

The Night in Which He Was Betrayed

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BIG SANDY, Texas—As many Church of God congregations approach the spring feast days, I began a series of six articles discussing principles that can be rehearsed at this time of year.

Here is the list of articles in this series that have been written so far.

- March 23—"Overview of Passover in Book of Exodus."
- March 30—"The Night in Which He Was Betrayed."

His last supper

I find it discouraging that some religious people find it important to argue about what to call the events that occurred on the night that Jesus Christ was betrayed. Some people refer to the night as Passover and other people refer to the night as the Last Supper.

I am aware that both names are given in the Bible.

- Luke 22:7-13
- 1 Corinthians 11:20-26

I know that some religious people say that the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 was instructing the Corinthian brethren to avoid calling the event by the name "Lord's Supper." (I actually prefer to call it "Last Supper").

But Paul was actually criticizing their poor behavior instead of criticizing the name. In like manner, I believe that God criticized the behavior of His people at assemblies in the Old Testament—without criticizing the name of those assemblies (Isaiah 1:12-15).

Old Testament Passover

There are two schools of thought among my circle of friends about the timing of Passover. Here they are in a nutshell.

- Some say that the "night in which He was betrayed" was the same as the Old Testament Passover.

■ Others say that when Christ died (at 3:00 p.m. on the next day) began the timing of the Old Testament Passover. This belief is based upon the fact that Christ was the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) and could not eat a meal at the time that He was fulfilling the action of the Passover Lamb.

Last supper

Since Christ became the Passover Lamb at 3:00 p.m. on the next day, the meal that He had with His disciples was truly His last supper.

- Jesus had a meal with His disciples (John 13:1-13).
- The brethren in Corinth had a meal together, although their behavior was very disrespectful (1 Corinthians 11:20-26).

Meal required?

Someone could ask: Would it be wrong to have a meal on the night picturing when Jesus was betrayed? Certainly not—as long as the behavior did not imitate the mistake of the Corinthians.

Someone could ask: Is a meal required on the night picturing when Jesus was betrayed? No.

Traditional meal

It is interesting that many people among the Church of God have a traditional meal, but not on the day picturing when Jesus was betrayed. This traditional meal occurs on the next day—on the day picturing when Christ died. And this traditional meal is not instructed in the Scripture.

The name of that meal is interesting. It is often referred to as “the night to be much observed” or “the night to be much remembered.”

It is not a Feast day listed in Leviticus 23. The phrase is taken from Exodus 12:42.

The strange title is taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

- King James Version—“A night to be much observed unto the Lord”

Notice how the phrase is noted in other translations.

- New American Standard—“A night to be observed for the Lord”
- Revised Standard—“A night of watching by the Lord”
- Moffatt translation—“A night when the Eternal was on the watch”
- New King James Version—“A night of solemn observance to the Lord”

Pieces of advice

Someone could ask: Are you saying it is wrong to have a traditional meal on the day picturing the death of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not.

- But please understand that it is a tradition.

- Please don't be angry with brethren who prefer to put more emphasis upon the instructed observance (the night picturing the night in which He was betrayed) instead of this tradition of men.
- If you participate in the traditional meal, please focus more upon the New Testament scenario than upon the Old Testament scenario.

Focus on the symbols

For the record, I am accustomed to some people becoming initially uncomfortable with some of the statements that I have made in this article. I say "initially" because people generally come to realize that what I am saying is simple truth.

- I love meeting on the night picturing the night in which He was betrayed.
- I love participating that night with the New Testament symbols—foot-washing, broken bread and a small dose of wine.
- I love reflecting upon the time on the next day (3:00 p.m.) picturing the death of the true Passover Lamb.
- I love reflecting upon the resurrection of the Savior—three days and three nights later.