The Passover of the New Covenant

# Its Purpose and Correct Observation

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The Passover is an annual observance at a specifically appointed time in the Bible calendar of Almighty God. It is not well understood by most Bible believers today. Many Christian churches teach that God no longer requires its observance. However, the Bible says the Passover is an annual memorial required by commandment (Deut. 16). In this study, we will examine the purpose of the Passover, the correct timing of its observance, and what it represents as one of the most important aspects of God’s covenant.

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*For also our Passover, Christ, was sacrificed, so that we might keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of amorality and wickedness, but with unleavened sincerity and truth (1Cor. 5:7b-8a; RNT; emphasis added).*

Nowhere in the Bible, and at no time throughout human history, has authority been granted to either change or do away with the day, date, or time of the annual observance that is called Passover. It is to be observed only once a year by all faithful believers (Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16-17; Deut. 16:1; Josh. 5:10; Mt. 26:29; Lk. 22:15-16; Jn. 6:53; 1Cor. 5:7; 11:17-29). Observing Passover is vital to our commitment and ongoing membership in the New Covenant - ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ. If we do not observe it or observe it incorrectly, we have no part with him (Jn. 13:8). The importance of its correct understanding and observance cannot be underestimated.

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## The First Passover

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The first Passover took place on the 14th day of the first month of Abib when the nation of Israel was in bondage under the Egyptians (Ex. 12). That Passover was the catalyst for Israel’s physical release and deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Each household was commanded to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and then put some of its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their home. They were then to roast and eat the sacrificial lamb that evening, keeping a watch or vigil that entire night (Ex. 12:42).

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The blood upon the doorposts and lintels was a sign for the Lord not to pass by but to remain above each door, standing guard to prevent the destroyer from entering and killing the firstborn of the Hebrews (Ex. 12:23).

Below is the Apostolic Bible Polyglot (ABP+) with Strong's numbers for a clearer definition and numerical reference.

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Exod. 12:23 (ABP+) **And**G2532 **the LORD will go by**G3928 G2962 **to strike**G3960 **the**G3588 **Egyptians**. G\* **And** G2532 **he shall see**G3708 **the**G3588 **blood**G129 **upon**G1909 **the**G3588 **lintel**G5393.2 **and**G2532 **upon**G1909 **both**G297 **of the**G3588 **doorposts.**G4712.4 **And**G2532**the LORD will go by**G3928 G2962 **the**G3588 **door**, G2374 **and**G2532 **he will not**G3756**leave off**G863 **the**G3588 **annihilating**G3645 **so as to enter** G1525 **into**G1519 G3588**your house**G3614 G1473 **to strike**. G3960

Exod. 12:23 (BBE) For the Lord will go through the land, sending death on the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the two sides and the top of the door, the Lord will go over your door and will not let death come in for your destruction.

Later at Mt. Sinai, God, through His mediator, the Angel of YHVH, established what we know as the First Covenant with the nation of Israel. It enabled a relationship between God and His chosen people and set the foundational structure of the nation. It was ratified with the shedding and sprinkling of animal blood (Ex. 24:4-8; Heb. 9:18-20).

## Establishment of the Covenant

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The First Covenant provided animal sacrifices for the purpose of physical purification from sin. These sacrifices foreshadowed the perfect and complete sacrifice–Jesus, the Christ. By his own blood sin was put away and made everlasting life possible (Lev. 4:35, 5:10; Heb. 9:13, 16-26; 1Pet. 1:19). The animal sacrificial system was not only a schoolmaster or tutor to lead faithful believers to Christ but it also established the principle that without the shedding of blood, there could be no forgiveness of sins (Lev. 17:11; cf. Heb. 9:22).

In the First Covenant an unblemished animal from either the flock or the herd, typically a lamb, was required for sacrifice on the afternoon of the 14th of the first month of Abib for Passover (Deut. 16:2; Ex. 12:5; 2Chron. 35:1; Mk. 14:12). This is in accordance with the law and calendar of God (Ex. 12:2-14; Deut. 16:1).

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The sacrifices of Passover began at approximately 3:00 pm on the afternoon of that day (Mk. 25:25; Jn. 19:14; Ex. 12:6; Deut. 16:5-7; 2Chron. 35:1). The animal was then roasted and eaten **between the two evenings, approaching the end of the day**(Lev. 23:5; cf. Num. 9:11-14).

The word used for 'evening' in English is Strong's Hebrew (H6153) *'ereb*' which has a broad application. It can stretch from the afternoon to complete darkness. God decreed that light divides the day from the night (Gen. 1:1-5, 1:14-19). For more information on when a day starts and finishes, or God's calendar in general, see the paper, '[*God's calendar - Understanding how to determine God's day, months and the start of the year*](https://editor.wix.com/html/editor/web/renderer/render/document/87573a6c-7825-47b5-97b8-654bf454de25/determining-the-biblical-new-moon)'.

Nothing of the Passover sacrifice was to remain until morning (Ex. 12:10). The symbolism associated with it is that it's a complete sacrifice, nothing remained. Thus, the Passover of the first Covenant sacrificial system represented the coming Messiah who would give his life completely, and nothing of his life would remain (1Pet. 1:19).

## The True Passover

The son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, is our Passover sacrificed for us (1Cor. 5:7). He willingly became our Passover by giving his life in our place, so that our sins, following our repentance, can be “passed over” in judgment (i.e., forgiven). By giving up himself for us, he is now able to redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for himself a people for his own possession who would be zealous for good works (1Jn. 3:4; Titus 2:14).

Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the afternoon of the 14th of Abib in the year 30 CE, which, in that year, fell on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday). He died at approximately 3:00 pm (Mt. 27:46-50; Mk. 15:33-37; Lk. 23:44-46), likely as the first lambs were being killed according to the Law. He was placed in the tomb just before dark as the annual Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened (High Day) was about to begin. (Jn. 19:14, 31, cf. Mat. 27:62).

The Passover is so important in God’s plan of salvation, that if one cannot keep it in the first month, God has made provisions in the law for it to be kept in the second month (Num. 9:10-11; 2Chro. 30:1-3). The correct understanding of and adherence to the Passover are vital if we are to be part of the Body of Christ, which is the only true church of God. It is a seal of God - necessary for resurrection from the dead at Christ’s return (Jn. 6:51-66; 13:8; cf. Gen. 17:11; Ex. 12:13; 13:1-10; 31:13; 16-17; Ezek. 20:11-20).

God has commanded His Covenant to eternity (Ps. 111:9; Ex. 12:24; Mt. 26:29). Its observance is binding upon all baptised members of the body of Christ, who from baptism are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, the spiritual temple of God and royal priesthood of the order of Melchizedek (Eph. 2:12-14; 1Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19; 2Cor. 6:16; 1Pet. 2:9; Heb. 6:20).

## The Feast of Unleavened Bread

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The Feast of Unleavened Bread commences on the 15th day of the first month beginning at dark. Nothing leavened is to remain in our homes over this period (Ex. 12:15-20; Lev. 23:5-8). We are to eat unleavened bread on each of the seven days of the Feast. Nothing leavened is to be consumed over that period (Deut. 16:3; Exod. 12:15, 34:18; Lev. 23:6).

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Scripture tells us that we are to observe a vigil, or night of watching, over the entire night portion of the 15th of Abib, the first night of Unleavened Bread (Deut. 16:7).

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Exod. 12:42 ESV  It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.

The first and last day of the Feast are Holy days and are to be kept like a sabbath (Lev. 23:7-8).

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## Symbols of Christ, the Paschal Lamb of God

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Christ is the singular truth symbolized by the sacrificial lamb of the First Covenant (Ex. 12:5, 43, 46; Jn. 1:29; 19:36). We memorialize his death every year at Passover by participating in the symbols of unleavened bread and wine (1Cor. 5;8; 11:24-26).

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The symbols of Passover in the First Covenant and the symbols of Passover in the Second Covenant, both identify the same singular truth – Christ our Passover sacrificed for us (Lk. 22:7; Mt. 22:6; 1Cor. 5:7; 1Pet. 1:18-19).

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The date and time of the Passover has never changed (Lev. 23:4-5; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8).

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On the night of his betrayal, Christ introduced the new symbols of the Second Covenant Passover: the foot-washing ceremony and the unleavened bread and wine. He did so on that evening out of necessity, because he would be killed at the time of the Passover as the Paschal Lamb later that same day (1Cor. 5:7). Christ's sacrifice on the afternoon of the 14th put an end to the need for the animal sacrificial system because he fulfilled its symbolism.

​The eating of a lamb as the Passover symbol was now superseded by the new symbols of unleavened bread and fermented wine.

Hebrews 10:8–10 (NASB95): After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” **He takes away the first in order to establish the second**. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the**body of Jesus Christ** **once for all**. (Emphasis added)

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​The Blood of the New Covenant - Wine or Grape Juice?

Lk. 22:20 (NASB95): And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

When Jesus Christ introduced the new symbols of the Passover, he did so in a way that conveyed the very meaning of these symbols by the words he chose. Christ said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood.” This “pouring out” represented the shedding of Christ’s blood at his death. Therefore, the (red) wine was a representation of his blood. There has been much debate regarding what was in the cup, however, by examining a few relevant scriptures it’s not difficult to reach the correct conclusion.

As previously mentioned, the First Covenant sacrificial system represented the coming Messiah who would give his life to pay the debt for our sins.

Lev. 17:11 (NASB95): For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls (lives); for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’

The pouring out of a sacrificial animal’s blood, represented the animal’s life being "poured out” in place of the sinner, although only for the purification of the flesh. It was Christ alone who could take away sin completely by willingly offering his life (Heb. 9:13-14). The idea that life is in the blood can only be conveyed by the appropriate symbol and that symbol is wine.

The fermentation process which transforms the juice of the grapes into wine is crucial to that symbolism. The natural yeasts and bacteria, which are alive, begin to act upon the juice of the grape and convert the natural sugars into alcohol. From this point onward the wine itself is alive.

It's this living aspect of wine that is so crucial to it being the only appropriate symbol of Christ’s shed blood.

The Bible is clear that it’s not appropriate to drink much wine or become drunk (1Tim. 3:8; Eph. 5:18), but in modest amounts wine brings joy to the heart (Ecc. 9:7; 10:19a; Ps. 104:15). And this is symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God bringing joy to the hearts of those who receive it (1Thes. 1:5; Acts 15:32; Gal. 5:22).

Php. 1:11 ESV filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The cup from which all the disciples drank as a symbol of the New Covenant was wine, not grape juice. Jesus Christ said, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Mat. 26:27-29). The “*fruit of the vine*” is an idiom referring to wine. This is confirmed by the apostle Paul when he admonished the church in Corinth because some members were abusing the wine and becoming drunk (1Cor. 11:20-21).​

The word for wine in Greek is SGD 3631 *oinos*: wine. It never means grape juice.

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Jesus was accused of being a drunkard by some of those who rejected him. This false accusation could only be considered plausible if he had been seen drinking wine on occasion (Lk. 7:33-34). The apostle Paul recommended to Timothy that he not just drink water but use a little wine for the benefit of his stomach (1 Tim. 5:23).

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Jesus used the example of how new wine was never poured into old wineskins because the old wineskins did not have the ability to stretch due to the fermentation process (Mat. 9:17). Jesus Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2: 1-12). The biblical account of the wedding in Cana has a spiritual element woven into it, specifically that the animal sacrifices would soon end since the Second Covenant in Christ's blood was about to be ratified. See ‘*The Significance of the Wedding in Cana’* for more.

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Wine represents the living blood of Jesus Christ poured out on our behalf; grape juice does not.

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## The Second Replaces the First

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Just before his death, Christ announced that the unleavened bread is the lawful replacement for the lamb of the First Covenant, which we now partake of as a symbol of his sacrifice,

Having taken **bread** and having blessed it, he broke it and gave it to them, **saying, “This is my body**being given on your behalf, **do this in remembrance of me”**. And the cup, likewise after eating, saying, “This is the cup of the **new covenant**in my blood being poured out on your behalf” (Lk. 22:19-20; RNT; emphasis added).

The symbol of a physical lamb served its purpose **IN** **THE FIRST COVENANT** - picturing the true Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, who was to come (Jn. 1:29, 35; Rev. 12:11). That Covenant, with animal sacrifices and the eating of lamb, has ended. It has no redeemable purpose or application today. Therefore, insisting on eating lamb as the Passover impedes the symbols of the New Covenant and contradicts the directives given by Christ himself (1Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8),

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And while they were eating, Jesus, having taken**the bread and having blessed it**, broke it, and giving it to the disciples, **said, “Take, eat; this is my body**.” And having taken **the cup**, **and having blessed it,** he said, **“Drink from it, everyone; for this is my blood of the covenant**, which is being poured out for many **for the release of sins**” (Mt. 26:26-28; RNT; emphasis added).

Let's be clear, Christ’s death put an end to the First Covenant animal sacrificial system (Mt. 5:17; Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:28; 10:10, 14; 1Cor. 5:7). The law has not changed, only the symbols. The old symbols of the First Covenant Passover and the new symbols **introduced** during the Supper **point to the same reality**- Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a **participation** in the **blood of Christ**? The **bread** which we break, is it not a **participation** in the **body of Christ**? (1 Cor. 10:16; RSV; Emphasis added)

Because many have failed to recognise or comprehend this, they find themselves thinking that a Passover meal, which includes a physical lamb, is required, or at the very least, appropriate. Yet this covenantal symbol expired with the death of the true Passover it prefigured. It belonged strictly to the animal sacrificial system of the First Covenant.

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The partaking of a physical lamb as a commemorative Passover meal, which has become a tradition for many people today, shows a misapprehension of the role of the Messiah, what he fulfilled and the purpose of the Passover.

Christ’s death is the dividing line between the two types of symbols of each covenant. Awareness of this should prevent the combination of the two (or the re-introduction of a physical lamb in any sort of capacity) in the covenantal agreement with God (Heb. 8:7-13). The first-century Churches’ observance of the Second Covenant Passover symbols and the end of consuming a physical lamb testify to this fact (1Cor. 11:20-34).

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In the First Covenant, the Paschal offering provided enough food for everyone in each of the families to partake of and ensured no one went hungry throughout the night of watching (Ex. 12:3-4). In the context of the narrative in 1 Corinthians, since the consumption of a physical lamb was no longer necessary, everyone meeting together to observe the Passover symbols brought food as they were able for the common meal.

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The Apostle Paul admonished the assembly in Corinth for not waiting for everyone to gather before eating the evening meal prior to partaking of the Lord’s Supper, as those who came later found no food left for them. Others became drunk.

1Cor. 11:20-29 ESV  When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat.  (21)  For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.  (22)  What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.  (23)  For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,  (24)  and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”  (25)  In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”  (26)  For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.  (27)  Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.  (28)  Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.  (29)  For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

For those who were hungry, he told them to eat and drink (in moderation) prior to assembling for the Passover (1Cor. 11:21-22). They did not have to wait for a roasted lamb as per the First Covenant Passover meal. If one wanted to eat a meal before they assembled, they could. But when we are assembled, we should wait until everyone gets there before we eat of the common meal, or put aside a plate of food for them.

1Cor. 11:33-34 CEV My dear friends, you should wait until everyone gets there before you start eating.  (34)  If you really are hungry, you can eat at home. Then you won't condemn yourselves when you meet together. After I arrive, I will instruct you about the other matters.

If one is still of the world displaying a carnal attitude, then we truly do not show that we love God or His Son, Jesus (Jn. 8:23; 14:15; 1Cor. 11:20). We are not to be of this world in the same manner Christ was not of this world (Jn. 17:14, 16).

1Jn 4:20-21 ISV  Whoever says, "I love God," but hates his brother is a liar. The one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love the God whom he has not seen.  (21)  And this is the commandment that we have from him: the person who loves God must also love his brother.

We are to bear fruits of our repentance (Lk. 3:8; Mt. 3:8 cf. Mt. 7:17-20).

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## Take This Bread for Food

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Failing to grasp the necessary transition of the First Covenant symbols of a physical lamb and bitter herbs to that of the Second Covenant symbols of the bread and wine, finds many today arguing and asking the same question as that of the Jews in Christ’s day, “*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*” (Jn. 6:51-55)

I am the **living bread**which has **come from heaven**: if**any man** takes **THIS BREAD FOR FOOD**he will have life for ever: and more than this, **THE BREAD**which I will give **IS MY FLESH**which I will give for the life of the world.  52 Then the Jews had an angry discussion among themselves, saying, How is it possible for this man to give us his flesh for food?  53 Then Jesus said to them, truly I say to you,**If you DO NOT TAKE the FLESH of the Son of man for food, and if you DO NOT TAKE HIS BLOOD FOR DRINK, YOU have NO LIFE IN YOU.**  54 He who takes my flesh for food and my blood for drink has eternal life: and I will take him up from the dead at the last day. 55 My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink (Jn. 6:51-55 (BBE; Emphasis added).

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## Our Duty

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The foot-washing is conducted between baptised members of the body of Christ and is mandatory (Jn. 13:14-15). It is done before the partaking of the bread and wine (Jn. 13:8; 1 Tim. 5:10). It is a reminder of the humble attitude a servant ought to have. It denotes the spiritual washing from the pollution from sin and the forgiveness we receive. We are to extend this to one another, just as Christ did for us. It is a demonstration of the subjugation of our minds to the duty and will of God.

As we seek to do the will of the Father and the good of the brethren, we are not to look down on anyone or any task. The foot-washing is also a yearly reminder that the leaven of this world hinders our willingness to lay aside everything for the Kingdom of God (Jn. 13:4-5; 17:14-16; 1 Jn. 2:15-17).

The bread and wine are only to be consumed by those circumcised of the heart, that is, only those who are baptised in Christ and have had the law of God placed in them and written on their heart (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:31-33; Rom. 2:29; Jn. 13:10).

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The Law states that no sacrifice is to be offered with leaven (Ex. 23:18). The bread, symbolic of the body of Christ for Passover, must therefore be unleavened, containing no yeast or leavening/raising agents.

The New Testament symbols for Passover today are still bound by the law, which requires the symbols not be taken before the mid-afternoon of the 14th day of Nisan/Abib.

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month **at twilight, is the LORD's Passover**(Lev. 23:5; ESV; Emphasis added).

Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. (3) On the fourteenth day of this month, **at twilight**, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances (Num. 9:2-3; NASB; emphasis added).

The same timing applies to the Passover taken in the second month (Num. 9:11-14).

We are required by law to stay physically and spiritually unleavened from the taking of the symbols of Christ, our Passover sacrifice, until the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (21st of Abib), with no opportunity to eat anything leavened within that entire period.

It is not coincidental that every time God’s people returned to Him, they observed the Passover with its correct covenantal symbols taken **from the time of afternoon sacrifice for the Passover offering on the 14th of the first month** (2Chron. 35ff; Ezra 6:9; Josh. 5:10; 2Ki. 23:21; 2Chron. 35:1).

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2Chron. 35:17-18 ESV And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, **and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days**.  (18)  No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Emphasis added).

## Sanctification Intact

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Observing the symbols for the New Covenant Passover at the end of the 14th of Abib–the biblically correct time to observe Passover, in fact, rectifies the proper sequence. It is in line with Christ’s instructions, the disciples, the first-century Church and, most importantly, God’s will and His law. We fulfil our duties to the covenantal agreement and we honour Christ in the manner he proposed (Lk. 22:19; 1Cor. 11:23-26).

There is also no breach of the law regarding ingathering when the symbols of bread and wine are taken. There are some who partake of the symbols for Christ for Passover at the beginning of the 14th day, (i.e., after the 13th day ends in the evening (dark) and as the new day of the 14th begins). In this scenario, there are some 20+ hours that separate the partaking of the Passover symbols of Christ’s sacrifice and the commencement of the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread.

When we take the Passover symbols of the bread and wine at the end of the 14th day, we then move seamlessly into the first Holy Day of the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread and prepare to undertake a night vigil until first light (Ex. 12:42) as the law prescribes. We remain unleavened, with the symbolism and the connectivity of sanctification unbroken. But when the Passover symbols of the body of Christ are observed incorrectly, at the beginning of the 14th, some 20 hrs before the first day of Unleavened Bread begins, one is still able to eat leavened bread for a number of hours leading up to the beginning of the feast of Unleavened bread (Ex. 12:18). This is contrary to the entire purpose and premise of tying the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread together.

Lev. 23:5-6 ESV In the first month, on the fourteenth **day** of the month **at twilight,** **is** **the** **LORD's** **Passover**.  (6)  And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. (Emphasis added)

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**Renewing Our Membership**

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Some 20 hours prior to Christ’s death, he introduced and explained the meaning of the symbols of the foot-washing, the unleavened bread, and the wine during the last meal he shared with his twelve disciples. Taking part in the symbols is the means for us to take part in the Covenant of God and our ongoing and renewing membership in the New or Second Covenant, thus remaining in Christ and he in us (Jn. 6:51-56).

Logically, one cannot commemorate the death of Christ for Passover if we partake of the symbols some 20 hrs before his memorial death, i.e., at the beginning of the 14th of Abib. It would be akin to Ancient Israel sacrificing and partaking of the lamb of the First Covenant some 20 hrs before it was commanded to be sacrificed and eaten, which according to the law renders the sacrifice of no consequence, as well as openly disobeying the commandment of God, and thus becomes idolatry.

If we observe the Passover symbols and foot washing at the beginning, rather than at the end of the 14th, by necessity we are forcing people to be in-gathered one day earlier at the end of the 13th/beginning of the 14th for the foot-washing, bread and wine (Jn. 13: 6-17). It adds an extra day to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is contrary to the law.

The erroneous practice of observing the ordinances on the night part (beginning) of the 14th places the individual in a time, and place, when their death penalty (for committing sin) cannot be “passed over”. Remember, Christ, our Lord, protected the Hebrews in Egypt who obeyed God’s word and killed the Passover at the end of the 14th of Abib and had its blood on the doors where they lived (Ex. 12:12-13). Today, that blood is found, symbolically, in the wine we partake, as a sign of the Second Covenant Passover (Mt. 26:27; Mk. 14:23-24; Lk. 22:20; 1Cor. 11:23-26). The sign of the blood of Christ of the New Covenant is now on the doorposts and lintels of our minds and hearts, and a sign of our obedience to the second phase of the Covenant of God (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).

## The Second Covenant Symbols Introduction

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There is a rational explanation as to why Christ introduced the symbols for the Passover, which the disciples had to partake of, yet this was at the beginning of the 14th of Abib rather than in the late afternoon (i.e., 3 p.m. onwards).

Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” 9 So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?” 10 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. 11 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?”’ 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you (Lk. 22:7-20; NKJV).

The night of Christ’s betrayal was not the evening in which the Lamb had already been sacrificed (Jn. 13:27-29). Only Christ himself knew fully that he was the Passover Lamb of God that would be killed the following afternoon and ratify the New Covenant in his blood. The disciples only knew that a Passover sacrifice had to be offered and killed later in the afternoon of that same day, in accordance with the animal sacrificial ordinances of the First Covenant. They did not understand it would be their Lord and Master who would provide himself as the sacrificial offering in fulfilment of scripture (Isa. 11:1, 49:7, 50:6, 52:14; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 17:22-24; Zech. 6:12; Psa. 22:6-7, 15, 17, 69:7-12, Psa. 69:19-20, 88:8, 102:3-5).

Isa 53:1-12 ESV  Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?  (2)  For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.  (3)  He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  (4)  Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.  (5)  But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.  (6)  All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.  (7)  He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.  (8)  By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?  (9)  And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.  (10)  Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.  (11)  Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.  (12)  Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

When the new symbols were introduced to them, it was a proclamation foreshadowing that Christ would be the Passover Lamb sacrificed that year at Passover. It was the moment that signified the impending fulfilment of the sacrificial law. Christ, offering himself, brought an end to all the sacrificial ordinances, which included a physical lamb (or goat) as the Passover symbol.

The new symbols he introduced became the participatory requirement at Passover. Starting with Christ’s disciples that evening, entrance into the New Covenant through the partaking of the new symbols of Passover began, and would continue progressively until everyone his Father calls is brought in (Jn. 6:44, 65; Rom. 2:4b).

When Christ introduced the New Covenant symbols, all the disciples were told to eat the bread and drink of the wine then and there. Christ spoke of the symbols in the present tense, which illustrated their relevance in that moment (re-read Lk. 22: 19-20).

In 30 CE, the twelve disciples found themselves in a unique position. They were the actual witnesses of the true Passover Lamb, fulfilling the symbolism of the physical lamb of the First Covenant. The introduction that evening by Christ to his disciples signified they could partake of his body, symbolically, with him, before his actual death as the Lamb of God.

Our Lord gave the disciples (in the form of the symbols of bread and wine) the means to validate their consumption of the Passover as part of the New Covenantal agreement beginning that year. By their actual partaking of the symbols that foreshadowed the impending death of Christ, they were the first to be initiated into the Second Covenant (v19-20).

When Christ took that bread, he gave thanks to his God and Father and then explained to his disciples that the bread symbolised his body, ‘*which is given for you’* (Lk. 22:19). Christ did likewise with the wine. Christ’s prayer and proclamation that the symbols represented his body and blood show that they were more than an informal or helpful guide.**Christ giving the bread and wine to his disciples showed the acceptability and authenticity of the new symbols beyond any shadow of a doubt.**

Christ knew the disciples had to partake of the Passover according to the law. Following Christ’s death, a physical lamb was no longer a valid sacrificial offering at Passover. Therefore, Christ had to introduce the new symbols to his disciples personally the evening before, **to ensure they fulfilled the requirement of the Second Covenant upon his death the following afternoon, at the appointed time of the Passover**- since it was prophesied, they would be scattered (Zech. 13:7; cf. Mt. 26:31).

The disciples, upon reflection, after the initial hurt and shock of witnessing the death of their beloved Lord, would have recalled the events of the previous night. It would be etched vividly into their memories and hearts forever. Having recalled being told to eat of the unleavened bread that represented his body and drink of the wine which represented the New Covenant in his blood, they would have realised they had partaken of the Passover Lamb, which their Lord and Christ now fulfilled. They would have come to the realisation they were the first to experience the replacement of a physical lamb as the Passover symbol. They took part in more than a “walk-through” or “practice run” that night.

The full impact of Christ's words, *'do this in remembrance of me,'* (Lk. 22:19) would have been apparent.

We are also able to get a better insight and understanding when Christ expressed, ‘*with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’* It was the partaking of these symbols by Christ’s disciples that he desired to oversee personally, that validated his disciples’ entry into the New Covenant as foundational members of his spiritual body, the Church.

To explain the validity and authority of the New Covenant in Christ, the apostle Paul used the analogy of the will that required the death of the testator to take effect. The New Covenant was ratified upon Christ’s death.

Heb. 9:14-20 (NASB) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you’.

## Kept in Remembrance

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Since Christ was not due to be sacrificed until the following afternoon, the partaking of the symbols of Christ by his disciples was done in faith, before the fact, as a foreshadowing of the Lord’s impending death. We are required to observe the same symbols at the end of the 14th of Abib in faithful acknowledgement and remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice, after the fact, in recognition that Christ died between the evenings on the 14th of Abib as our Passover Lamb for the very same purpose.

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The only difference now is that we receive confirmation of our adoption through Christ’s blood, from his death, memorialised yearly, on the afternoon of the 14th, *“for also our Passover, Christ, was sacrificed”* (1Cor. 5:7b). In the year the disciples actually witnessed their Messiah’s death, there would be no need for them to commemorate his death, for they were witness to it. In other words, you can’t pay remembrance to something that you are witnessing in the moment, as it is unfolding right before your very eyes.

The introduction of the symbols also could not have been done in any previous year. The disciples partook of a physical Passover lamb with their Lord in both 28CE and 29CE. The actual timing of Christ’s death, which would fulfil the Passover sacrificial ordinance, was still anticipated.

It would have been idolatrous of Christ to introduce the symbols on any year other than the one he was earmarked to lay down his life. It was only in his final year that Christ could have given the symbols. The partaking of the symbols by his disciples signified it was this actual Passover in which Christ would lay down his life. It signified the Messiah was going to be the Passover Lamb of 30CE.

**Paul’s Writings–Does He Contradict the Law of God?**

Now when we read what the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians with a better understanding of the meaning and timing of the Passover symbols, we see Paul was only giving a historical account of when the new symbols were introduced. This letter in no way suggests the symbols were to be observed at the beginning of the 14th,

1Cor. 11:18-29; (NASB) For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there also have to be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. 20 Therefore when you come together it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, 21 for when you eat, each one takes his own supper first; and one goes hungry while another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What am I to say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I do not praise you.23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes. 27 **Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.** 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself **if he does not judge the body rightly** (Emphasis added).

When Christ introduced the symbols, he wasn’t establishing a new commandment or changing the existing time for the Passover (Ex. 12:5-6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3, 11; 2Chron. 35:1). The Law has already been written. Paul’s account in 1 Corinthians 11:17-29 also isn’t creating a new commandment with regard to the timing. Again, the Law has already been established.

If Paul advocated a new, earlier observance in honour of Christ using the New Covenant symbols for Passover to be taken at the beginning of the 14th of Abib, he would have been deemed a false apostle and false prophet (Isa. 8:20).

What the Apostle Paul stated here is a historical account. He also reiterated the solemnity of the occasion and its significance. Paul was addressing our spiritual duty and diligence when we come together as an assembly to honour God and partake of Christ, our Passover.

Christ’s sacrifice was the perfect example of humility and self-sacrifice. This should always be at the forefront of our minds. Proof that we are consuming Christ and putting on the new man should be evident in our behaviour and relationship with God and our neighbour (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:9-11). If we cannot recognise the basic principle of putting others before ourselves, and that no one is beneath us, and we are to love one another as ourselves, then the symbols of the Passover sacrifice of Christ are clearly lost on us.

Paul also verifies that the night in which the new symbols were introduced was not the night in which the Passover had already occurred (Jn. 13:1; 18:28). It was the night in which Christ was betrayed (v. 23).

Paul here is clarifying the significance of the bread and wine as the new symbols necessary to fulfil the observance of the Passover on the afternoon of the 14th.

Paul is clear that the cup of blessing is a participation in the blood of Christ, and the bread we break is a participation in the body of Christ. This connects the timing of participation of the symbols to the time of Christ's death.

The cup of blessing that we bless, **is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?** The bread that we break, **is it not a participation in the body of Christ**? (1Cor. 10:16; ESV; emphasis added).

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**Discerning the Body**

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In relation to the bread and wine symbolising Christ, we have to make sure we know the when and why, otherwise we bring judgement upon ourselves,

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Therefore **whoever** eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But **a man**must examine himself, and in so doing**he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.** 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and **drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly**(1Cor. 11:27-29; NASB, emphasis added).

Paul here is addressing each individual’s responsibility related to self-examination before partaking of the bread and drinking the cup, and only once a year. We must recognize the validity and necessity of taking these symbols, which is not a choice, but a condition of the faith, and making sure that we, to the best of our ability, are spiritually prepared to do so.

Paul is not saying that we must identify what we believe to be the true body (Church) of Christ before we can partake of the Passover. See the paper, ['*What is the Church Model?'*](https://editor.wix.com/html/editor/web/renderer/render/document/87573a6c-7825-47b5-97b8-654bf454de25/copy-of-the-good-samaritan)

We are each to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13). God’s spirit is the means by which His law is placed in us and written on our hearts (Jer. 31:31-33), and if we are willing, the Father’s spirit is able to guide each of us to salvation through and in Christ. We must rightly judge what the symbols represent, specifically the symbols of the Passover of the New Covenant, when they are to be observed, in their correct manner, literally, mentally and spiritually.

If some of us see that we have been observing the Passover symbols or timing incorrectly, then we must repent and turn from our error and seek God diligently.

For those who come to the understanding of the timing of the Lord’s Passover suddenly, or shortly after Passover of the first month, they are directed to keep it towards the end of the 14th of the second month, in accordance with the Law/Word of God (Num. 9:11).

The failure to recognise this error (or the reluctance to correct it once it has been understood) may well be one of the major reasons so few of this generation enter the first resurrection (1Cor. 15:23; Rev. 2 & 3; 20:5-6). It is illustrated in the parable Christ gave known as the ‘narrow door’ (Lk. 13: 22-27; Matt. 7:13-14).

No matter which camp one belongs to, most churches, by default, are not partaking of the Passover symbols of Christ (i.e., bread, wine and foot-washing) on the late afternoon of the 14th as the Law of God commands.

Each of us has the same decision to make. There are no soft options. Every one of us has to make the personal decision to correct and uphold the Covenant of God and accept Christ as our Passover by the means of the new symbols he introduced first to his disciples.

No baptised member of the Church is excluded or absolved. In this, we will all be tested as to whom we really place our allegiance and loyalty to - either to man or Almighty God.

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For a better understanding of the correct timing and observance of the Passover according to God's true biblical calendar, please read, *'*[*God's Biblical Calendar - Understanding How to Determine God's Day, Months, and the First Day of the Year.*](https://editor.wix.com/html/editor/web/renderer/render/document/87573a6c-7825-47b5-97b8-654bf454de25/determining-the-biblical-new-moon)

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