat.... [Jesus said] And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where *I shall eat the Passover* with my disciples?...And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and *they made ready the Passover....* And He said unto them, With desire *I have desired to eat this Passover* with you before I suffer."

From the above accounts, it would seem that Jesus and His disciples had an early Passover that year. For this reason, some claim that this Passover was a one-time occasion, that it was to teach the disciples how they were to keep the Passover thereafter, and that in the subsequent years the Passover was to be observed at the usual time—in the 15th.

Others hold that the Jews observed Passover on the wrong date, and that Jesus was setting the proper example by observing it at the correct time. However, this view becomes highly doubtful when we carefully consider the chronology of the Exodus account and John's record of the events leading to Jesus' arrest.

But was the "Passover" Jesus and His disciples had in the early hours of the 14th *the Passover*? Were they observing the Passover described in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23?

Consider the following:

First, each of the Synoptic writers speaks of "the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed."

Matthew and Mark seem to have the disciples inquiring as to the whereabouts of Passover on the "first day of unleavened bread." Luke, however, has Jesus sending Peter and John to prepare the Passover *just before* "the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." Luke writes, "Then came [or *came near*] the day of unleavened bread...." Obviously, Matthew and Mark did not mean that "the day of unleavened bread" had arrived; they meant that it was drawing near.

Second, the "first day of unleavened bread" was the 14th of Nisan, the day Jesus died. Obviously, this was not the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23), for that day falls on the 15th, not the 14th. The 14th was called a "day of unleavened bread" because that was the day the people made final preparations for the upcoming seven-day festival, the day they completed disposing of leavened products and preparing unleavened bread.

Third, when Mark and Luke speak of the "day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed," they do not mean that the *time of day* for the sacrifice had arrived; they simply mean that the 14th, the *day* on which the sacrifice takes place, was drawing near. The sacrifice was not to take place until the following afternoon.

Thus, the phrase, "the day of unleavened bread," or "first day of unleavened bread," refers to the day *before* the first day (the 15th) of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. We normally refer to the 15th, the first annual Sabbath of the seven-day festival, as the "first day of Unleavened Bread," and rightly so, for Leviticus 23:6,7 tells us clearly that the 15th is the first day of the feast. However, in the time of Jesus, the phrase (or a similar one) was used in reference to the preceding day, as the Synoptic accounts sug-

gest.

We see, then, that a word or phrase can have more than one meaning. The word "Passover," like "first day of unleavened bread," has more than one meaning.

First, the sacrificial lamb that was killed in the afternoon of the 14th is called "the Passover" (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7).

Second, the sacrificial rite and the feast that immediately follows ("night to be much observed") may correctly be called "the Passover" (Exodus 12:11,43,48; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 33:3; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7).

Third, the entire seven-day festival is called "the Passover" (Ezekiel 45:21; Luke 22:1).

"Passover," then, can be used to refer to several different aspects of the spring festival. This opens the possibility that the word, when used by Jesus in the night of His betrayal, was used in reference to a meal other than the Passover meal in which the sacrificial lamb was eaten.

It is quite possible that, since the 14th was considered a "day of unleavened bread," and since the entire festival was called "the Passover," the meal Jesus and His disciples had at the beginning of the 14th (just after sunset) could have been called a "Passover meal"—though it was not the Passover in which the sacrificial lamb was eaten.

When the Synoptic writers used the term "Passover," they did not qualify which aspect of the festival they were speaking of because they assumed their readers would understand. For instance, when Mark wrote, "And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover," he didn't add the word "lamb" because he assumed his readers would understand that he was speaking of the "Passover *lamb*." Similarly, when the Synoptic writers spoke of "the Passover" Jesus and His disciples ate in the evening of the

14th, they did not add the word "meal" because they assumed their readers would understand that the first meal of the spring festival was a "Passover *meal*."

The entire festival, including the 14th, the day the Passover lamb was killed, was known as "the Passover." Therefore, the first meal of the festival was a "Passover meal." Interestingly, the NRSV translates Mark 14:16 this way: "So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal." The translators seem to have understood that the word "meal" was assumed by the writer.

By inserting the words "meal" and "lamb" in the appropriate places, by understanding that the 14th was considered a part of the Passover festival, and by understanding that the first meal of the festival (and perhaps other meals as well) was known as a "Passover meal," the seeming conflict with the Exodus chronology is resolved.

While it is conceivable that Jesus ate an early Passover (including the sacrificial lamb) that year, the more probable explanation is that the "Passover" He had in the beginning of the 14th was a "Passover meal" in that it was the first meal of the spring festival.

With this understanding, let's insert the words "lamb" and "meal" in the appropriate places in several verses from the Synoptic accounts:

"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover [lamb], His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover [meal]?" (Mark 14:12).

"The Master saith; Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover [meal] with my disciples?" (verse 14).

"And His disciples went forth...and they made ready the Passover [meal]" (verse 16).

"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover [meal] with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15).

Of course, some will object to the insertion of words into the text. However, it should be understood that it is sometimes necessary to insert words in order to capture the intended meaning of the original. That's why italicized words are found throughout the KJV. The italics indicate that those words were inserted by the translators. This is an essential part of properly translating from one language to another, especially when translating involves crossing cultural boundaries separated by thousands of miles and almost two thousand years.

The inclusion of the word "meal" (in order to separate the "Passover" Christ had from the Passover of the following evening) is warranted not only by the Exodus chronology and John's record, but by evidence within the Synoptics themselves.

First, all three accounts indicate that the 14th was about to begin when the disciples inquired as to the whereabouts of the Passover meal. If preparations for the meal involved sacrificing and preparing a lamb, it seems unlikely that they would have waited so late to inquire.

Second, Jesus had apparently observed the Passover along with the other Jews in the preceding years (see Luke 2:41; John 2:23), which means that in previous years He ate the Passover lamb in the night of the 15th, as did His disciples. Had the Passover meal Jesus and His disciples had in the evening of the 14th been the customary Passover in which the lamb was eaten, it seems unlikely that the disciples would have expected to eat it twenty-four hours earlier than usual. Had the meal they had in the evening of the 14th been the Passover normally eaten in the 15th, one would expect to find an objection or question on the part of the dis-

ciples. But no such objection or question is found.

Third, the Passover normally eaten in the 15th was a family occasion. Yet, neither Jesus nor His disciples had their families with them at the Last Supper. While conclusive proof that this was not the Passover (normally eaten in the 15th) cannot be drawn from this, it is one more piece of evidence that the Last Supper was not an early Passover.

Considering all the evidence, then, we conclude that Jesus was neither moving Passover to a new time nor teaching the disciples how to keep the Passover (in its regular time) in the years to follow. He was introducing a brand-new commemorative observance, one the apostle Paul called "the Lord's Supper."□