

Christ Instituted New Symbols

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of April 8, 2017.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—On April 9, 2017, many people will be commemorating the suffering and death of our Lord and Savior on a date representing the night that He was betrayed.

Two weeks ago, I began a three-part series to briefly discuss the following histories.

- Two weeks ago—Exodus Passover
- Last week—Passovers of Hezekiah and Josiah
- This week—Christ Instituted New Symbols

Before Christ’s death and resurrection

Bible students are correct to note how the covenant changed after the death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. When Christ died, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51).

By recognizing that this occurred at the end of Christ’s life, Bible students realize that the family of Christ lived under some technicalities of the Torah.

Notice a few examples.

Luke 2:21—The infant Christ was circumcised after eight days (Leviticus 12:3).

Luke 2:22-23—When the days of purification according to the law of Moses (Leviticus 12:2-6) were completed, Christ’s family took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord—citing Exodus 13:2.

Luke 2:24—The family offered a sacrifice according to the law of the Lord—a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons (Leviticus 12:8).

Sanctuary Passover

In last week’s article, we mentioned a difference between the Exodus 12 Passover and later Passover events.

One way to describe that was that the Exodus 12 Passover was a domestic event, and that later Passovers were sanctuary events. The Passover of Exo-

us 12 occurred before the instructions about the tabernacle (Exodus 25-27) and about the priesthood (Exodus 28-30) were given.

So it should be no surprise that the family of Christ went to the temple in Jerusalem for the Passover during His life.

- Luke 2:41-46
- John 2:13-23

Christ foretold of a greater approach

When Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), He told her in advance about an upcoming change to a superior approach of the New Testament.

Let's pick up His comments later in His discussion with her.

John 4:21-24—"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' "

Noticing the Greek word

Compassionate Bible students are discerning to understand why some of their friends develop different theories about the history of Christ's observance of the spring feasts during His time on earth.

Much of the difference in interpretations occurs because of the Greek word *pascha*. After we take a brief look at this word, I want to list the verses in the Gospels.

According to *Strong's Concordance*, the English word *Passover* comes from the Greek word *pascha* (No. 3957)—which is used 29 times in the King James Version of the Bible. (The word is erroneously translated as "Easter" in Acts 12:4 of the King James Version.)

According to the concordance, the word can have any of the following four meanings.

- Passover
- Passover week
- Passover meal
- Passover lamb

Enjoy studying the verses in the remainder of the article.

Early events

Here are some verses about early events in Christ's life.

Luke 2:41—"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover."

John 2:13, 23—"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem . . . Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did."

John 6:4—"Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near."

Later events

Here are some verses about later events in Christ's life.

John 11:55—"And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves."

John 12:1—"Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead."

John 13:1—"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

Three versions of same event

How a Bible student interprets *pascha* in the following Gospel accounts (three versions of the same event) will determine which theory he adopts.

- Many brethren among the Church of God believe that Christ's last meal with His disciples was at the exact time of the Old Testament Passover.
- Other brethren among the Church of God (including the Church of God International and deceased teacher Ron Dart) believe that Christ's last meal with His disciples was in the Passover season, but He did not eat his last meal at the time of the Old Testament Passover—which they identify as occurring at 3:00 p.m. on the next day.
- Remember that Church of God brethren who believe these different theories commemorate the suffering and death of our Savior on the same night—with the same New Testament symbols.
- Remember that Church of God brethren who believe these different theories accept 1 Corinthians 5:7—that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Matthew 26:17-19—"Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.' " ' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover."

Mark 14:12-14—"Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?' And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' " ' "

Luke 22:7-13—"Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.' So they said to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare?' And He said to them, 'Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.' So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.' "

Luke 22:14-16—"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' "

Interesting verses

Here are some verses that Bible students use to claim that the last meal that Christ ate with His disciples was a meal in the Passover season, but He did not eat at the time of the Old Testament Passover—which they identify as occurring at 3:00 p.m. on the next day.

John 18:28—"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover."

John 18:39—"But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

John 19:14—"Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' "

Same night, same symbols

Remember that Church of God brethren who believe these different theories commemorate the suffering and death of our Savior on the same night—with the same New Testament symbols.

Remember that Church of God brethren who believe these different theories accept 1 Corinthians 5:7—that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Three symbols

No matter what you conclude about the history of the Old Testament Passover and about the history of Christ's observance during His time on earth, please focus on the symbols that Christ gave to His disciples on the night that He was betrayed.

■ Foot-washing

John 13:12-17—"So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord

and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

■ Broken bread

1 Corinthians 11:23-24—"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' "

■ Small portion of wine

1 Corinthians 11:25—"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' "

One final item

As disciples get ready to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread (1 Corinthians 5:8), I recommend that disciples remember that the lesson about leavening is about reacting to God's grace.

- Before the commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ, I recommend that we focus upon God's grace.
- After the commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ, I recommend that we focus upon our Father's expectations of us—which includes loving Him and loving our neighbor.