

## Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder?

[Biblical Archaeology Society Staff](#) April 19, 2019 – 148 Comments

### Traditional Views of Jesus' Last Supper as a Passover Meal

Many people assume that [Jesus'](#) Last Supper was a Seder, a ritual meal held in celebration of the Jewish holiday of Passover. And indeed, according to the Gospel of Mark 14:12, Jesus prepared for the Last Supper on the “first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb.” If Jesus and his disciples [gathered together to eat soon after the Passover lamb was sacrificed](#), what else could they possibly have eaten if not the Passover meal? And if they ate the Passover sacrifice, they must have held a Seder.

Three out of four of the canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) agree that [the Last Supper](#) was held only after the Jewish holiday had begun. Moreover, one of the best known and painstakingly detailed studies of the Last Supper—Joachim Jeremias's book *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*—lists no fewer than 14 distinct parallels between the Last Supper tradition and the Passover Seder.<sup>1</sup>



With his disciples gathered around him, Jesus partakes of his Last Supper. The meal in this late-15th-century painting by the Spanish artist known only as the Master of Perea consists of lamb, unleavened bread and wine—all elements of the Seder feast celebrated on the first night of the Jewish Passover festival. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke appear to present Jesus' Last Supper as a Seder. In John, however, the seven-day Passover festival does not begin until after Jesus is crucified. Jonathan Klawans suggests that the Passover Seder as we know it developed only after the time of Jesus. *Christie's Images/Superstock*

### The Passover Seder and Sacrifice

The Jewish holiday of Passover commemorates [the Exodus from Egypt](#). The roots of the festival are found in Exodus 12, in which God instructs the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb at twilight on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, before the sun sets (Exodus 12:18). That night the Israelites are to eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The lamb's blood should be swabbed on their doorposts as a sign. God, seeing the sign, will then “pass over” the houses of the Israelites (Exodus 12:13), while smiting the Egyptians with [the tenth plague](#), the killing of the first-born sons.



A San Francisco seder. California Rabbi Jack Frankel and his family lift the first glass of wine during a Seder meal, held on the first night of Passover (and the second night in the Diaspora). The Seder commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. Throughout the meal, the biblical story is retold; the food is linked symbolically with the Exodus. *Photo by Rodger Ressimyer, San Francisco/Corbis.*

Exodus 12 commands the Israelites to repeat this practice every year, performing the sacrifice during the day and then consuming it after the sun has set. (According to Jewish tradition, the new day begins with the setting of the sun, so the sacrifice is made on the 14th but the beginning of Passover and the meal are actually on the 15th, although this sequence of dates is not specified in Exodus.) Exodus 12 further speaks of a seven-day festival, which begins when the sacrifice is consumed (Exodus 12:15).

Once the Israelites [were settled in Israel](#), and once [a Temple was built in Jerusalem](#), the original sacrifice described in Exodus 12 changed dramatically. Passover became one of the Jewish Pilgrimage festivals, and Israelites were expected to travel to Jerusalem to sacrifice a Passover lamb at the Temple during the afternoon of the 14th day, and then consume the Passover sacrifice once the sun had set, and the festival had formally begun on the 15th. This kind of celebration is described as having taken place during the reigns of [Kings Hezekiah](#) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 30 and 35).

As time passed, the practice continued to evolve. Eventually, a number of customs, recorded in rabbinic literature, began to accumulate around the meal, which became so highly ritualized that it was called the *Seder*, from the Hebrew for “order”: Unleavened bread was broken, wine was served, the diners reclined and hymns were sung. Furthermore, during the meal, the Exodus story was retold and the significance of the unleavened bread, bitter herbs and wine was explained.

The bread and wine, the hymn, the reclining diners—many of these characteristic elements are shared by the Last Supper, as Jeremias pointed out. (Jeremias’s 14 parallels are given in full in endnote 1.) What is more, just as Jews at the Seder discuss the symbolism of the Passover meal, Jesus at his Last Supper discussed the symbolism of the wine and bread in light of [his own coming death](#).

It is not only Jeremias’s long list of parallels that leads many modern Christians and Jews to describe the Last Supper as a Passover Seder. The recent popularity of interfaith Seders (where Christians and Jews celebrate aspects of Passover and the Last Supper together) points to an emotional impulse that is also at work here. The Christian celebration of the Eucharist (Communion)—the Last Supper—is the fundamental ritual for many Christians. And among Jews the Passover Seder is one of the most widely practiced of all observances. In these times of ecumenicism and general good feeling between Christians and Jews, many people seem to find it reassuring to think that Communion (the Eucharist) and the Passover Seder are historically related.

## Historical Doubts about Jesus’ Last Supper as a Passover Seder

History, however, is often more complex and perhaps a little less comforting than we might hope. Although I welcome the current ecumenical climate, I believe we must be careful not to let our emotions get the better of us when we are searching for history. Indeed, even though the association of the Last Supper with a Passover Seder remains entrenched in the popular mind, a growing number of scholars are beginning to express serious doubts about this claim.

Of course a number of New Testament scholars—the Jesus Seminar comes to mind—tend to doubt that the Gospels accurately record very much at all about Jesus, with the exception of some of his sayings. Obviously if the Gospels cannot be trusted, then we have no reason to assume that there ever was a Last Supper at all. And if there was no Last Supper, then it could not have taken place on Passover.<sup>2</sup>



The sacrifice of the Passover lamb is conducted annually on Mt. Gerizim, in Nablus (ancient Shechem), in the West Bank, by the Samaritans, a religious group that split from Judaism by the second century B.C.E. The Samaritans retained the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) as their Scripture, although with some alterations. The Samaritan Bible refers to Mt. Gerizim, not Jerusalem, as the center of worship. *David Harris.*

Furthermore, several Judaic studies scholars—Jacob Neusner is a leading example—very much doubt that rabbinic texts can be used in historical reconstructions of the time of Jesus. But rabbinic literature is our main source of information about what Jews might have done during their Seder meal in ancient times. For reasons that are not entirely clear, other ancient Jewish sources, such as Josephus and Philo, focus on what Jews did in the Temple when the Passover sacrifice was offered, rather than on what they did afterward, when they actually ate the sacrifice. Again, if we cannot know how Jews celebrated Passover at the time of Jesus, then we have to plead ignorance, and we would therefore be unable to answer our question.

There is something to be said for these skeptical positions, but I am not such a skeptic. I want to operate here under the opposite assumptions: that the Gospels can tell us about the historical Jesus,<sup>3</sup> and that rabbinic sources can be used—with caution—to reconstruct what Jews at the time of Jesus might have believed and practiced.<sup>4</sup> Even so, I do not think the Last Supper was a Passover Seder.

## Jesus' Last Supper in the Gospels

While three of the four canonical Gospels strongly suggest that the Last Supper did occur on Passover, we should not get too comfortable based on that. The three Gospels that support this view are the three *synoptic* Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke. As anyone who has studied these three Gospels knows, they are closely related. In fact, the name *synoptic* refers to the fact that these three texts can be studied most effectively when “seen together” (as implied in the Greek etymology of *synoptic*). Thus, in fact we don’t really have three independent sources here at all. What we have, rather, is one testimony (probably Mark), which was then copied twice (by Matthew and Luke).

Against the “single” testimony of the synoptics that the Last Supper was a Passover meal stands the lone Gospel of John, which dates the crucifixion to the “day of Preparation for the Passover” (John 19:14). According to John, Jesus died just when the Passover sacrifice was being offered and before the festival began at sundown (see the sidebar to this article). Any last meal—which John does not record—would have taken place the night

before, or even earlier than that. But it certainly could not have been a Passover meal, for Jesus died before the holiday had formally begun.

So are we to follow John or the synoptics?<sup>5</sup> There are a number of problems with the synoptic account. First, if the Last Supper had been a Seder held on the first night of Passover, then that would mean Jesus' trial and crucifixion took place during the week-long holiday. If indeed Jewish authorities were at all involved in Jesus' trial and death, then according to the synoptics those authorities would have engaged in activities—holding trials and carrying out executions—that were either forbidden or certainly unseemly to perform on the holiday. This is not the place to consider whether Jewish authorities were involved in Jesus' death.<sup>6</sup> Nor is it the place to consider whether such authorities would have been devout practitioners of Jewish law. But this is the place to point out that if ancient Jewish authorities had been involved in something that could possibly be construed as a violation of Jewish law, the Gospels—with their hatred of the Jewish authorities—would probably have made the most of it. The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well.

There are, of course, some reasons to doubt John's account too. He may well have had theological motivations for claiming that Jesus was executed on the day of preparation when the Passover sacrifice was being offered but before Passover began at sundown. John's timing of events supports the Christian claim that Jesus himself was a sacrifice and that his death heralds a new redemption, just as the Passover offering recalls an old one. Even so, John's claim that Jesus was killed just before Passover began is more plausible than the synoptics' claim that Jesus was killed on Passover. And if Jesus wasn't killed on Passover, but before it (as John claims), then the Last Supper could not in fact have been a Passover Seder.

## A Jewish Last Supper Celebration

What then of Jeremias's long list of parallels? It turns out that under greater scrutiny the parallels are too general to be decisive. That Jesus ate a meal in Jerusalem, at night, with his disciples is not so surprising. It is also no great coincidence that during this meal the disciples reclined, ate both bread and wine, and sang a hymn. While such behavior may have been characteristic of the Passover meal, it is equally characteristic of practically any Jewish meal.

A number of scholars now believe that the ritual context for the Last Supper was not a Seder but a standard Jewish meal. That Christians celebrated the Eucharist on a daily or weekly basis (see Acts 2:46–47) underscores the fact that it was not viewed exclusively in a Passover context (otherwise, it would have been performed, like the Passover meal, on an annual basis).

An ancient Christian church manual called the *Didache* also suggests that the Last Supper may have been an ordinary Jewish meal. In Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Didache*, the eucharistic prayers are remarkably close to the Jewish Grace After Meals (*Birkat ha-Mazon*).<sup>7</sup> While these prayers are recited after the Passover meal, they would in fact be recited at any meal at which bread was eaten, holiday or not. Thus, this too underscores the likelihood that the Last Supper was an everyday Jewish meal.

Moreover, while the narrative in the synoptics situates the Last Supper during Passover, the fact remains that the only foods we are told the disciples ate are bread and wine—the basic elements of any formal Jewish meal. If this was a Passover meal, where is the Passover lamb? Where are the bitter herbs? Where are the four cups of wine?<sup>a</sup>



# The Symbolic Explanation of the Bread and Wine at Passover and Jesus' Last Supper

We are left with only one important parallel (Jeremias's 14th) that can be explained in terms of a Seder: the surprising fact that Jesus at his Last Supper engaged in symbolic explanation of the bread and wine, just as Jews at the Seder engage in symbolic explanations, interpreting aspects of the Passover meal in light of the Exodus from Egypt: "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant'" (Matthew 26:26–28=Mark 14:22; see also Luke 22:19–20). Is this not a striking parallel to the ways in which Jews celebrating the Seder interpret, for example, the bitter herbs eaten with the Passover sacrifice as representing the bitter life the Israelites experienced as slaves in Egypt?

However, this last parallel between the Last Supper and the Passover Seder assumes that the Seder ritual we know today was celebrated in Jesus' day. But this is hardly the case.

## The Development of the Modern Passover Seder

When Jews today sit down to celebrate the Passover Seder, they use a book known as the Haggadah. The Hebrew word *haggadah* literally means "telling"; the title refers to the book's purpose: to provide the ordered framework through which the story of Passover is told at the Seder. Telling the story of Passover is, of course, one of the fundamental purposes of the celebration, as stated in Exodus 13:8: "And you shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went forth from Egypt.'"



The text on this particular page from an illuminated Haggadah created by Zeev Raban (1890–1970) provides rabbinic commentary on a Biblical passage relating to Israel's sojourn in Egypt. After discussing Jacob's journey to Egypt, the text continues, "And he lived there"—this teaches that our father Jacob did not go to Egypt to settle there permanently, just temporarily, as it is written: 'And the sons of Jacob said to Pharaoh: "We have come to live in this land temporarily, for there is no pasture for the flocks that belong to your servants, for the famine is harsh in the land of Canaan"' (quoting Genesis 47:4). *From the Raban Haggadah/Courtesy of Mali Doron.*

The traditional text of the Haggadah as it exists today incorporates a variety of material, starting with the Bible, and running through medieval songs and poems. For many Jews (especially non-Orthodox Jews), the process of development continues, and many modern editions of the Haggadah contain contemporary readings of one sort or another. Even many traditional Jews have, for instance, adapted the Haggadah so that mention can be made of the Holocaust.<sup>8</sup>

How much of the Haggadah goes back to ancient times? In the 1930s and 1940s, the American Talmud scholar Louis Finkelstein (1895–1991) famously claimed that various parts of the Passover Haggadah were very early, stemming in part from the third century B.C.E.<sup>9</sup> In 1960, Israeli scholar Daniel Goldschmidt (1895–1972) effectively rebutted practically all of Finkelstein’s claims. It is unfortunate that Goldschmidt’s Hebrew article has not been translated, because it remains, to my mind, the classic work on the early history of the Passover Haggadah.<sup>10</sup> Fortunately, a number of brief and up-to-date treatments of the history of the Haggadah are now available.<sup>11</sup> A full generation later, the Goldschmidt-Finkelstein debate seems to have been settled, and in Goldschmidt’s favor. Almost everyone doing serious work on the early history of Passover traditions, including Joseph Tabory, Israel Yuval, Lawrence Hoffman, and the father-son team of Shmuel and Ze’ev Safrai, has rejected Finkelstein’s claims for the great antiquity of the bulk of the Passover Haggadah. What is particularly significant about this consensus is that these scholars are not radical skeptics. These scholars believe that, generally speaking, we can extract historically reliable information from rabbinic sources. But as demonstrated by the late Baruch Bokser in his book *The Origins of the Seder*, practically everything preserved in the early rabbinic traditions concerning the Passover Seder brings us back to the time immediately following the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.<sup>12</sup> It’s not that rabbinic literature cannot be trusted to tell us about history in the first century of the Common Era. It’s that rabbinic literature—in the case of the Seder—does not even claim to be telling us how the Seder was performed before the destruction of the Temple.<sup>b</sup>

Let me elaborate on this proposition by examining the Haggadah’s requirement of explaining the Passover symbols:

Rabban Gamaliel used to say: Whoever does not make mention of the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation: namely, the Passover sacrifice, unleavened bread (*matzah*) and bitter herbs.

- (1) The Passover sacrifice, which our ancestors used to eat at the time when the Holy Temple stood—what is the reason? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt. As it is said, “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover...” (Exodus 12:27).
- (2) The unleavened bread, which we eat—what is the reason? Because the dough of our ancestors had not yet leavened when the King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed be He revealed Himself to them and redeemed them. As it is said, “And they baked unleavened cakes...” (Exodus 12:39).
- (3) These bitter herbs, which we eat—what is the reason? Because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors bitter in Egypt. As it is said, “And they made their lives bitter...” (Exodus 1:14).



Rabban Gamaliel instructs his students in this illumination from the Sarajevo Haggadah. The Haggadah credits Gamaliel with introducing the requirement that the symbolic significance of the food served during the Seder be explained during the meal. Some scholars who assume the Last Supper was a Seder have suggested that Jesus deliberately explained the significance of the bread and wine in fulfillment of this requirement. But the requirement may not have even been in place in the time of Jesus. There were two leaders of the rabbinic academy called Gamaliel: One lived around the time of Jesus; the other, after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. *Sarajevo National Museum*.

On first reading, Jeremias might appear to be correct: Jesus' explanation of the bread and the wine does seem similar to Rabban Gamaliel's explanation of the Passover symbols. Might not Jesus be presenting a competing interpretation of these symbols? Possibly. But it really depends on when this Rabban Gamaliel lived. If he lived later than Jesus, then it would make no sense to view Jesus' words as based on Rabban Gamaliel's.

Unfortunately for the contemporary historian, there were two rabbis named Gamaliel, both of whom bore the title "rabban" (which means "our master" and was usually applied to the head of the rabbinic academy). The first lived decades before the destruction of the Temple, according to rabbinic tradition.<sup>13</sup> It is this Gamaliel who is referred to in Acts 22:3, in which Paul is said to have claimed that he was educated "at the feet of Gamaliel." The second Rabban Gamaliel was, according to rabbinic tradition, the grandson of the elder Gamaliel. This Gamaliel served as head of the rabbinic academy sometime after the destruction of the Temple. Virtually all scholars working today believe that the Haggadah tradition attributing the words quoted above to Gamaliel refers to the grandson, Rabban Gamaliel the Younger, who lived long after Jesus had died.<sup>14</sup> One piece of evidence for this appears in the text quoted above, in which Rabban Gamaliel is said to have spoken of the time "when the Temple was still standing"—as if that time had already passed. Furthermore, as Baruch Bokser has shown, the bulk of early rabbinic material pertaining to the Passover Haggadah is attributed in the Haggadah itself to figures who lived immediately following the destruction of the Temple (and were therefore contemporaries of Gamaliel the Younger). Finally, a tradition preserved in the Tosefta (a rabbinic companion volume to the earliest rabbinic lawbook, the Mishnah, edited perhaps in the third or fourth century) suggests that Gamaliel the Younger played some role in Passover celebrations soon after the

Temple was destroyed, when animal sacrifices could for this reason no longer be offered.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the Passover Seder as we know it developed after 70 C.E. I wish we could know more about how the Passover meal was celebrated before the Temple was destroyed. But unfortunately, our sources do not answer this question with any certainty. Presumably, Jesus and his disciples would have visited the Temple to slaughter their Passover sacrifice. Then they would have consumed it along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, as required by the Book of Exodus. And presumably they would have engaged in conversation pertinent to the occasion. But we cannot know for sure.

## **Why the Synoptic Gospels Portray the Last Supper as a Passover Meal**

Having determined that the Last Supper was not a Seder and that it probably did not take place on Passover, I must try to account for why the synoptic Gospels portray the Last Supper as a Passover meal. Of course, the temporal proximity of Jesus' crucifixion (and with it, the Last Supper) to the Jewish Passover provides one motive: Surely this historical coincidence could not be dismissed as just that.

Another motive relates to a rather practical question: Within a few years after Jesus' death, Christian communities (which at first consisted primarily of Jews) began to ask when, how and even whether they should celebrate or commemorate the Jewish Passover.<sup>16</sup> This was a question not only early on, but throughout the time of the so-called Quartodeciman controversy. The Quartodecimans (the 14-ers) were Christians who believed that the date of Easter should be calculated so as to coincide with the Jewish celebration of Passover, whether or not that date fell on a Sunday. The Jewish calendar was (and is) lunar, and therefore there is always a full moon on the night of the Passover Seder, that is, the night following the 14th of Nisan. But that night is not always a Saturday night. The Quartodeciman custom of celebrating Easter beginning on the evening following the 14th day apparently began relatively early in Christian history and persisted at least into the fifth century C.E. The alternate view—that Easter must be on a Sunday, regardless of the day on which the Jewish Passover falls—ultimately prevailed. Possibly the Gospels' disagreements about the timing of the Last Supper were the result of



these early Christian disputes about when Easter should be celebrated. After all, if you wanted to encourage Christians to celebrate Easter on Passover, would it not make sense to emphasize the fact that Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples just before he died?

Related to the question of when Christians should recall Jesus' last days was a question of how they should be recalled. Early on, a number of Christians—Quartodecimans and others—felt that the appropriate way to mark the Jewish Passover was not with celebration, but with fasting. On the one hand, this custom reflected an ancient Jewish tradition of fasting during the time immediately preceding the Passover meal (as related in *Mishnah Pesachim* 10:1). On the other hand, distinctively Christian motives for this fast can also be identified, from recalling Jesus' suffering on the cross to praying for the eventual conversion of the Jews.<sup>17</sup>



Jesus is the Paschal lamb in the Gospel of John, which associates the crucifixion, rather than the Last Supper, with the Passover festival. According to John, Jesus died on the “day of Preparation for the Passover” (John 19:14), when the Passover sacrifice was being offered but before the festival began at sundown.

In Matthias Grunewald's altarpiece (1510–1516) for the monastery of Isenheim, Germany (but now in the Unterlinden Museum, in Colmar), the crucified Jesus is explicitly linked with the Paschal sacrifice. To the right of the cross stands a wounded lamb, which carries a cross and bleeds into a chalice. The disciple whom Jesus loved comforts Jesus' mother at left. Mary Magdalene kneels at the foot of the cross, her alabaster ointment jar beside her. At right, John the Baptist points to Jesus. His prediction that Jesus will overtake him (“He must increase, but I must decrease,” John 3:30) is inscribed beside him in Latin. *Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.*

The German New Testament scholar Karl Georg Kuhn has argued that the Gospel of Luke places the Last Supper in a Passover context in order to convince Christians not to celebrate Passover. He notes that the synoptic Last Supper tradition attributes to Jesus a rather curious statement of abstinence: “I have earnestly desired to eat this Paschal lamb with you before I suffer, for I tell you that I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God...[and] I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:15–18; cf. Mark 14:25 [“I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God”]=Matthew 26:29). The synoptics' placement of the Last Supper in a Passover context should be read along with Jesus' statement on abstinence; in this view, the tradition that the Last Supper was a Passover meal argues that Christians should mark the Passover not by celebrating, but by fasting, because Jesus has already celebrated his last Passover.<sup>18</sup> Thus, until Jesus' kingdom is fulfilled, Christians should not celebrate at all during Passover.

New Testament scholar Bruce Chilton recently presented an alternate theory. He argues that the identification of the Last Supper with a Passover Seder originated among Jewish Christians who were attempting to maintain the Jewish character of early Easter celebrations.<sup>19</sup> By calling the Last Supper a Passover meal, these Jewish-Christians were trying to limit Christian practice in three ways. Like the Passover sacrifice, the recollection of the Last Supper could only be celebrated in Jerusalem, at Passover time, and by Jews.<sup>5</sup>

Without deciding between these two contradictory alternatives (though Kuhn's is in my mind more convincing), we can at least agree that there are various reasons why the early church would have tried to “Passoverize” the Last Supper tradition.<sup>20</sup> Placing the Last Supper in the context of Passover was a literary tool in early Christian debates about whether or not and how Christians should celebrate Passover.



Other examples of Passoverization can be identified. The Gospel of John, as previously noted, and Paul (1 Corinthians 5:7–8) equate Jesus’ crucifixion with the Passover sacrifice: “Our Paschal lamb, Christ has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” This too is a Passoverization of the Jesus tradition, but it is one that contradicts the identification of the Last Supper with the Seder or Passover meal.

Both of these Passoverizations can be placed in the broader context of Exodus typology in general. W.D. Davies and N.T. Wright have argued that various New Testament sources depict the events of Jesus’ life as a new Exodus. Early Christians interpreted Jesus’ life and death in light of the ancient Jewish narrative of redemption par excellence, the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Surely the depiction of the Last Supper as a Passover observance could play a part in this larger effort of arguing that Jesus’ death echoes the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>21</sup>

This process of Passoverization did not end with the New Testament. The second-century bishop Melito of Sardis (in Asia Minor) once delivered a widely popular Paschal sermon, which could well be called a “Christian Haggadah,” reflecting at great length on the various connections between the Exodus story and the life of Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

Passoverization can even be found in the Middle Ages. Contrary to popular belief, the Catholic custom of using unleavened wafers in the Mass is medieval in origin. The Orthodox churches preserve the earlier custom of using leavened bread.<sup>23</sup> Is it not possible to see the switch from using leavened to unleavened bread as a “Passoverization” of sorts?

Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder? Most likely, it was not.

## When Passover Begins: The Synoptics versus John

	14th of Nisan (Ending at Sundown)	15th of Nisan (Beginning at Sundown)
	Day of Preparation for Passover. Passover lamb sacrificed in late afternoon.	Passover holiday begins and a festive Seder meal is held at night. Passover lamb is consumed.
Matthew 26–27, Mark 14–15 and Luke 22–23	Jesus and his disciples prepare for Passover.	Jesus and his disciples hold a Last Supper at the time of the Passover Seder. Jesus is arrested that night.
		He is killed the next morning, which is the day of the 15th of Nisan.
John 19	Jesus crucified while the Passover lambs are being sacrificed.  (The Last Supper is not mentioned by John, but it would have taken place the night before the crucifixion or even earlier.)	

---

*“Was Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder?”* by Jonathan Klawans originally appeared in *Bible Review*, October 2001. The article was first republished in *Bible History Daily* in October 2012. Klawans also wrote a follow-up article, *“Jesus’ Last Supper Still Wasn’t a Passover Seder Meal.”*—Ed.

---



**Jonathan Klawans** is Professor of Religion at Boston University. He is the author of *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2005) and *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), which received the Salo Wittmayer Baron Prize for the best first book in Jewish studies.

## Notes:

[a.](#) Some may also ask, where is the *unleavened* bread? The Gospels do not specify that Jesus fed his disciples unleavened bread, which is what Jews would eat at Passover. This however does not preclude the possibility that Jesus used unleavened bread at the Last Supper, as Jews commonly refer to unleavened bread (called in Hebrew, *matzah*) as simply “bread.” See, for example, Deuteronomy 16:3 and Nahum N. Glatzer, *The Passover Haggadah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), pp. 24, 64.

[b.](#) See Baruch Bokser, *“Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?”* *Bible Review*, Summer 1987.

[c.](#) See Bruce Chilton, *“The Eucharist—Exploring Its Origins,”* *Bible Review*, December 1994.

[1.](#) The book first appeared in 1935 and was revised and translated various times after that. The 14 parallels are listed in the 1960 third edition, which was translated into English in 1966. See Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1966), esp. pp. 42–61. His 14 parallels may be summarized as follows: (1) The Last Supper took place in Jerusalem, (2) in a room made available to pilgrims for that purpose, and (3) it was held during the night. (4) Jesus celebrated that meal with his “family” of disciples; and (5) while they ate, they reclined. (6) This meal was eaten in a state of ritual purity. (7) Bread was broken during the meal and not just at the beginning. (8) Wine was consumed and (9) this wine was red. (10) There were last-minute preparations for the meal, after which (11) alms were given, and (12) a hymn was sung. (13) Jesus and his disciples then remained in Jerusalem. Finally, (14) Jesus discussed the symbolic significance of the meal, just as Jews do during the Passover Seder. For brief surveys summarizing the question see Robert F. O’Toole, “Last Supper,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), vol. 4, pp. 235–236 and Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 423–427.

[2.](#) For a representative statement denying the historicity of the Last Supper traditions, see Robert W. Funk and The Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), p. 139.

[3.](#) For an excellent treatment of what we can and cannot know of the historical Jesus, see the recent book by my colleague Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[4.](#) For an excellent summary of Judaism in Jesus' time—one which makes judicious use of rabbinic evidence—see E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 B.C.E.–66 C.E.* (London: SCM Press, 1992). For more on the use of rabbinic sources, see Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), esp. pp. 59–84.

[5.](#) There are those who attempt to harmonize John and the synoptics by supposing that they disagreed not about when the Last Supper occurred, but about whether the date of Passover was supposed to be calculated by following a solar calendar or a lunar one. Annie Jaubert presents this theory in her book, *The Date of the Last Supper* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1965). This view cannot be accepted, however. It is too difficult to conceive of Passover having been celebrated twice in the same place without any contemporary or even later writer referring to such an event. Surely it would have been remarkable if two Passovers were held in the same week! Moreover, while we do know of solar calendars from the Book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, we do not know how any of these calendars really worked. Jubilees's calendar, for instance, explicitly prohibits any form of intercalation (the adding of extra days in a leap year). And without intercalation, by Jesus' time, Jubilees's 364-day solar calendar would be off not just by days, but by months. It is only by hypothesizing some manner of intercalation that we can even come up with the possibility that in Jesus' time the two calendars were both functioning, but off by just a few days. Thus in the end, Jaubert's book presents a good theory, but it remains just that, a theory. For more on these questions, see James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[6.](#) On the question of Jewish authorities and their role in Jesus' death, see John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995).

[7.](#) For more on the parallels between the Didache and the Jewish *Birkat ha-Mazon*, see Enrico Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of Its Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), esp. pp. 19–26 (where he discusses these parallels) and pp. 307–309 (where he provides translations of the texts).

[8.](#) A useful version of the traditional text of the Haggadah, with introduction and translation, can be found in the widely available edition of Nahum N. Glatzer, *The Passover Haggadah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981). Those interested in appreciating how the Haggadah brings together material from various historical periods might look at Jacob Freedman, *Polychrome Historical Haggadah for Passover* (Springfield, MA: Jacob Freedman Liturgy Research Foundation, 1974).

[9.](#) Finkelstein published his theories in three articles: “The Oldest Midrash: Pre-Rabbinic Ideals and Teachings in the Passover Haggadah,” *Harvard Theological Review* (HTR) 31 (1938), pp. 291–317; “Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah (Part 1),” HTR 35 (1942), pp. 291–332; and “Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah (Part 2),” HTR 36 (1943), pp. 1–38. Glatzer summarizes some of Finkelstein's claims in *The Passover Haggadah*, pp. 39–42.

[10.](#) Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960). Glatzer's edition of the Haggadah (cited above) is based in part on Goldschmidt's research, but the first edition of Glatzer's Haggadah was published in 1953, years before Goldschmidt's final 1960 version of his article.

[11.](#) See especially the collection of essays, *Passover and Easter: Origin and History to Modern Times*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1999). Those who read Hebrew will want to consult Shmuel Safrai and Ze'ev Safrai, *Haggadah of the Sages: The Passover Haggadah* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Carta, 1998).

[12.](#) Baruch Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984).

[13.](#) Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Sabbath*, 15a.

[14.](#) This view can be traced back well into the middle ages—it is advocated in a 14th-century Haggadah commentary by Rabbi Simeon ben Zemach Duran. This view has also been advocated more recently by, among others, Daniel Goldschmidt, Joseph Tabory, Israel Yuval and Baruch Bokser. Bokser, *Origins of the Seder*, pp. 41–43, 79–80, and 119 n. 13; Goldschmidt, *Passover Haggadah*, pp. 51–53. See also the articles by Joseph Tabory and Israel Yuval in *Passover and Easter*, esp. pp. 68–69 (Tabory) and pp. 106–107 (Yuval). Goldschmidt, Tabory and Yuval go even one step further, suggesting that Jeremias had it backwards. It was not that Jesus was reinterpreting a prior Jewish tradition. Rather, Rabban Gamaliel the Younger required the explanation of the Passover symbols as a way of countering Christian manipulation of these symbols.

[15.](#) *Tosefta Pesahim* 10:12; see Bokser, *Origins of the Seder*, pp. 41–43, 79–80.

[16.](#) Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 66 and 122–125.

[17.](#) On the Quartodecimans and on fasting before Easter, see Bradshaw, “The Origins of Easter” in Bradshaw and Hoffman, *Passover and Easter*, pp. 81–97.

[18.](#) See Karl Georg Kuhn, “The Lord’s Supper and the Communal Meal at Qumran,” in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, Krister Stendahl, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 65–93. Kuhn builds here on work of B. Lohse, published in German (and cited in his article). See also Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 216–218.

[19.](#) Bruce Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus Through Johannine Circles* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), esp. pp. 93–108.

[20.](#) The term “Passoverize” is used by Mazza, in his brief treatment of the issue; see *Celebration of the Eucharist*, pp. 24–26.

[21.](#) See especially W.D. Davies, *Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 25–92.

[22.](#) Commonly entitled “On the Passover,” the sermon survives in numerous copies and fragments in Coptic, Greek, Syriac, Latin and Georgian. The oldest copy, from the third or early fourth century, is in Coptic. See James E. Goehring and William W. Willis, “On the Passover by Melito of Sardis,” in *The Crosby-Schoyen Codex MS 193*, James E. Goehring, ed. (Leuven [Louvain]: Peeters, 1999).

[23.](#) On the medieval debate between the Catholic and Orthodox churches on this matter, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 2, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700)* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 177–178. On the archaeological evidence pertaining to this dispute, see George Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1970).



# 148 Responses

1. [\*Christ is Our Passover / Commisssional\*](#) says:

[April 21, 2019 at 11:51 am](#)

[...] <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-je...and https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/march-web-only/jesus-didnt-eat-seder-meal.html>. [...]

[Reply](#)

2. [\*Passover and Good Friday, 2019 – Being Both\*](#) says:

[April 7, 2019 at 7:19 am](#)

[...] and Christmas. The idea that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder is tantalizing, though historically debatable. But for Jews, this idea may also raise the red flag of supersessionism—the problematic [...]

[Reply](#)

3. *Jerry* says:

[October 4, 2018 at 1:54 pm](#)

Try as you will; you will not understand by examining doctorines; or the old covenant; also called the “law”... Jesus told us (This is my body) a new covenant...also (This is my blood)...”New”- “New” a(New covenant) Act’s: 2v46-47 tells us all about breaking “Bread”... giving thanks; & that is how you really remember JESUS; not once a yr ; but every time we partake... our family breaks bread & takes wine ???? at every bible study (3 times) a week) ...we have arrived at(Amos: 8v11-12) only the “Elect” will

know. ???????? Jerry

[Reply](#)

4. *Clif Payne* says:

[April 3, 2018 at 5:56 pm](#)

John 19:31 says, “because it was the ‘preparation day’, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)” Here meaning the preparation for the Sabbath. Friday afternoon was always known as the “preparation day” for the Sabbath. It was the preparation day for the Sabbath during the week of Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread also being called Passover at this time. Jesus would have been sacrificed at the time of the sin offering on the first day of Passover not at the time of the slaying of the Passover lambs as a Passover lamb is not a sin sacrifice. Edersheim I think had the proper understanding of this seeming contradiction.

[Reply](#)

5. *jims110* says:

April 2, 2018 at 6:13 pm

Have you ever read Brant Pitre's book "Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist"? He posits or speculates perhaps given the location of the Cenacle/Upper Room in the Essene quarter (among other other hints, like the "man carrying water") of Jerusalem, that Jesus and his disciples were hosted by Essenes and observed an Essene Passover.

Due to the Essene/Qumram alternative calendar (they used a 364 day year so that feast days always fell on the same day of the month every year [[http://theos-sphragis.info/essene\\_passover\\_dates.html](http://theos-sphragis.info/essene_passover_dates.html)]), Passover would have fallen on Tuesday. This explanation might account for some of the timing issues discussed in this article as well as accounting for or simplifying the timing of all that shuttling back and forth between Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod and back to Pilate... I also believe he mentions that the Essenes didn't include the sacrificing (and subsequent eating) of the lamb in their passover meal because they believed the Temple was defiled.

\*\* I don't believe Dr Pitre is the originator of this idea. I believe James Walther proposed the same idea in 1958. And Pope Benedict XVI speculated about it in a sermon in 2007

[ <https://community.chnetwork.org/forum/topic/the-pope-suggests-that-jesus-celebrated-an-essene-passover-acc-to-the-essene-calendar/> ]

Reply

6. *Damon Casale* says:

April 2, 2018 at 3:39 pm

The reason why the synoptic gospels appear to be against John, in terms of when the Passover was kept, is because of a basic misunderstanding of how Passover evolved from its beginnings with Moses, down through to the first century.

The original Passover was celebrated \*on the evening beginning Nisan 14th\*, when the death angel passed through Egypt. The following evening was the "night to be much observed" and marked the beginning of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a feast which lasted for a total of seven days. The original Passover was a family affair, kept at home.

In the time of King Hezekiah and again in the time of King Josiah, when the purity of the Israelites was an issue because of their sins, both Hezekiah and Josiah instituted a national observance. This observance required that the Israelites come to the Temple so that the priests could sacrifice the Passover lambs on their behalf, to avoid the issues with ritually impure people sacrificing their own Passover lambs and eating them at home.

This observance, together with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was renamed "Passover". The instructions in Deuteronomy 16 for the Feast of Unleavened Bread were edited to reflect the new usage of the term "Passover." Here, we are told that the Israelites are to "sacrifice the Passover" in the "place where the Lord shall choose to place his name there" (Deut. 16:2) — e.g. in Jerusalem, at the Temple.

In Jesus' day, there were many Jews who observed the national Passover by sacrificing at the Temple on the afternoon of Nisan 14th (in the bible, days are reckoned as beginning at evening and going from one evening to the next, so this afternoon was after the \*evening\* portion of Nisan 14th). But, there were also many Jews who kept the home-based observance. Jesus and his followers were among them.

The Gospel account of John noting that the day Jesus was crucified was the "preparation day of the Passover". It was simply the "preparation day" of the national observance that began that evening. But Jesus and his followers had already eaten a Passover seder the previous night.

[Reply](#)

7. *johhny* says:

[April 2, 2018 at 1:26 pm](#)

is there any way, we can focus on the TRUTH, which will set you free?

I understand that we have to seek for the truth, but this often times keeps us from THE REAL TRUTH!!

I men it sad to see we are still captivated in our traditional ways of trying to be smarter than everybody else.

there are so many other things overwhelmingly convincing just read and compare what will you say if you understand that Jesus did die on Friday and was buried just before the beginning of sabbath (end of unleavened bread) and resurrected on the day of the first fruit, doesn't that tells you anything? just start from there going back and see what will be the outcome.

i sincerely hope from my heart that you could understand what we see in these last days when we read the scripture that You the people of G.d have written.

I am so great full and I bless You for this, otherwise I would never knew the Lord and Savior  
G.D bless you shalom

[Reply](#)

8. *dona1629* says:

[March 30, 2018 at 8:08 am](#)

read the Exodus commands concerning the Passover. The lambs were slaughtered on the evening beginning the 14th, the Passover. This was the time Jesus instituted the symbols of the new covenant at supper. This was later changed by the Jews to be later in the day so as to accommodate the large number of lambs slaughtered in the temple. Originally the lambs were to be slaughtered at the dwelling, immediately roasted and eaten and any leftovers burned. The change to the temple was one of the traditions Jesus scolded the religious leaders over placing above the scripture. Jesus and probably other Jews were observing the Passover [not a seder] that had been prepared according to scripture. Jesus was killed according to Jewish traditional passover, which is ironic.

[Reply](#)

9. *James* says:

[March 30, 2018 at 1:15 am](#)

Matt. 26:17 (King James Version)

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?

So in your opinion Matthew is lying and it was not the PASSOVER?

[Reply](#)

10. *Bruins* says:

[March 20, 2018 at 5:42 pm](#)

Any Jew will tell you that Preparation Day refers to the weekly day before the Sabbath, except when specifically delineated otherwise, such as the annual Day of Preparation for the Passover. (The differentiation lies in the addition of the word “Passover.”) Mark 15:34 and John 19:14 are talking about two different events; they are not in conflict.

[Reply](#)

1. *patrick lynch* says:

[March 20, 2018 at 7:27 pm](#)

Two different events?

[Reply](#)

11. *Faith* says:

[March 17, 2018 at 1:54 pm](#)

The Greek word protos translated as “on the first day of unleavened bread” can also be translated as “BEFORE unleavened bread”. It could be that the synoptic gospels were saying they were sitting down to a meal before Passover began. No discrepancy with John. Those who translated seem to assume it was a Passover meal though it was not.

[Reply](#)

12. *patrick lynch* says:

[March 16, 2018 at 7:54 pm](#)

The Jews have another name for Friday. They call it Preparation day, preparing for the Sabbath, and it was the day ( night ) that he ate the Passover meal, and died, ( day ). The Jews today celebrate only the remembrance of the Seder meal ( no lamb )

[Reply](#)

13. *Dwight* says:

[September 13, 2017 at 1:31 pm](#)

Here is my thought:

Matthew 26 does say, “on the first day of the week of Unleavened bread” and the Jews asked Jesus where He wanted the Passover prepared, that it was indeed the Passover.

The answer is that Jesus died before the second Passover, or Pesach Sheni, which was reserved for to “allow those who did not bring the Paschal Lamb offering (Korban Pesach) a second chance to do so.” The reason for this was “Eligibility was limited to those who were distant from Jerusalem on Passover, or those who were ritually impure and ineligible to participate in a sacrificial offering.”

Jesus not only died as a Passover lamb, but as a sin offering as well, after taking on the sins of the world. This would have made him ritually unclean until the sacrifice of blood, His own, for the sins of the world.

[Reply](#)



14. *John Morken* says:

[April 15, 2017 at 9:29 pm](#)

Can anyone wonder why we are spending billions of dollars on something that has no meaning to over 90% of Americans? Why should people's mystical beliefs from the time when the world was flat consume our politics and warfare now?

[Reply](#)

15. *DavidS* says:

[April 12, 2017 at 8:24 am](#)

I have done some research into the traditions of the Passover Seder, although not in great depth. Considering Judaism was not really codified until the 2nd or 3rd century CE, it is highly possible, as some sources say, that some portions of the Seder may have resulted from the influence of Christians, e.g. the ritual of the Afikoman. They suggest this was introduced as symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Although I do not agree with many of the conclusions and arguments in the article, I thought it was very interesting and appreciate the information contained in it.

[Reply](#)

16. *John Miller-Crispe* says:

[April 11, 2017 at 2:24 am](#)

From a Christian spiritual perspective, if Jesus was slain as our Passover something required for Him to be our Saviour, then He had to be slain at the same time that the Passover Lamb was slain. The gospel accounts indicate that the lamb was slain around 3pm on the 14th and that Jesus was stabbed to death by a roman soldier at this same time. The High Priest and Jesus saying the same words, "It is finished". Therefore the meal Jesus had with His disciples would be a simple meal that many other Jewish families would be sharing after settling into their HolyDays/holiday accommodation, prior to the festivities of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

The seder is certainly the eating of the Passover but the Passover itself is the ritual slaughter of then lamb. The meal eaten at the start of the 15th is the eating of the nPassover lamb but also the first meal of the Holy Day of the first day of Unleavened Bread. The fact that Jewish tradition calls the whole 8 day period Passover which confuses things. The Passover is on the 14th the days of Unleavened Bread start on the 15th. Strictly speaking the 15th is not the Passover

[Reply](#)

17. *e.s.k* says:

[March 7, 2017 at 2:00 am](#)

There has been a great discussion about this topic – for over a year – in the Hermeneutics.SE community : <http://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/22042/was-the-last-supper-actually-a-passover-feast>

It would be awesome if contributors and readers here – could help clarify questions, over there.

Thanks!

[Reply](#)

18. *Melanie* says:

[February 22, 2017 at 2:18 pm](#)

I think, since Jesus and likely a good number of his disciples were firstborn males, that the meal described in the NT was actually the last supper before the fast of the firstborn was to begin, which would have made it, in effect, a part of their Passover experience, though not the Passover seder itself. Thus, it would be justified from their point of view to call it a Passover meal, a meal eaten as a tradition for the purpose of preparing oneself for the fast that they would experience during preparation day. What do you think?

[Reply](#)

19. *Donald Ashton* says:

[February 18, 2017 at 4:42 pm](#)

There seems to be one aspect which has been overlooked, both by the author and the commenters. We know the date of the Seder (Nisan 14th), but we don't know when the month began. At least not absolutely precisely.

The new moon to commence the month cannot actually be observed and therefore the start of the month is deduced from the first lunar observation. This is not good enough to our western mindset where precision is everything, but although it seems good enough for the observers of a small area (Eretz Israel) different observers still could not agree on the sightings.

The different religious groups within Israel each followed their own calendar, and it was not unknown for there to be several days difference between groups.

Yeshua obviously followed the calendar of the Essenes, because the last supper was celebrated in the Essene quarter of Jerusalem. (Why it is called the last supper is beyond me. It is the penultimate supper, because there is still the marriage feast of the lamb to come.)

The gospel writers could quite easily be referring to the calendar of the temple groups, who often disagreed between themselves anyway).

It doesn't take much to appreciate that Yeshua and his talmudim could celebrate pesach on the correct day by the Essene calendar but the wrong day by the temple calendar. Thus all the timing difficulties disappear.

[Reply](#)

20. *Belinda* says:

[February 10, 2017 at 5:42 am](#)

Comments 3 and 8 impressed me. I've always been a bit bothered by the 3 nights.

I've spent the morning reading about Passover and parallels with the Last Supper and notice that the third cup of Seder, or whatever predates that ritual, likely similar, is "likewise after supper" and symbolises the Redeemer. I love it when these things come together. And maybe we only see bread mentioned because it was a pre Passover meal, Jesus Himself would later be the Lamb, but He's making a parallel with the Bread of Life, not the meat at this stage? Which we feed in by believing.

And when He rose from the dead early Sunday, was that just as the priest was out gathering the first fruits? Click....Does that fit with comment 8's time frame?

I would like it all to fit together like that, but even if it didn't, since our Lord was doing something at the meal to fulfil the Passover, He would have to conduct the meal early! Because He is our Paschal Lamb, our Passover, by whose blood we are spared. And redeemed. He was yearning to share that meal with His disciples; He had this important remembrance to institute.

Usually the gospel details turn out to be significant, included for a reason, to clinch our understanding, don't they? So what are we missing?

(Sorry to say naive things, I'm not a scholar at all). It does seem likely to me that the post 70 AD Seder would seek to represent the earlier practice (however it had developed over the centuries of tradition to that point), minus the now impossible temple sacrifice, in shock at their loss of the temple; wouldn't they try to keep what they could? Likely, I think, there were only minor differences then, and embellishment since.

It feeds me to think of Jesus' blood as the Redeemer's third cup of wine.

[Reply](#)

21. *John* says:

[October 17, 2016 at 9:22 pm](#)

<https://rogerviklund.wordpress.com/2011/08/15/the-traditional-translation-and-interpretation-of-the-last-supper-betrayal-of-the-original-text/>

[Reply](#)

22. *Mike Giedraitis* says:

[September 7, 2016 at 9:46 pm](#)

The Last Supper followed the order of a Seder meal, but it is impossible, according to Sacred Scripture, that is included a lamb that had been sacrificed in the Temple. The verse that makes it impossible is John 18:28,

John 18:28 RSV

27 Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed. 28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Ca'iaphas to the praetorium. It was early. They themselves did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.

John 18:27 and its surrounding context as well as the other Gospels is clear that John 18:28 occurred early in the morning. John 18:28 is clear that the Old Covenant Passover meal had not yet occurred. It follows that the the Old Covenant Passover lambs had not yet been sacrificed in the Temple, as the Old Covenant Passover meal had to be celebrated after sunset and before midnight.

Consequently, though the Last Supper followed the order of a Jewish Seder meal, the only lamb Who was present was the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the Eucharist, His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

[Reply](#)

23. *Robert Marcus Rosemann* says:

[April 8, 2016 at 2:15 pm](#)

I'm not sure I understand this whole thing about Jesus fulfilling scripture by the Passover lamb. No Pastor has ever had a good explanation. Reading the Old Testament, it clearly says a Goat was the Israelite sacrifice for sin. The lamb sacrifice on Passover was a testament that the Egyptian god represented by the lamb was a false god. Always been very confusing.

[Reply](#)

24. *Matan* says:

[March 24, 2016 at 11:36 am](#)

You lost me at the helpless and feeble attempt to state that the last supper, was not a Passover Seder, by stating that the only thing they ate was wine and bread, just like a normal Jewish supper. A Jewish supper regardless of economical status, would have been much more elaborate than just wine and bread. Luke in chapter 22, tell us that Jesus sent Peter and John to 'prepare the Passover.' They did. They celebrated a formal Seder. Jesus had to in order to fulfill scripture. The writer needs to review the facts, and write as honestly as possible,, failure to do so, shows a blatant disregard for truth, and honesty.

[Reply](#)

25. *Bruce* says:

[March 21, 2016 at 11:01 am](#)

The author says John did not record the Last Supper at all. But John does record a "supper" (John 13:4, 26), so the author seems to have missed this.

[Reply](#)

26. *Fred* says:

[February 27, 2016 at 2:16 am](#)

Thank you very much for your time and effort in sharing this. I think it honest, non proselytizing, sharing of a very complicated subject. I think we seldom if ever get to know/understand the a truth of any given event, and your effort is a help (reading time well spent) in understanding a version of the truth that gets the reader farther down the path to understanding

[Reply](#)

27. *Nick* says:

[January 4, 2016 at 3:05 pm](#)



This article complicates a subject, that need not be so, by ignoring several pertinent facts about the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and daily Temple sacrifice and liturgy.

First, the “Day of Preparation” mentioned by Saint John, in chapter 19, is simply referring to Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath. Every Passover/Unleavened Bread feast included at least one Sabbath, since the feast lasted 7 days. So, the “day of preparation” is not referring to the day the Passover lambs were slaughtered, which didn’t happen until the afternoon.

Second, so you may ask, “What lambs were being slaughtered?” Well, John doesn’t say that lambs were being slaughtered when Christ was being crucified. That’s a misnomer based on the time of day John noted (19:14,) i.e., the sixth hour (12 noon). According to Josephus (War 6:423-24,) the Passover lambs were sacrificed from 9th (3pm) to the 11th (5pm).

Third, Josephus also tells us (Ant.3:10:5) that after the Passover meal on the night of 15 Nisan (Thursday evening) for the next seven days “two bulls are killed, and one ram, and SEVEN LAMBS. Now these lambs are entirely burnt, besides the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest, for sins; for it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days.” This is why the high priest Caiaphas didn’t want to enter Pilate’s court. It would have defiled him for this sacrifice.

Fourth, there was also the Tamid sacrifice, the perpetual sacrifice commanded in Num 28:1-8; Exod 29:38-42. This sacrifice consisted of an unblemished male lamb and bread and wine. (Sound familiar?) This sacrifice happened EVERY DAY, morning and evening (i.e., 3rd & 9th hour, 9am & 3pm) in the sanctuary. These are the same times given for Christ’s trial/crucifixion in Saint Mark’s chapter 15.

So, to conclude, there is no conflict between the Synoptics and Saint John’s Gospel. Saint Luke makes it clear that it was the Passover/Seder meal that Christ had with His disciples on Thursday evening. As Christians have done for almost 2,000 years. God Bless!

[Reply](#)

28. *Anita* says:

October 4, 2015 at 11:14 am

Jesus and His disciples were Jewish believers and worshippers. The Last Supper was absolutely a Passover seder. The only persons which do not believe that are Jewish people and all non believers. Jesus fulfilled what was prophesied about Him in the Old Testament Prophecies describing the Messiah that the Jewish people are still waiting for. All the people who followed Him and believed that He is the Messiah in His time were mostly Jews. He was the fulfillment of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb.

check out all the Old Testament prophecies of who the Messiah would be, they fit exactly to who Jesus was and is.

[Reply](#)

29. *Don* says:

September 21, 2015 at 5:20 pm

First, for Yeshua to have been the Pascal Lamb, He had to be crucified at twilight of Nisan 14th, just as it is stated in Exodus 12. Thus He could not have participated in the Passover meal that evening, which is the start of Nisan 15th. I think that is very basic and clear. However, one thing you should research. Back in Yeshua’s time, millions of Jews traveled to Jerusalem in obedience to Yahweh’s command to observe the Passover Feast. It was physically impossible for the priest to sacrifice all of the lambs in one day. So back then they had two Passover meals. One on the evening of Nisan 14th, and the other on the 15th. Please

research this! So Yeshua took advantage of this and observed Passover on the night of the 13th, the beginning of the 14th day.

[Reply](#)

30. *reesorville* says:

[June 27, 2015 at 5:12 am](#)

Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) the catholic visionary who had visions of the passion, which Mel Gibson took for his movie, said that the reason why Jesus celebrated the passover meal the day before the passover was because the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem were so many at the time, that there had been established a custom of making the Galileans go to the temple to do the immolation and eat the passover meal a day before everyone else who came from more respected part of Israel. Jesus and his disciples, being Galileans, therefore did accordingly.

[Reply](#)

31. *My Jewish husband- Part 3 / Dissecting Jesus* says:

[May 21, 2015 at 9:14 pm](#)

[...] or at least that's what the writers of the synoptic gospels tell us. Now a days, however, historians are concluding that the meal Jesus had most likely was not a Passover Seder, like the ones Jewish [...]

[Reply](#)

32. *Ron Israel* says:

[April 25, 2015 at 6:25 pm](#)

Interesting that the words of Jesus, attributed to him in the canon Gospel texts, are taken to be generally accurate, but the actions attributed to him in those same texts are questioned with great skepticism. I would think it all goes in one direction or the other. I also find it interesting that the Gospel of John has a notably different take on the timing of the "Last Supper." John's text has a different take altogether. As it was written considerably later than the other three canon Gospels, the agenda is clearly different, separating itself from Judaism of the time more clearly, which might easily explain the shift in timing as to when a last supper might have taken place. As a person who was born a Jew, lived and died as a Jew, and taught as a rabbi, I think it's just as likely that Jesus was performing the Passover meal (as it existed at that time—not the much more elaborate seder of later times through today) with his disciples. The alleged words of Jesus in this instance have to be taken the same way as all others—we can not know whether he spoke any of the words attributed to him in the canon or any other gospels. Unless one is coming from a believing point of view, one must be absolutely skeptical of all that is presented in the myths of all cultures in the absence of absolute archaeological evidence.

[Reply](#)

33. *Kurt* says:

[April 6, 2015 at 10:43 am](#)

Jesus Christ remains the most famous figure in the modern world, says the British newspaper The Guardian.

#### Counting Fame by Books

“If fame is having a book written about you, . . . Jesus Christ remains the most famous figure in the modern world,” says the British newspaper The Guardian. Research on the books in the Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C., revealed 17,239 books about Jesus. That was almost twice as many as those written about William Shakespeare, who occupied second place with 9,801 books. Vladimir Lenin came in third with 4,492, followed by Abraham Lincoln, who had 4,378 books written about him, and Napoléon I, with 4,007. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was in seventh place, with 3,595 books, and was the only woman in the top 30. Joan of Arc, the next closest woman, had 545 books written about her. As for composers, Richard Wagner led the list, followed by Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach. Picasso heads the list of painters, ahead of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. However, Leonardo heads the list of scientists and inventors, beating Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Galileo Galilei. “There is no living person in the top 30,” says The Guardian.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/sep/14/martinkettle>

[Reply](#)

#### 34. *Jim Oppenheimer* says:

[April 5, 2015 at 2:17 pm](#)

Thanks for a thought-provoking article. While I agreed with the following text, I found its implications quite intriguing:

“The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well.”

The Gospels generally portray Jesus as equating the bread of the meal to his body and the wine to his blood. I have not read of the view that faithful Jewish people would take of such a view. Would they not have been horrified at the very idea, even metaphorical, of consuming a person’s blood? If so, is this good cause to question the connection between the Last Supper and the Eucharist? Could the words of institution (preserved in the Gospels and in a letter of Paul) be based on a misunderstanding?

I believe Bruce Chilton has expressed a similar idea.

[Reply](#)

#### 35. *Jim Oppenheimer* says:

[April 5, 2015 at 2:07 pm](#)

@ 21 Dennis

A quick question about your comment:

=====

The article states:

“The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well...”

As such, the article openly questions the inerrancy of Scripture.

=====

Could you be so kind as to give a few authoritative sources to support your position that scripture is inerrant? I'm sure this ought to be elementary for you.

Is this the first time you have come to realize that BAR is not rigidly committed to inerrancy (or any other ideas, for that matter) as ideas not subject to question or discussion?

I have always been aware that the writers of the Greek Testament have, to put it charitably, a poor grasp of the nature of the Judaism of the time of which they are attempting to write. Sorry this comes as a surprise to you, but one must deal with all facts, not just the ones that satisfy our own preconceived notions.

[Reply](#)

36. *Programming in Paschal / VoVatia* says:

[April 5, 2015 at 3:32 am](#)

[...] himself to have been there, when most of his preaching is said to have taken place in Galilee. The Last Supper is often identified as a Seder, but it appears that we have very little information about how the meal was celebrated back then. [...]

[Reply](#)

37. *Rabbi Explains The Legal Battle for Temple Mount* / says:

[April 4, 2015 at 1:51 pm](#)

[...] main course at the historical Last Supper. Based on the Christian scriptures, many scholars claim the famous meal was indeed a Passover Seder. (This week, millions of Christians will commemorate it on "Maundy [...]

[Reply](#)

38. *Levitt Letter Extra News / Passover sacrifice reenacted by Jewish priests-in-training* says:

[April 4, 2015 at 6:01 am](#)

[...] main course at the historical Last Supper. Based on the Christian scriptures, many scholars claim the famous meal was indeed a Passover Seder. (This week, millions of Christians will commemorate it on "Maundy [...]

[Reply](#)

39. *Gary W. Harper* says:

[April 3, 2015 at 9:03 pm](#)

"And the day of the unleavened food came, in which it was behoving the passover to be sacrificed, and he sent Peter and John, saying, 'Having gone on, prepare to us the passover, that we may eat;' and they said to him, 'Where wilt thou that we might prepare?' And he said to them, 'Lo, in your entering into the city, there shall meet you a man, bearing a pitcher of water, follow him to the house where he doth go in, and ye shall say to the master of the house, The Teacher saith to thee, Where is the guest-chamber where the



passover with my disciples I may eat? and he shall show you a large upper room furnished, there make ready;' and they, having gone away, found as he hath said to them, and they made ready the passover. And when the hour come, he reclined (at meat), and the twelve apostles with him, and he said unto them, 'With desire I did desire to eat this passover with you before my suffering, for I say to you, that no more may I eat of it till it may be fulfilled in the reign of God.' And having taken a cup, having given thanks, he said, 'Take this and divide to yourselves, for I say to you that I may not drink of the produce of the vine till the reign of God may come.'" (Luke 22:7-18, YLT)

This states unequivocally that it was the Day of Preparation wherein the Upper Room was obtained, and that the Paschal "meat" was consumed at the proper hour.

"And before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour hath come, that he may remove out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own who [are] in the world — to the end he loved them. And supper being come, the devil already having put [it] into the heart of Judas of Simon, Iscariot, that he may deliver him up, Jesus knowing that all things the Father hath given to him — into [his] hands, and that from God he came forth, and unto God he goeth, doth rise from the supper, and doth lay down his garments, and having taken a towel, he girded himself; afterward he putteth water into the basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe with the towel with which he was being girded." (John 13:1-5, YLT)

This occurred specifically at the last supper; the incident and the supper both occurred after "before the feast of the Passover", which could be the Day of Preparation. On that day, everything is washed clean, which is part of the symbolism of washing the disciples' feet, as they are about to embark upon the path which Yeshua has been walking before them.

"Before the feast of the Passover" echoes the "And the feast of the unleavened food was coming nigh, that is called Passover" language of Luke 22:1, YLT. And "when the hour come, he reclined" of Luke is "his hour hath come" of John. There is no discrepancy here.

[Reply](#)

40. *Gary W. Harper* says:

[April 3, 2015 at 8:53 pm](#)

"And the day of the unleavened food came, in which it was behoving the passover to be sacrificed, and he sent Peter and John, saying, 'Having gone on, prepare to us the passover, that we may eat;' and they said to him, 'Where wilt thou that we might prepare?' And he said to them, 'Lo, in your entering into the city, there shall meet you a man, bearing a pitcher of water, follow him to the house where he doth go in, and ye shall say to the master of the house, The Teacher saith to thee, Where is the guest-chamber where the passover with my disciples I may eat? and he shall show you a large upper room furnished, there make ready;' and they, having gone away, found as he hath said to them, and they made ready the passover. And when the hour come, he reclined (at meat), and the twelve apostles with him, and he said unto them, 'With desire I did desire to eat this passover with you before my suffering, for I say to you, that no more may I eat of it till it may be fulfilled in the reign of God.' And having taken a cup, having given thanks, he said, 'Take this and divide to yourselves, for I say to you that I may not drink of the produce of the vine till the reign of God may come.'" (Luke 22:7-18, YLT)

This states unequivocally that it was the Day of Preparation wherein the Upper Room was obtained, and that the Paschal "meat" was consumed at the proper hour.

"And before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour hath come, that he may remove out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own who [are] in the world — to the end he loved them. And

supper being come, the devil already having put [it] into the heart of Judas of Simon, Iscariot, that he may deliver him up, Jesus knowing that all things the Father hath given to him — into [his] hands, and that from God he came forth, and unto God he goeth, doth rise from the supper, and doth lay down his garments, and having taken a towel, he girded himself; afterward he putteth water into the basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe with the towel with which he was being girded. (John 13:1-5, YLT)

This occurred specifically at the last supper; the incident and the supper both occurred after “before the feast of the Passover”, which could be the Day of Preparation. On that day, everything is washed clean, which is part of the symbolism of washing the disciples’ feet, as they are about to embark upon he path which Yeshua has been walking before them.

Before the feast of the Passover echoes the “And the feast of the unleavened food was coming nigh, that is called Passover” language of Luke 22:1, YLT. There is no discrepancy here.

[Reply](#)

41. *Max* says:

[April 3, 2015 at 12:53 pm](#)

There is an excellent book that addresses the issue of whether the last meal was a Passover meal and when it occurred, and reconciles the apparent discrepacies in the Gospel accounts.

It is *The Mystery of the Last Super* by Sir Colin J. Humphreys. ISBN 978-0-521-51755-3.

He is Professor and Director of Research at the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy at Cambridge. He was assisted in reconstructing ancient calendars and the dates on which events could have occurred (such as the date on which “the moon turned to blood” when rising over Jerusalem) by Dr. Graem Waddington, an Oxford astrophysicist.

Humphreys addresses and answers fundamental questions about the last weeks of the life of Jesus, such as the date of the crucifixion, the date of the last supper, whether the last supper was a Passover meal. In my mind, his book provides compelling evidence that the biblical accounts of that week are factually based, and, upon analysis, are not contradictory.

It is a mystery to me why anyone who is researching or writing about this subject does not address this book. I believe that Humphreys’ conclusions are solid, and probably definitive. The ball is in the court of scholars to either confirm his conclusions or demonstrate why they are wrong.

[Reply](#)

42. *Kurt* says:

[April 3, 2015 at 5:55 am](#)

The Eucharist—The Facts Behind the Ritual

The Purpose of the Lord’s Evening Meal

Jesus concluded the first observance of the Lord’s Evening Meal with these words: “Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19) The observance does indeed help us to remember Jesus and the wonderful things accomplished by his death. It reminds us that Jesus upheld the sovereignty of his Father, Jehovah. It also reminds us that by means of his death as a perfect, sinless human, Jesus gave “his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” The ransom makes it possible for any who would exercise faith in his

sacrifice to be freed from sin and to attain to everlasting life.—Matthew 20:28.

Primarily, though, the Lord's Evening Meal is a communion meal. Those involved are (1) Jehovah God, who arranged for the ransom, (2) Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God," who provided the ransom, and (3) Jesus' spiritual brothers. By partaking of the bread and wine, the latter show that they are fully united with Christ. (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17) They also show that they are in "the new covenant" as spirit-anointed disciples of Jesus. These are the ones who will reign with Christ in heaven as kings and priests.—Luke 22:20; John 14:2, 3; Revelation 5:9, 10.

When should the Memorial be observed? The answer becomes clear when we remember that Jesus chose a particular date to institute this celebration—the Passover. God's people had annually been observing that date, Nisan 14 on their calendar, for over 1,500 years in order to commemorate a remarkable salvation that Jehovah performed for his people. Clearly, Jesus was directing his followers to use the same date to commemorate the far greater act of salvation that God would make possible through the death of Christ. Jesus' true followers thus attend the Lord's Evening Meal every year on the date corresponding to Nisan 14 on the Hebrew calendar.

Do they do so out of love for ritual? Frankly, that is what appeals to many about celebrating the Eucharist. Said the author of the aforementioned Time magazine essay: "There is something deeply soothing about participating in ancient rituals practiced by so many." Like a number of Catholics today, this author prefers that the ceremony be performed in Latin as it was in the past. Why? She writes: "I want to hear Mass sung in a language I don't understand because too often I don't like what I hear in English."

Jehovah's Witnesses, along with millions of interested ones, enjoy observing the Lord's Evening Meal in their own language wherever they live. They delight in improving their understanding of the meaning and value of Christ's death. Such truths are worthy of contemplation and discussion throughout the year. The Witnesses find that observing the Memorial is the best way to keep remembering the profound love of Jehovah God and of his Son, Jesus Christ. It helps them to "keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he arrives."—1 Corinthians 11:26.

<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1200273752>

[Reply](#)

43. *dongszkie* says:

April 3, 2015 at 12:33 am

Jesus and his immediate disciples, the 12 apostles, were Jewish people who were under the Mosaic Law. So what they did observed that night was the Jewish Passover celebration. But there was something greater that happened that night. While in the course of their Passover Meal, after dismissing the traitorous Judas, Jesus initiated one and new Celebration for His Followers, the MEMORIAL of his sacrificial DEATH on the next morning which was STILL part of the Jewish day of Nisan 14 (Jewish day is from sundown to sundown of the next day of our gregorian calendar). Jesus took an unleavened bread from their passover meal symbolizing his sinless body, blessed it and had the remaining faithful and loyal apostles partook it. Then he took a cup of the red wine from their passover drink that symbolized his blood to be poured on their behalf, blessed it and passed it on to each one of them to partook..Luke 22:19,20..So during that night Jesus and his faithful apostles commemorated two ANNIVERSARIES..the PASSOVER which was exclusively Jewish and Jesus SACRIFICIAL DEATH which is to be remembered and observed by ALL sorts of people of the world who expressed belief in Jesus as the Messiah of God, the Lamb of God, that God PROVIDED for ALL believing mankind of the world, as a RANSOM of what our parents lost due to their disobedience which sold all mankind to SIN and DEATH. Moses was God's anointed (messiah) savior, leader and mediator for His EXCLUSIVE PEOPLE, the ancient Israelites out from EGYPTIAN SLAVERY to the promised Land. God chose the Israelites as his Covenant People of all the people on the face of the earth, and by means of the laws and statutes that God gives to the Israelites

through the mediatorship of Moses at Mt. Sinai, they were a different people separated from people of all other nations that surrounded them..by means of their religious observances that were exclusive to them. Reason that the true God, YHWH, was only known during those period as,"THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS" by virtue of God's special and exclusive dealings with the Jewish people only. On Jesus case, God used him as his Anointed One by sending him to earth, as his instrument of saving ,leading, and mediator of God's New Covenant for his believing people of the whole earth,( no longer exclusively fleshly Israelites, but a SPIRITUAL ISRAEL of God which is INCLUSIVES of ALL sorts of BELIEVING MAKIND of the whole world).There is PARALLELISM between Moses and Jesus. Moses was used by God to saved the Israelites from EGYPTIAN SLAVERY out to the promised land,which was the land of the Canaanites. Jesus was used by the only true God to save mankind from SLAVERY OF SIN AND DEATH out, to live in a renewed earth into a Paradise under God's Kingdom..Dan.2:44..So Moses and Jesus were God's means of His great Saving Acts, for the literal Israelites in Moses time, and the Spiritual Israel for the whole of obedient mankind of the world under Jesus Christ.

[Reply](#)

44. *Frantz Peretz* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 9:38 pm](#)

It seems the article aims to separate the Eucharist of the RCC from any connection to the Pesach festival. The historical Jewish Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, must have celebrated pesach, as a faithful observant Jewish man, regardless that it was not a seder as we celebrate it today.

חג פסח שמח

Frantz

[Reply](#)

45. *RVWinkle* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 9:31 pm](#)

The Christ could not have eaten the Passover Seder because he was the Passover Seder. Let's look at the Synoptics. If The Christ ate the Passover then he was tried, tortured and the Sabbath because the 1st day of Unleavened Bread is a Sabbath. If one reads the actual instructions about when to kill and eat the Lamb in Exodus/Leviticus then one needs to question the account from the Synoptics. The slaying of the Lamb takes place as the sun is setting and then the Lamb is eaten that evening (which is the 1st day of Unleavened Bread) during Sabbath. Since the 1st day was a Sabbath, the Jews would not have violated the Sabbath. Remember how the thieves and The Christ were taken down before the Sabbath commenced. Legs were broken to hasten the death, but when they got to The Christ, he was already dead.

[Reply](#)

46. *Barbara* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 6:04 pm](#)

Let's keep it simple.

Let's just remember that on the evening before he died on the cross, Jesus had a meal with his twelve disciples.

Let's just remember at the wonder of a God whose love is so powerful and so deep that he would die for us.

Let's just remember that he rose again and Easter is a celebration of that amazing love.

Let's keep it simple.

[Reply](#)

47. *Dennis Dimitrov* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 5:42 pm](#)

Wow! I am shocked and disappointed in B.A.R. I was always aware that B.A.R was slightly liberal in their theology, but this absolutely solidifies their thoroughly non-Christian approach to their work. The article states:

“The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well. There are, of course, some reasons to doubt John's account too. He may well have had theological motivations for claiming that Jesus was executed on the day of preparation when the Passover sacrifice was being offered but before Passover began at sundown.”

As such, the article openly questions the inerrancy of Scripture. If B.A.R's position is that we cannot trust the Biblical accounts of history, then we certainly cannot trust B.A.R. With great sadness, I am cancelling my subscription TODAY!

[Reply](#)

48. *Mike Sala* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 4:28 pm](#)

Wonderful article. I remember reading Bargil Pixel (spelling?) working out an Essene Passover calendar vs the Jerusalem Passover calendar. Since Jesus' last supper was in the Essene section of the city on Mt. Zion, had you investigated that possibility and found it wanting?

[Reply](#)

49. *John Fewkes* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 4:12 pm](#)

It would be good to consider: Edersheim; The Temple and Its' Services as well as Leeper: Prelude to Glory for contrasting views.

[Reply](#)

50. *(Rt. Rev. Dr.) Chopin Cusachs* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 4:07 pm](#)



I would add the 1989 book, “Eucharist” by Louis Bouyer, who also concludes the Last Supper was not a Seder, but a fellowship meal, a Chabura.

[Reply](#)

51. *Damon Casale* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 3:39 pm](#)

First of all, this article hits upon a lot of excellent historical points, including how the observance of Passover evolved due to the national observances of Passover in the time of Hezekiah and Josiah. However, what’s not commonly understood is that NOT EVERYONE was keeping Passover that way. Given Josephus’ estimates for the population of Jerusalem and the numbers of pilgrims coming to sacrifice lambs at the Temple for Passover, there’s simply no way that the priests could possibly have sacrificed all of them between noon and sunset on the afternoon portion of Nisan 14th. Therefore, Josephus was wrong in his estimates, but why?

Because Josephus was lumping in those who practiced a family based observance on the evening beginning Nisan 14th (the original meaning of “between the two evenings”, beyn ha-arbayim, in Ex. 12:6) with those who observed a Temple-centric observance, killing lambs in the afternoon portion of Nisan 14th, approaching Nisan 15th, his numbers include BOTH. Josephus was of the sect which believed that the Temple-based observance was the “proper” one, so he simply covered up the evidence for a family-based observance.

What John records is the Jews’ Passover, in keeping with the tradition of Hezekiah and Josiah. What the synoptic gospels record is Jesus’ Passover, in keeping with the original, family-based observance. BOTH observances were practiced in Jesus’ day, by different sects of Jews.

[Reply](#)

52. *Holy Thursday, Holy Manna / Holy Manna* says:

[April 2, 2015 at 9:10 am](#)

[...] There is an excellent article about just what might have happened in that upper room, when Jesus and the Twelve gathered for their final meal together. I commend it to you, for I will not discuss that here: <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes&#8230;> [...]

[Reply](#)

53. *Passover sacrifice reenacted by Jewish priests-in-training - Online Israel News - Latest Israel News* says:

[March 31, 2015 at 6:18 pm](#)

[...] main course at the historical Last Supper. Based on the Christian scriptures, many scholars claim the famous meal was indeed a Passover Seder. (This week, millions of Christians will commemorate it on “Maundy [...]

[Reply](#)

54. *Day 76: Visualizing the Last Supper / Sandie's Bible Blog* says:

[March 21, 2015 at 12:02 am](#)

[...] gets labeled as a Passover meal. While many Christian communities today identify it as a Seder, scholars question this assertion in terms of both timing and [...]

[Reply](#)

55. *T. Alex Tennent* says:

[March 18, 2015 at 5:11 pm](#)

Pietas, it is important to understand that the Messiah was speaking in parables at the last supper (as the scripture says he almost always did). Would it really make any sense that the Jewish Messiah (there being no Roman Catholic church yet) would want his orthodox Jewish disciples to remember him while eating unleavened bread that is his body? The Jewish apostles all understood that this was a parable, and that the leavened pieces of bread represented us, his spiritual body. This was a parable about how God would sustain and spiritually feed the believers in the promised new covenant. The disciples taught that WE are the body of Christ. They did not pull this new teaching out of a hat, but it is what they understood from Jesus' last supper parables. The first chapter in my book brings out that all 10 scriptures that speak of what they ate at the last supper use the regular Greek word for daily leavened bread. Jesus was crucified on the 14th day, therefore the previous night could not possibly have been the eating of the Passover, so there was no legal requirement for unleavened bread at this meal.

[Reply](#)

56. *T. Alex Tennent* says:

[March 18, 2015 at 4:58 pm](#)

Thank you for this well reasoned article. I think you have done well in this article to dismiss the book by Joachim Jeremias where he attempts to link the last supper to the Jewish Passover. In supposing that the last supper was the Passover, Jeremias tries to explain that all that was done on the following day (including the crucifixion) was all acceptable under Jewish law. After all, if the last supper was the eating of the Passover which is always sacrificed towards the end of the 14th day, then the high holy Sabbath of the 15th day Passover would have (of course) been the following day. The book that I have authored (*The Messianic Feast: Moving Beyond the Ritual*, by T. Alex Tennent) has a chapter that lists over 50 reasons that the last supper could not possibly have been a Jewish Passover, and some of those reasons have to do with the following day not being this 15th day Sabbath. Having said that, I also believe it is a mistake to look at the last supper through the lens of the Haggadah, as this is predominately Pharisaic history which was often at odds with Jesus' teaching. For instance neither Jesus nor his disciples washed their hands before eating bread, and when the Pharisees wanted an answer to this breach of tradition (Matthew 15:1-3), Jesus answered them by asking why they transgress God's laws for the sake of their tradition, something he taught on various occasions. So the fact that the last supper may not follow the Haggadah should not be used as an argument for or against it being a Passover, and this also applies to the four cups of wine, which was also a tradition that was never in the God breathed scriptures, to Moses or otherwise.

My book brings out the most salient point that has hitherto been missed by all the new testament scholars, and that is that they were all eating regular leavened bread at this last supper (see Course 1). To think that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul would all use the regular Greek word for daily leavened bread (10 scriptures in all) for a Passover meal in the heart of Jerusalem is beyond belief, had that meal truly been

the Passover. Anyone with Jewish orthodox understanding of keeping anything leavened far away from a Passover would know this. If the last supper had been the Passover, why would all these disciples portray to Israel and the world that they and the one they believed was the Messiah had all sinned before the nation and before God by eating regular daily leavened bread at the Passover? It only takes one more Greek letter to use the word azumos (Hebrew matzah) then it does to use the Greek word for daily leavened bread artos (Hebrew lechem), so why not use the correct word instead of one that implies sin before God? If anyone debates this, try going to a rabbi's house in the Orthodox section of Jerusalem on Passover carrying a brown bag and when the door opens step in proclaim "rabbi, I have brought bread for Passover!" and you will quickly find out what I am saying. I of course am not asking anyone to actually do this, but just making the point. This however is only the beginning, for my book then challenges the so called Catholic and Protestant Communion ritual itself. Since Jesus held one leavened bread at this meal why do they all keep their ritual with unleavened bread? It is because tradition has falsely passed down that this meal was the Passover (hence a need for unleavened). However a ritual where Jews eat bread that was the Messiah's body, and juice that is his blood (actually flesh and blood for Catholic's, and symbolically for Protestants) would never have happened in first-century Jerusalem. The Jewish prophets prophesied that the Messiah would speak in parables (see Setting the Table 3, in my book) and the scripture says that Jesus almost always spoke using parables (Mathew 13:33-35; Mark 4:33, 34). I then explain what his last supper parables really mean, from within the first-century Jewish idioms. I also bring out that when the Greek is translated accurately (concerning the Passover scriptures) the three synoptic gospels harmonize perfectly with John, which is what we should expect if indeed they were inspired by God as they claim. They perfectly align with the understanding that this meal was not the Passover, but that Jesus was crucified on the very day the lambs were offered. Most of these chapters can currently be read for free on my website <http://www.TheMessianicFeast.com>. (PS a few years ago I purchased and enjoyed your book titled Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism.)

[Reply](#)

57. *Pietas* says:

[February 23, 2015 at 12:39 am](#)

the way i see it is that the unleavened bread represented without sin. When Jesus said this was his body, it had to be unleavened because unleavened means without sin. Leavened was sin. Everything has a symbolic meaning in the Old testament.

[Reply](#)

58. *Personalized Passover / Occasionally Thoughtful* says:

[February 20, 2015 at 4:34 pm](#)

[...] those who do not share their faith? Reasons vary from person to person. Many Christians believe the last supper of Jesus Christ was a seder. The fact that the celebration takes place at a dining table instead of a synagogue is [...]

[Reply](#)

59. *Kurt* says:

[January 6, 2015 at 9:15 am](#)

Lord's Evening Meal  
Act in Harmony With Jesus' Loving Prayer

"Father, . . . glorify your son, that your son may glorify you."—JOHN 17:1.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is involved in truly "knowing" God?

How was Jesus' prayer recorded in John chapter 17 answered in the first century?

How can we act in harmony with Jesus' prayer today?

IT IS late in the evening of Nisan 14 in the year 33 C.E. Jesus and his companions have enjoyed celebrating the Passover, which reminds them of how God delivered their forefathers from slavery in Egypt. But his faithful disciples are to experience a far grander "everlasting deliverance." The next day, their sinless Leader will be put to death by his enemies. But this hateful act will be turned into a blessing. Jesus' shed blood will provide the basis for mankind's deliverance from sin and death.—Heb. 9:12-14.

To make sure that we do not forget this loving provision, Jesus instituted a new annual observance that replaced the Passover. He did this by breaking a loaf of unleavened bread, and passing it to each of his 11 faithful apostles, he said: "This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me." He did likewise with a cup of red wine, telling them: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf."—Luke 22:19, 20.

The end was soon coming to the old Law covenant between God and natural-born Israelites. It would be replaced by a new covenant between Jehovah and Jesus' anointed followers. Jesus was deeply concerned about the welfare of this new spiritual nation. Natural Israel was hopelessly divided religiously and socially, bringing great reproach on God's holy name. (John 7:45-49; Acts 23:6-9) In contrast, Jesus desired that his followers remain perfectly united so that they could work harmoniously together to bring glory to God's name. So, what does Jesus do? He offers the most beautiful prayer that any human will ever be privileged to read. (John 17:1-26; see opening illustration.) We are in a position to look back and ask, "Has God answered Jesus' prayer?" We should also examine ourselves and ask, "Am I acting in harmony with it?"<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1200273113>

[Reply](#)

60. *Chris Van Horn* says:

[November 12, 2014 at 11:33 am](#)

I respectfully disagree with your conclusions because all the evidence you presented especially from a biblical perspective to the modern customs show that you are wrong on several levels. Much like you are wrong to accuse the Jews as the only ones who held sabbaths around the moon. When we know that the audience were pagan of origin and not Jewish in the works of Timothy. We know witches and pagans as well as the gnostics and kabbalist held sabbaths too. That is why I am saying your dead wrong and assuming that Christianity had a parting before 400 AD is a far stretch that modern scholarship has proven wrong as well. We know they were talking to the Sethians and other forms of Platonic Paganism that made it into the Church it was not always demonizing the Jews as you would have us think the evidence that James or even the book of Hebrews was cannonized shows how wrong you are!

[Reply](#)

61. *Healthy Last Supper Meal Ideas Jesus – about food and health* says:

[October 20, 2014 at 11:50 am](#)

[...] Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? – Biblical Archaeology ... – What is more, just as Jews at the Seder discuss the symbolism of the Passover meal, Jesus at his Last Supper discussed the symbolism of the wine and bread in light of his own coming death. ... Healthy Jewish Passover Meal Jesus | About Food and Diet linked to this post on August 25, 2014 [...] [...]

[Reply](#)

62. *Rick* says:

[October 18, 2014 at 3:02 pm](#)

Sorry, I should have said that Klawans is not a creditable source of information on this topic.

[Reply](#)

63. *Rick* says:

[October 15, 2014 at 2:57 am](#)

Most comments above are ridiculous. Passover is only a single day. Klawans theory is a theory of a clown.

[Reply](#)

64. *Healthy Jewish Passover Meal Jesus | About Food and Diet* says:

[August 25, 2014 at 8:06 pm](#)

[...] Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? – Biblical Archaeology ... – Many assume that Jesus' Last Supper was a Seder, the ritual Passover meal. Examine evidence from the synoptic Gospels with scholar Jonathan Klawans. [...]

[Reply](#)

65. *Wayne* says:

[June 9, 2014 at 6:34 pm](#)

@1. David: Wow! Where's the love? "Knowledge puffs up, but LOVE builds up" 'brother' David. They will know that we are disciples of Jesus by our LOVE for one another, not by our arrogant (and ignorant) attacks on one another. I never got that Jonathan was giving kudos to the Jesus Seminar from reading his comments. That he called them 'scholars' simply identifies them as a group that considers themselves knowledgeable on the Scriptures, just like I referred to you as 'brother' – not because there's any evidence that you are one.

@Jonathan: First of all, I would just like to thank you for your thorough job of covering this topic. I think you've come to the right conclusion using some good logic; even if perhaps some of your assertions about the historic aspects of the passover celebration aren't perfectly accurate (I don't pretend to know, but judging by all of the 'experts' that have chimed in there seems to be some room for debate).

Whenever I've read the passages that talk about Jesus' disciples being sent to prepare for the Passover, I've always wondered why there was no mention of them killing and roasting a lamb. The only victuals mentioned are bread, dipping sauce & wine. Then as I was reading your article, it occurred to me that there



is a perfectly wonderful verse that, for me, resolves the question without all of the scholarly calisthenics: John 13:29

“27 Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.” – Jhn 13:27-29 ESV

If this episode had occurred at the passover Seder, no such supposition would have ever entered into the minds of the Disciples. Ta da! Good enough for me.

[Reply](#)

66. *Larry L. Wilson, Biblical chronologist* says:

[May 20, 2014 at 9:22 am](#)

When the Israelites first left Egypt, they used Egyptian timekeeping, which did not change the date until midnight. So lots of confusion comes from thinking the DATE changed at sundown when the sabbath began. Thus the passover meal was always described as occurring on the 14th after sundown. But at midnight, the date changed to the 15th. That’s why the date the Israelites leave Egypt is the 15th and the daytime celebration of the day they left Egypt is held on the 15th. (Numbers 33:3).

A second issue is the misinterpretation of John 19:14’s reference to “preparation for passover.” “Preparation” is a specific term in relation to a sabbath day, whether a Saturday or a special “high sabbath.” There were two special “high sabbaths” during passover week and thus two special preparation days for passover. So John 19:14 is not a reference to the passover seder but to the preparation day for the second high sabbath of passover week. Thus “passover” was a very general term for anything related to events of the entire week. So “preparation for passover” is a specific reference to the day before one of the passover “high sabbaths” which were held on the 1st and 7th days of UFC. Thus the confusion comes when “preparation for passover” is not understood as a preparation day before a sabbath.

When “preparation for passover” is understood to be one of two days of preparation for the “high sabbaths” of passover week, you have a choice of Nisan 14th or Nisan 20th for the date of Jesus’ death. Since Jesus was arrested on the 15th, there is no other choice here but to date Jesus’ death on Nisan 20th, the preparation day before the passover high sabbath of the 21st. In 33 CE this would have been a Thursday. Supporting this is the reference in Matthew that says Jesus was in the grave for “three nights” which would require him to die on a Thursday as he rose on the first day of the week, the day after a sabbath.

In order for him to be in the grave for “three nights” and also to die on a day of preparation before a high sabbath and to rise the day after a sabbath, you must have two sabbath days in a row. In 33 CE, indeed, there were two sabbath days in a row, Friday the 21st and Saturday the 22nd. Therefore, there is really no contradiction between John and the Synoptics. Jesus ate the passover meal as the Last Supper on Friday after sundown, Nisan 14th. The passover meal ended precisely at midnight when the date changed to the 15th. Jesus was arrested on the 15th and came before the Sanhedrin at sunrise. He was taken before Pilate the first time just before noon (i.e. “but early”/de proi which means just before the early evening watch which began at noon). When Pilate discovered Jesus was from Galilee, he sent him to Herod who was not expecting him. Of note, when the Jews said they did not want to enter the palace of Herod so as not to be defiled because they wanted to eat “passover”, this would have been understood as another official “passover” week event, which would have been the special meal and celebration held at the temple on the 15th, mandated by Jewish tradition for a special celebration on Nisan 15th.

That week a prisoner was to be released and this was apparently set up for Wednesday, Nisan 19th. Thus Herod returned Jesus to Pilate on Wednesday morning, Nisan 19th. This is when they became friends. Jesus was condemned on Wednesday, Nisan 19th and impaled later that night at the “third hour” at 9 p.m. It was now the day of “preparation for passover” meaning preparation for the passover sabbath of the 21st. Jesus died at the ninth hour, 3 p.m. on Thursday, Nisan 20th. He remained in the grave for “three nights” — Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday night.

There is no conflict in the gospels over when Jesus died, just lack of insight into usage of the term “passover” during Jesus’ time, which was a term used broadly to apply to the entire festival, not just the Seder.

[Reply](#)

67. *Pesach, pasen, seder; Roomser dan de rabbi?* / *Verfrisbee* says:

[May 17, 2014 at 2:05 pm](#)

[...] Artikel op [biblicalarcheology.org](http://biblicalarcheology.org): Was Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder? [...]

[Reply](#)

68. *Chris H* says:

[May 14, 2014 at 4:02 pm](#)

Jonathan,

Thanx for an interesting read. This is the kind of summary I appreciate, b/c it includes the historical facts. One thing I esp. appreciate is your acknowledging the unreliability of the ancient “rabbinic” sources for defining issues, due to the vagueness involved. That is a critical point. Therein lies much of the confusion when attempting to re-create the ancient world.

However, some experts, like David Flusser and his contemporaries, do a fine job of sorting through the “ancient authorities”, and use pieces of them to make sense out of the NT ‘traditions’. Their material is priceless.

I have to disagree w/you on your thesis, that the “Eucharistic meal” was not part of Pesach. I am convinced that it was, based on the statements in the synoptics. Even Flusser would agree w/me on historical grounds. Remember: An argument from silence is no argument.

One thing I wish you would have addressed more clearly:

What is the factual explanation for the disagreement between John’s gospel and the synoptics, regarding the timing of “the last supper”? And what historical evidence is that based on?

The only thing I can think of, based on something I read in George Foot Moore’s, “Judaism in the first Centuries of the Christian Era”, is “the day of preparation” wasn’t just one day. But I haven’t had time to look any further into the meaning and historical reality of that phrase/term. Maybe you can, considering your professional position and abilities?

Flusser also make an interesting point about which synoptic writer was the “source” for the “synoptics tradition”: Luke. His reasons also drive my preference on this issue. You can read his article in “Judaism and the Origins of Christianity”.

If there's one thing I wish you did, which is the same thing I wish all Christian professional educators and scholars would do, is quit calling the NT's 2nd Temple history a "religion", and begin call it what it was: POLITICS & LAW. I believe the sooner we get our heads into that reality, and out of our emotions and Christian traditions, the sooner we'll all come to terms w/the truths conveyed in the NT.

Thanx again for posting this enjoyable read! ... Chris

[Reply](#)

69. *Was Jesus' Last Supper a Passover Seder? - Religious Education Forum* says:

[May 7, 2014 at 3:24 pm](#)

[...] [...]

[Reply](#)

70. *D Kennedy* says:

[April 23, 2014 at 10:46 pm](#)

Note about two holy days at the beginning and end of Passover. Some commenters on here are confused about this.

In the land of Israel, including Jerusalem, Passover takes and has always taken seven days. The first and last day are the holy days, when work is forbidden. Days 2-6 are intermediate days, when work is allowed. The seder takes place on the first evening, the beginning of the first day. There is only one seder. This is how the holiday is described in the Bible.

In the Diaspora, because of the uncertainty of an observed and announced calendar (the rules predate the introduction of a calculated calendar), the entire holiday takes eight days. The first two and last two are the holy days, when work is forbidden. Days 3-6 are intermediate days, when work is allowed. The seder takes place twice, on the first and second evenings, the beginnings of the first and second days.

Any discussion relevant to Jesus and the Last Supper, taking place in Jerusalem, would automatically have to be based on the first case, not the second. There would be only one holy day at the start, and only one seder.

[Reply](#)

71. *Keep A True Lent: Easter Sunday / Decatur Unity Church* says:

[April 23, 2014 at 1:23 pm](#)

[...] The Christian Holy Week and the Jewish Passover are celebrated at the same time. Passover commemorates the Exodus of the Jewish peoples from Egypt. Their journey was long and hard, one which required them to leave behind the culture of slavery to attain true freedom. Many failed because it was easier to worship the 'gods' they could see than keep faith with an invisible God who demanded so much more of them. Holy Week commemorates the final week in the life of Jesus, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Jesus returned to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with His disciples. Their final meal together, the Passover Seder, would become The Last Supper. [...]

[Reply](#)

72. *Glen* says:

[April 20, 2014 at 5:33 pm](#)

The Seder not in existence yet, indeed! The only logical conclusion to draw from Klawans' hypothesis (if you buy into it) is that whoever invented Judaism must have drawn heavily upon the New Testament in putting the Seder together!

[Reply](#)

73. *Scott I* says:

[April 20, 2014 at 1:22 am](#)

Passover seems to be used loosely in the gospels, as covering the whole 7 days of unleavened bread. So for one to assume passover in the gospels is just referring to the 15th, at its start in the evening, would be a mistake. The 14th was the preparation for the 15th meal, which is why the lamb was slaughtered in the 14th in the day, preceding the evening start of the 15th. Lawyers make terrible investigators and historians, since they like to misplace emphasis in order to twist and distort, thereby enhancing what they promote, while belittling any other view point offered. This was the technique of the Greek Stoics as well. But if we are objectively looking for truth, we must dispose of prejudiced techniques in favor of ones that are unbiased and objective, so as to produce a more sound conclusion.

[Reply](#)

74. *Scott I* says:

[April 20, 2014 at 1:14 am](#)

Jesus was preparing for the evening beginning the 14th. He did not intend to have a full passover meal which I assume you call a Seder meal. Since Jesus was to be the "sacrificial lamb" to be offered on the following day of the 14th, he did not offer anything but the wine symbolizing the acceptance of the blood he was sacrificing for them and all mankind, and the bread, symbolizing his body being accepted as sacrificed for not only the Apostles, but all mankind, as was God's plan from the days of Moses and Abraham. After his death, the passover meal of the lamb, bitter greens, and unleavened bread took place, commemorating the passover angel and the departure of Israel after daybreak at some time. So it was not a seder meal. It was the establishment of the new amended covenant long promised by Moses near to Deut. 28 or 30 or so. Since all mankind was now released from the sin of Adam, if they so chose, all would commemorate the emblems of the wine and bread on the evening that began the 14th. And at Pentecost, Jesus presented his bodily sacrifice to God in heaven, so that the body may never be seen again. The spirit of God was then poured out on those gathered that day of Pentecost as evidence of the transfer of blessings from the priesthood to those who accepted Jesus as the messiah of Jehovah/Yahweh/Yahuweh.

[Reply](#)

75. *Internet Scrapbook – Awesome Facebook Shares /* says:

[April 19, 2014 at 10:38 am](#)

[...] Was Jesus' last supper actually seder? There are a lot of folks out there that believe that the last supper was a passover meal, or [...]

[Reply](#)

76. *Let My People Go / Nosmerca* says:

[April 18, 2014 at 11:12 am](#)

[...] the theme of sacrifice runs through the liturgy (and let us not forget that a Seder was probably Jesus' Last Supper). Could it be that learning to live without a bagel is telling us something about what it means to [...]

[Reply](#)

77. *Living in the Wilderness / From guestwriters* says:

[April 18, 2014 at 9:05 am](#)

[...] Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? by Jonathan Klawans  
(10/18/2012) <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes&#8230;>; [...]

[Reply](#)

78. *SKFinston* says:

[April 17, 2014 at 9:23 pm](#)

Actually, apart from the first day and the last day, there is no prohibition on ordinary work activities during Passover. I point this out because the author places a great deal of emphasis on the mistaken assumption that this is not the case:

“First, if the Last Supper had been a Seder held on the first night of Passover, then that would mean Jesus' trial and crucifixion took place during the week-long holiday. If indeed Jewish authorities were at all involved in Jesus' trial and death, then according to the synoptics those authorities would have engaged in activities—holding trials and carrying out executions—that were either forbidden or certainly unseemly to perform on the holiday ... The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well.”

In this context, it would appear that it is the author who has lost (or more likely never had) familiarity with the contemporary and continuing Jewish practice of Passover, as laid out in the Torah, where it is only the first day and the seventh day that are holy days where there can be no work:

4 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; howbeit the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be



done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you.’ {P} (Exodus, Chapter 12)

<http://www.mechon-mamre.org/e/et/et0212.htm>

Accordingly, there is no reason to doubt the synoptic accounts on the basis of the fact that they place the arrest, trial and death of Jesus as taking place during Passover.

[Reply](#)

79. *Maundy Thursday & the Last Seder / The Christian Noob (n00b)* says:

[April 17, 2014 at 3:39 pm](#)

[...] Was Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder? by Jonathan Klawans  
(10/18/2012) <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes&#8230;>; [...]

[Reply](#)

80. *Dave* says:

[April 16, 2014 at 5:17 pm](#)

I have known for quite some time that the, “Biblical Archaeological Review,” was a very liberal magazine but if I had any doubts about that, you have removed them all. For you to call people from the Jesus Seminar as scholars really takes the cake. You totally lost my attention at that point. What a bunch of poppy cock.

[Reply](#)

81. *Harold Littleton* says:

[April 16, 2014 at 3:11 pm](#)

I am supportive of the results of this article:

1. the last supper was NOT a seder meal; it occurred on the “day” of preparation, the day BEFORE Passover
2. Jesus’ execution was 15 Nison. It was also in the year 29 CE

Please see my book Jesus: A Would Be King available at <http://www.amazon.com>

[Reply](#)

82. *justm* says:

[April 14, 2014 at 6:37 pm](#)

Joseph was Imhotep of Egypt  
<http://www.arkdiscovery.com/joseph.htm>

[Reply](#)

83. *Scott David Lucas* says:

[April 14, 2014 at 6:40 am](#)

After YESHUA / SALVATION, and his talmidim had the Passover Seder; our forefathers have pertaken of, since the night we were in Egypt; YESHUA blessed the matzah " the unleavened bread ", and blessed "the fruit of the vine " at his " last supper ", YAHSHUA and the eleven talmidim fulfilled what had been commanded of, by The Heavenly Father; that we too, might partake of.....as a memorial, that we remember, what YAHSHUA Messiah had fulfilled, through Moshe and the Prophets. For the glory of the beloved Son of God, YESHUA HaMashiach HaKadosh Yisrael. Amein.

[Reply](#)

84. *Clark* says:

[April 13, 2014 at 10:26 pm](#)

Having just received a message relating to this article and seeing a renewed conversation here and at the risk of not staying on topic I would like to submit to the kind and thoughtful members the following possibility that I did not see addressed in this article.

I am wondering if Mark was even attempting to present any temporal (time related) aspect in Mark 14:12? Was his point the place not the time? For example I find in the God's word translation of Mark 14:12:

Mark 14:12 GW

GOD'S WORD Translation

Killing the Passover lamb was customary on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The disciples asked Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

Now I am not promoting this translation, clearly this is a very rare translation of this verse but I present it to show what I am thinking as a non-time specific rendering of the Greek.

Now in the Greek Matthew 26:17 is very close to Mark 14:12 and could be rendered the same in English. It is interesting that the God's word translation does NOT translate this passage the same indicating how rare the Mark 14:12 translation is and also makes me wonder about the consistency of the God's word translation.

Now Luke 22:7 does make a change and does seem to be addressing the temporal aspect of this passage. He does this by adding the word came (Strong's #2064) which seems clear. Now I am not well versed in Greek but a brief look shows that this Greek word is not a aorist tense and is sometimes translated as coming which would be an interesting change to the timing aspect of this passage.

So in conclusion I am wondering if Mark and subsequently Matthew were NOT addressing the timing of this passage event. Again I speculate but maybe this issue was raised and being discussed at the time of Luke who therefore makes an attempt to clarify the issue? Not to suggest the Luke did a poor job, he may have been very clear to his intended audience as Mark and Matthew may have been to their targeted audience but as these writings were making wider and wider audiences the interpretation/understanding was becoming muddled?

Given John was likely to be the last of the Gospel to be written maybe he was simple being very clear on the timing of this event to settle the matter? So my question is, are we confusing what seems to be a contradiction that was really a progressing clarification?

I am not stating this as my position on this but submit this for consideration by the wider audience.

85. *Gregory J. Brown* says:

[April 13, 2014 at 7:01 pm](#)

The article stated: “If indeed Jewish authorities were at all involved in Jesus’ trial and death, then according to the synoptics those authorities would have engaged in activities—holding trials and carrying out executions—that were either forbidden or certainly unseemly to perform on the holiday ... The synoptic account stretches credulity, not just because it depicts something unlikely, but because it fails to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what it depicts. It is almost as if the synoptic tradition has lost all familiarity with contemporary Jewish practice. And if they have lost familiarity with that, they have probably lost familiarity with reliable historical information as well.”

However, history and rabbinic tradition testify that the rabbinic authorities would break the law to destroy an enemy. First, the testimony of Josephus on the killing of James, the brother of Jesus:

“Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity (to exercise his authority). Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others ... and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa II], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrim without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months” (Antiq of Jews 20, 9, 1; Whiston translation).

Such action was contrary to rabbinic principles: “Samuel said: The law of the State is law” (Talmud, Baba Kama 113b; Gittin 10b; Soncino translation). “‘Be submissive to a superior’: that is, to the ruling power” (Talmud, Kallah Rabbathi 4, 8 [53b]; *ibid.*).

A Jew could kill or rob from Gentiles with no rabbinic penalty, but this would be to break the 6th and 8th commandments against murder and theft. To break the law in regard to one considered an apostate (as Christ was), would, according to this pattern, be something to be overlooked: “Concerning seven religious requirements were the children of Noah admonished ... [including] bloodshed, and thievery ... For bloodshed – how so? A gentile [who kills] a gentile and a gentile who kills an Israelite are liable [for punishment]. An Israelite [who kills] a gentile is exempt. Concerning thievery? [If] one has stolen, or robbed ... a gentile in regard to a gentile, or a gentile in regard to an Israelite – it is prohibited. And an Israelite in regard to a gentile – it is permitted” (Tosefta, Abodah Zarah 8, 4A, B; 8, 5A-E; Neusner translation).

Maimonides is even more explicit in allowing breaking basic Mosaic laws in order to harm enemies: “It is a mitzvah [commandment] to kill minim and apikorsim. The term minim refers to Jewish idolaters or those who perform transgressions for the sake of angering God, even if one eats non-kosher meat for the sake of angering God or wears sha’atnez [clothes of mixed types of fabric] for the sake of angering God. The term apikorsim refers to Jews who deny the Torah and the concept of prophecy. If there is the possibility, one should kill them with a sword in public view. If that is not possible, one should develop a plan so that one can cause their deaths. What is implied? If one sees such a person descend to a cistern, and there is a ladder in the cistern, one should take the ladder, and excuse oneself, saying: ‘I must hurry to take my son down from the roof. I shall return the ladder to you soon.’ Similarly, one should devise other analogous plans to cause the death of such people. With regard to a gentile idolater with whom we are not at war, a Jewish shepherd of small livestock, and the like, by contrast, we should not try to cause their deaths. It is,

however, forbidden to save their lives if their lives are threatened. For example, if such a person fell into the sea, one should not rescue him. Leviticus 19:16 states: 'Do not stand idly by while your brother's blood is at stake.' This does not apply with regard to such individuals, because they are not 'your brothers' " (Mishneh Torah, Rotseah uShmirat Nefesh 4, 10-11).

One more piece of evidence showing that even the holiest of days would not hold back rabbinic scholars from destroying an enemy: "R[abbi] Eleazar said: An 'am ha-arez, it is permitted to stab him [even] on the Day of Atonement which falls on the Sabbath" (Talmud, Pesachim ["Feast of Passover"] 49b; Soncino translation).

The evidence is thus clear, breaking rabbinic and secular law was allowed by the rabbis in order to do away with one perceived as an enemy. The synoptic gospels are thus accurate in this regard and present a view of 1st Century C.E. Judaism consistent with historical evidence. There are hundreds of other points of agreement between the stated facts in the gospels and Paul's letters, and rabbinic literature, that show how well the Christian writers of Jewish descent knew Judaism, and events therein, in their day.

[Reply](#)

86. *Ron Jockers* says:

[April 12, 2014 at 12:52 pm](#)

The day before Passover, is also a Holiday on the Jewish Calendar. Since it was the 1st born that were saved during the Passover, first born Jews celebrate another Holiday called the Feast of the First Born. Jesus was the 1st Born of his family and therefore held a regular traditional Seder the night before he went to the cross. This meal was held on Wednesday night, the day before the lamb was slain in the temple. On Thursday, Jesus was sent to the cross, the lamb in the temple was slain at the time of Jesus death. Jesus was put in the cave on Thursday, he died on Thursday, no Friday. He rose on Sunday, in the ground a full 3 days and nights no matters how you count it. Any orthodox Rabbi knows about the Feast of the First born. I fail to see why this explanation of these events do no make the light of day.

[Reply](#)

87. *Stephen Funck* says:

[April 12, 2014 at 9:53 am](#)

From Seder to Holy Communion –  
How many were with Jesus at his Last Supper?

Some scholars say Jesus' Last Supper was not a Passover Seder. There are scholars that say the early church gradually created the Eucharist from an early pot luck fellowship dinner. That could be considered to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However it is such a radical change, there is no room for gradual development. The Seder change to the Eucharist and the change from Sabbath worship to the first day of the week require deliberate decisive action. Both involve abandonment of the revealed word of God's command, Torah, and the establishment of something else in its place.

Pious people of God do not on their own volition reject God's command and invent something new. Jesus' disciples, in order to be faithful, had to maintain what Jesus taught. All twelve had to agree or there would have been conflict. Acts 15 records the first Jerusalem council. It was serious consideration of a much more minor matter that was an extension of revealed principles.

The discussion of the Seder change often mentions Jesus' last meal was on Thursday. The lambs for the Passover were killed on Friday before the Seder. Jesus himself was killed on Friday as the Passover Lamb.

However the historical record states lambs were killed on Thursday and Friday. Various reasons are given and some accounts are from many years later. The fact they exist does prove that there was a remembrance of the two day practice. It is known that the Essene teaching and practice was to celebrate the Seder the day before the rest of Israel. Jesus's Last Supper was on the Essene Seder.

Does this prove Jesus was Essene? Perhaps Jesus observed the Passover on the normal day in the prior years. This year He told them to prepare on Thursday. They knew this was to be exceptional. His followers were filled with anticipation. Many thought Jesus was going to reveal Himself as the Messiah and bring in the Messianic age. Everything about this Passover meal was exceptional. The normal practice was to celebrate in family groups, those without families were mixed in. Jesus' followers were either at the olive press, Gethsemane, the base of the Mount of Olives, or at the top of the hill at Lazarus' home in Bethany.

Jerusalem was overflowing with pilgrims from all the diaspora for the Passover. Those who traveled together from a town or synagog would camp and eat in close association. Most expected to sit on the floor in a circle around the common bowls. That is how they ate at home, all had to be in reach of the food. Ten people make a circle less than eight feet in diameter. Hundreds would fit in the large upper room.

Jesus broke the normal practice for this Seder. He ate with His chosen twelve disciples. That meant they could not eat with their families. Should we suppose that the twelve left their families behind and went off by themselves? That would have been a horrible violation of social mores. Everyone came along, otherwise Jesus would have been publicly crude and selfish. What great man proclaiming love among his followers could do otherwise? Just because the Gospels do not mention them is no proof that all the rest were not there. Lazarus, Mary, Martha and their families, Jesus mother Mary, Clopas and his wife Mary, Matthias and Joseph Barsabba, Mary Magdalene. What about those He healed? Do you think Jairus whose daughter had been raised would have sought Jesus out? Would Zaccheaus have gone somewhere else? Counting the known followers of Jesus, adding family members quickly leads to a figure over 250. The only ones missing would have had social obligations that kept them away. Joseph of Aramathia and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin. Luke lists Joan'na, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many other socially prominent women. The Centurion, whose servant was healed, may have been out of place. The Picture of the Last Supper is changed from the Twelve at table to close to 300 sitting in circles on the floor. The second image is much closer to the truth.

The upper room was prepared for passover and available. Unbelievable! Every space for miles around was packed tight, roofs, every bare patch of ground covered with campsites. How could a room have been available, much less a room prepared for passover celebration? Distant synagogues, Alexandria, Antioch, Babylon, had guest houses for their members when they came to Jerusalem. There were a reported 500 of such guest houses in Jerusalem. The Torah mandated all Israelites come to the Temple for three festivals a year. In between the festivals those places were for students and travelers from their community. It was not just the upper room that was prepared and empty. The whole large house was ready for a large contingent and equipped to prepare their feast. Jesus' followers would have prepared nearly 30 lambs. That was not a major task when scattered at many camp sites but requires an establishment with great facilities. Records state between 200,000 and 250,000 lambs were sacrificed for Passover in the years before the Temple was destroyed.

Perhaps the pilgrims had a problem, the rabbi fell and was injured, slowing their travel. A messenger was sent to inform the people at the house. Jesus told the disciples they would meet a man carrying water, who would lead them to the house. That still does not explain why the steward would permit them to use the building, unless, he realized this was by divine intervention. He might have sent the man for water, anticipating their imminent arrival. Then another messenger came saying they were further delayed until the next day. If it was a house for Essenes, they would have been forced to celebrate Passover where they stopped and not at the house. It was custom, not law, that the lamb was sacrificed at the Temple. The steward of the house, the disciples, recognized a miracle. Jesus knew this house was available before the steward of the house knew.



Having a reason for the time and place of Jesus' final meal does not explain how that became the weekly Sunday Eucharist celebration of bread and wine. The Decalog mandates Sabbath worship. How can the obedient faithful decide to break that commandment to worship on Sunday? Only the one they knew as the Son of God, Lord, Messiah – Christ, could have the authority to change God's Torah – Law. Just because Jesus rose from the grave on Sunday is not authority for them to make that change, without His clear command.

Jesus walked with Clopas/Cleopas on the way to Emmaus. His wife Mary is called the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother. The best understanding is that Clopas was Mary's husband Joseph's brother. Clopas' son Simeon became the second Bishop of the Jerusalem church. Probably Clopas' whole family were present when Jesus revealed himself in the breaking of bread. They hurried back to tell the news and were present when Jesus appeared again.

Very little is recorded. Could it be that the Sunday evening group had been praying? They might have been following the familiar synagog liturgy and then shared a snack? Bread and wine? Did someone remind them that when they shared bread and wine Jesus commanded at His last supper with them, they were to share the bread as His body and wine as His blood. They might have joined in the prayer Jesus taught them. As they were remembering Him, did they feel His presence and realize He was standing in their midst? Actually not mere imagination. Could He have said something to remind them He was present when they shared the bread and wine, remembering, celebrating the day He rose?

The following Sunday more were present. Were they again following the synagog liturgy, concluding with the bread and wine as He commanded them? Had He told them to meet on Sundays, and He would be with them in the bread and wine? Again Jesus appeared and spoke with them. It is only the clear command of the Master that could change God's decalog commanded day of worship. The new covenant, the new creation, the new messianic age had begun. The annual elaborate Seder dinner of the first covenant becomes the weekly sharing of bread and wine.

Was it on Sunday, Jesus appeared on the mount in Galilee to more than 500? Did they worship following the synagog service and then share the bread and wine? It was on Sunday that the Holy Spirit was poured out on them all. Had they been praying the liturgy, sharing the bread and wine? The worship of the Christian Church ever since is based on the synagog Service of the Word followed by the Service of the Eucharist. I think that only could have occurred by the clear direction of the Lord of the Church, Himself.

See my web site for more. <http://thesignofconcord.com> Posted there are chapters from a Life of Christ that is footnoted to historical documentation

Stephen H. Funck February 12, 2014 Email [ConcordDove@mac.com](mailto:ConcordDove@mac.com)

[Reply](#)

88. *Eric Peloquin* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 5:46 pm](#)

I appreciate much of the material that I receive in BAR. However, I have to always read their material through a filter. While I readily admit that I am fairly new to BAR, it seems that biblical/archaeological/anthropological scholars with a more liberal bent are quoted profusely and given much weight. Yet we rarely seem to hear from scholars with a more conservative bent. Dr. Eilat Mazar (who I grant has been published numerous times in BAR) said "I work with the Bible in one hand and the tools of excavation in the other. That's what Biblical archaeologists do. The Bible is the most important historical source and therefore deserves special attention."

It just seems to me that while using the bible as the impetus for the very existence of BAR, that many people then seek to find reasons why the bible is not reliable.

[Reply](#)

89. *DD* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 3:54 pm](#)

What is Easter? Is it mentioned in the bible? Or is it an ancient Roman pagan festival?(Ishtar? Many religions teach to celebrate Easter and...with a traditional ham? meal. It seems to have very little about the Resurrection of Jesus.

[Reply](#)

90. *WAS JESUS' LAST SUPPER A SEDER?* | *Aaron Halim* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 2:31 pm](#)

[...] <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes&#8230;>; [...]

[Reply](#)

91. *David Morse* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 2:10 pm](#)

I don't expect a response after all this time, but I hadn't heard they "gave alms after the meal", so obviously not a Seder, since handling money on a holiday would have been forbidden.

[Reply](#)

92. *bobbyg11* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 12:02 pm](#)

I wish BAS had clear restrictions on comments — that they stick to issues raised in the articles — and that comments were reviewed before posting to make sure they are relevant.

The above gets way off and is much more distractive than helpful.

[Reply](#)

93. *Allan Richardson* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 10:48 am](#)

Another possibility, mentioned by some analysts, is that Jesus and His disciples may have followed one of the anti-establishment sects (like the Dead Sea Essene community) who had contended that the Temple priests were not following Torah properly, and not calculating the calendar of holy days correctly, thus substituting their own theological opinion as to the correct days to celebrate festivals.

If this is so, then Jesus may have celebrated Passover the night before the "official" one; they did arrive in Jerusalem almost a week early anyway. Or, as a PRACTICAL matter, He decided to celebrate a day early,

since Jesus knew He would be dying during the “day of preparation” and would not be able to join in the meal on the actual first night of Passover. He did say on other occasions that ritual requirements should be kept when possible, but not when they were in conflict with human need (hence, the Samaritan, unencumbered by the ritual purity rules of the Priest and the Levite, got his hands bloody and helped the injured man; and He healed on the Sabbath and allowed His disciples to glean a handful of grain from the fields on the Sabbath). The only mystery then is, how could He convince the disciples to hold the feast early without telling them He would die tomorrow (since they seemed to be taken by surprise by the events after the meal), unless they all followed a “contrarian” calendar.

[Reply](#)

94. *Steve Roberts* says:

[April 11, 2014 at 9:44 am](#)

The absolute best reading on this subject is by Dr Scott Hahn in the book; “The Lambs Supper”. In this video, Dr. Hahn has a doctorate in covenant theology and does an incredible job investigating and explaining this whole mystery. Here is a taste of this book in a talk definitely worth hearing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzaiwqsDAm8>

[Reply](#)

95. *Dianne* says:

[March 10, 2014 at 11:25 pm](#)

Jonathan Klawans is not Jewish or a Messianic Jew so he makes STUPID assumptions based on the knowledge he has but not on it's application to daily life. In the REAL world, we often celebrate with several groups several different Passover seders in commemoration of Passover. We may have one at home, with our congregation and maybe even one with Christian friends. Often these “extras” fall either before or after the actual official Passover day. Yeshua also KNEW He was to die on the actual day. Was He going to skip a last seder with His beloved friends? The author is trying to sell a book not live the life.

[Reply](#)

96. *Was the Last Supper really a Jewish Seder? / Mark Grago* says:

[March 10, 2014 at 12:10 pm](#)

[...] <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes...>  
Tintoretto, Last Supper, oil on canvas, Venice, Italy, 1594 Share this:TwitterFacebookLike this:Like  
Loading... [...]

[Reply](#)

97. *Rex* says:

[February 8, 2014 at 2:30 pm](#)

Many posting above have the days of week wrong. The Last Supper was on Thursday nite / [Friday 13th begins at sunset]. Thus, the Last Supper was not celebrated on the Jewish Passover, which comes 24 hrs

later.

John's Gospel has the correct dates. John even mentions that Christ went to visit the risen Lazarus, 6 days before the Passover ... which places that visit on prior Sunday, making the Passover on Saturday / Nisan 15. If, Nisan 15 had been on Friday .... that would of placed the travel to Lazarus on Saturday / Jewish Sabbath — no travel allowed on that holy day.

The Trial occurred that night, before the cock crowed for Peter [and we] on morning of 14th. Next, they rushed Christ before Pilate in AM, for sentencing. Then straight on to the cross by midday on 14th / Friday [Nisan 14] ... the day of Preparation for the upcoming Passover meal. No trial / business was allowed for Jews on Passover [or their Sabbath] ... which precluded a Saturday trial & execution of Christ.

Christ placed on Cross by midday, and dead @ 3PM on Friday, GOOD FRIDAY. Then body prepared and in the tomb before dark, the beginning of Nisan 15 / Passover. Nisan 15 continued thru Saturday / Jewish Sabbath .. until dark. Christ arises from the tomb at daybreak on Nisan 16 / Sunday, the Christian SABBATH ... the FIRST DAY of the Week [ the 8th DAY].

3 days in the earth for Christ, in accordance with the Jewish scriptures . [Nisan 14/15/and 16th. Evermore at the Rt. Hand of the Father, King of Kings, Lord of all time and eternity.

Now, even tho the Last Supper was not the Seder/ Passover meal ..... it had to of occurred one day earlier .... in order for the Jewish Scriptures and Laws to be full-filled. And, Christ died on the Day of Preparation,— prepared for mankind as the Lamb of God, our 'once for all time' sacrifice for sins, ... which animal sacrifices can never ever again remove, ever-since Nisan 14/15/16 ....in 30 AD.

[Reply](#)

98. *Wayne* says:

[February 8, 2014 at 1:04 pm](#)

I have been studying the creation calendar found in the book of Enoch and the instructions for Passover found in the book of Jubilees and the Torah. Both suggest the fourteenth day of the first month is a weekly Sabbath. Being a weekly Sabbath no work is done, no burden is brought into or out of a dwelling, no fire is to be kindled, no water is to be drawn. With this in mind, the instructions for performing the Passover in the book of Jubilees and the Torah state the lamb is to be killed on the fourteenth day at evening, between sunset and sundown. The book of Jubilees states specifically that the lamb is not to be killed during any part of the daylight. The lamb is to be roasted by fire in the night at the beginning of the fifteenth day. All of these instructions would validate the rules of the weekly Sabbath of the fourteenth being upheld.

[Reply](#)

99. *Eucharist: From Jewish Meal to Christian Meal / VatiKos* says:

[October 13, 2013 at 10:39 pm](#)

[...] about the Lord's Supper celebrated by his disciples after the resurrection of Jesus? Is it only a recalling of that meal or [...]

[Reply](#)

100. *Eliyahu* says:

[September 23, 2013 at 5:26 pm](#)

“This custom reflected an ancient Jewish tradition of fasting during the time immediately preceding the Passover meal (as related in Mishnah Pesachim 10:1).”

[Reply](#)

101. *Eliyahu* says:

[September 23, 2013 at 5:22 pm](#)

The Synoptics may say “to eat the Passover meal” but they really mean to eat the pre-Passover meal or the before-Passover meal (the night before).

After that you wouldn’t eat until the Passover Seder meal the next evening so as to get all the leaven out of your system by Passover eve.

or you would just snack on passover food before the Seder starts.

[Reply](#)

102. *Eliyahu* says:

[September 23, 2013 at 4:28 pm](#)

The Last-Supper was not a Passover-Seder meal but it was rather on the night before (on Tuesday night). When the Jews burn the Khamets (Leaven) and have a last leaven supper.

Yes, Yeshu died a couple of hours before started the Eve of Passover (on Wednesday evening).

Wednesday evening to Thursday evening is ONE FULL DAY Passed since his death. Thursday is the Passover during the daytime until sunset.

Thursday evening to Friday evening is TWO FULL DAYS Passed since his death. Friday during the day you can go shopping to buy the incense and then prepare them at home, but you wouldn’t have time to go to the cemetery to use it on the body because it’s almost sunset, the sabbath is about to begin.

Saturday is Shabat-day no working or going to the cemeteries allowed.

Saturday evening would make THREE FULL DAYS and THREE FULL NIGHTS HAVE PASSED SINCE HIS DEATH.

Very early Sunday morning before dawn they came and no body found.

[Reply](#)

103. *Eliyahu* says:

[September 23, 2013 at 4:03 pm](#)

The Biur Khamets meal is the last leavend meal before passover.  
The night before the Eve of Passover.

[Reply](#)

104. *Pat* says:

June 6, 2013 at 8:20 am

The evil potential of this passage is nearly sufficient to ban religion altogether because of its potential to convert status into violence because the death of innocents became the defining event to mark the freedom of the Jews. That reality embodied into mankind can justify violence in the mind of mankind as the final solution for human conflict; it is the justification for murder, for war, for torture, and for defining failure and success.

The lingering schizophrenia of “cause based” morality was made possible by the concept of Passover, and its use in religious custom and tradition that tends to keep alive the psychological war between humans that harm to first born is an acceptable method of getting rid of the problem. Thus, kings have been assassinated due to desire to alter history, and grab the power of violence, etc, all of which emerged because of religious convention, and the torture and harassment it has caused. It gave rise to the concept of primogeniture upon which these evil methods have survived through centuries in nearly every country. thus, favoring first born males, or harming first born males has been made into an artistic art form that has spanned the ages, and now extends to girls.

Humanity which cannot see the disaster of this inhuman aspect of evil cannot save itself, and will eventually exterminate itself. The programming is anything but holy, and rests upon the reality of an ancient evil carried by humans through superstition into the present. Humanity must manage this evil trend for evil expression its allowed expression, and condemn it completely.

[Reply](#)

105. *Gaillard Lee* says:

June 1, 2013 at 9:52 pm

” If you want to re-write the Bible you can make it say anything you want. However for me, it is utter nonsense to suggest that the “last supper” had nothing to do with the celebration of Passover. What a ridiculous and naive article. Do your homework! Learn the history of Jewish customs and then come back with your “A-game”. ”

” the crucified Jesus is explicitly linked with the Paschal sacrifice. To the right of the cross stands a wounded lamb, which carries a cross and bleeds into a chalice ”

God had been weary of the blood of bulls, Jesus the sacrifice vs the ‘Mercy’, so why are so many here taking issue with the likely fact ( given Jesus entire family as given by historical figures, was vegetarian at the least, not the least was James ) that the last supper was not Seder ? Call me foolish all you wish anyone at all, but I have never thought mercy to be very foolish, and indeed quite powerful ,humble and compassion as teachings go ....

How blind do you have to be to languish within misery to not see the new testament of Jesus whereby laid aside were to be ways of cruelty and sacrifice ( as GOD so noted!) and usher in new ways of harmony, peace, love and compassion ? I realize some will demand the slaughter of innocence just as was done to make sure that ‘Passover’ blood kept them safe; but I say to you Jesus brought a new time where Mercy was paramount, because we do not have in our GOD a vengeful or lust for sacrifice of the innocent, but of Mercy and good will to all man, do we not ?

Jesus ENTIRE LIFE was devoted to that mentality, so I fail to understand how so many here are so blind to that, yet just as so many still cling to their diets of ill health ( as is now prove by Sanjay Gupta and others), yet so many still cling to ideas which we really should Passover for something new, and



compassionate; something Jesus was willing to die for, and stand up to the Pharisee brethren of his back then. Oh the irony.

I see the truth through the lens of compassion, not sacrifice, and it's mirrored through GOD (Genesis etc.) and his son JESUS in every breath and deed, as given in the Very temple itself by a son fully cognizant how important it was to , 'Give me mercy not sacrifice' . Amen.

[Reply](#)

106. *Jim Roane* says:

[May 20, 2013 at 4:05 pm](#)

I for one, agree that it was not a Seder meal for reasons stated. Jesus inaugurated a New Covenant; the Seder was under the Old Covenant. The Seder meal controversy is a tough one. That's for sure.

[Reply](#)

107. *Looking for Help Finding a Church! Advice Needed - Page 3 - Christian Forumssays:*

[April 26, 2013 at 6:36 pm](#)

[...] and it makes a persuasive case in much of the article FOR the Last Supper being held on Passover. Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? – Biblical Archaeology Society You can find many other articles as well out there if you take the time to look. 1. The Last [...]

[Reply](#)

108. *Pasen / Pesach / Seder, Roomser dan de Rabbi? / wandelen in de waarheid* says:

[April 11, 2013 at 3:24 pm](#)

[...] Artikel op biblicalarcheology.org: Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? [...]

[Reply](#)

109. *Josephgpal* says:

[April 2, 2013 at 4:56 am](#)

Also Fount's comment makes much sense to me.

[Reply](#)

110. *Josephgpal* says:

[April 2, 2013 at 4:49 am](#)

Thank you Roberta for your post.

//”Yeshua would NEVER break the law, either before or after the resurrection-He is NOT like the worldly leaders of this age or ages past who believe they are above the law” – Roberta//

Truth cannot be clearer than the above!

[Reply](#)

111. *Roberta Fioretti* says:

[April 1, 2013 at 4:27 am](#)

Josephgal—I am in total agreement that the Scriptures are clear that a day is from sunset to sunset. Your understanding of the Sabbaths and High Sabbaths is Scripturally correct.

Also, as we know, Yeshua would NEVER break the law, either before or after the resurrection—He is NOT like the worldly leaders of this age or ages past who believe they are above the law—the state of this world is a testament to that fact .

[Reply](#)

112. *Fount Freeman* says:

[March 30, 2013 at 1:55 pm](#)

I too wrestled with this issue for years. Then I realized that the modern Jewish timing of the celebration of Passover has them celebrating it on 15 Nisan. Yet God clearly commanded them in the Bible to celebrate it on the evening of the 14th (which the way Jewish people count day would be the beginning of the 14th)? What happened?

Since by the time of Jesus' passion (30 AD) the Jews were already doing Passover on the 15 – merging it with the first day of the week long First Fruits festival. This must have been changed at an early date. Many people point to the Babylonian captivity period for this change. We know the Jews came out with different names for their months, a different starting time for the their year and evidently also a messed up dating of the Passover.

So Jesus celebrated God's Passover with His apostles starting right after the beginning of the day (at about 6 PM) on 14 Nisan. Is there any surprise that Jesus would not be confused about the right date? After all later that same day He was to become the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world in the ultimate fulfillment of this Holy Day of God! So, this last supper WAS the Passover meal. It was also evidently celebrated at that time by the Sadducees so they were not the only group observing the correct date.

However, it is clear to see that the worldly Passover group – led by the Pharisees (who also dominated the Sanhedrin at that time) – celebrated the Passover on the 15th. This is in perfect agreement with the synoptic gospels. With their later time of observance, they also sacrificed their Passover lambs at 3 PM on the “day of preparation”. John says Jesus died on the cross at 3 PM on the day of preparation. The perfect fulfillment of God's Passover! His later followers – the Quartodecimans confirmed this timing of the crucifixion as being on the 14th by being resistant to the Roman Catholic Church about the timing of “Easter” for centuries afterwards.

All of these factors have me respectfully disagreeing with Jonathan Klawas by saying: “Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder? Most likely, it was!”

[Reply](#)

113. *A Feast For The Senses...And The Soul | Hebrew Vision News* says:

March 29, 2013 at 2:21 pm

[...] Last Supper is history's most famous meal. Read Jonathan Klawans's full article "Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? for FREE in Bible History [...]

[Reply](#)

114. *Josephgpal* says:

March 28, 2013 at 5:50 am

// "Please notice again the heretical rantings of Josephgpal," – Rick//

Let the great God make the judgement of heresy in me. Judgement is His prerogative. I don't want to usurp His right!

\*\*\*\*\*

// "Here is what Mark 16:1 KJV, " really says" – Rick//

Surprising that all of a sudden you switched to KJV! Why don't you look in the YLT (Young's Literal Translation), your most favourite version?!!

\*\*\*\*\*

// "Where is this addition to Scripture that J has inserted: "the ladies went to the market"." – Rick//

First of all I was not quoting directly from the Bible. I was explaining something. I use quotation marks when I take a direct verse from the Bible.

I explained that because the Scripture says they "\*\*\*\*BOUGHT\*\*\*\*" (I had highlighted this already in my previous post) the spices.

Now it is obvious that usually one goes to the market to BUY something or the market comes to one's home to SELL something. Both needs time in the daylight.

\*\*\*\*\*

// "There is no time reference in Mark 16:1 that tells when the spices were bought." – Rick//

There \*\*\*"IS"\*\*\* the time reference in Mark!

It starts at Mark 15:42!

And it becomING evening already Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked permission to remove Jesus' body from the cross and by the time he buried Jesus in the new sepulchre, it was already late in the evening. (Mark 15:42-46).

And Mary Magdalene and Mary of Joses observed where Jesus' body was laid. (Mark 15:47).

Thus the crucifixion day ENDED and the ladies could not buy any spices in the night because the high Sabbath had already started!

So, ..... "And the SABBATH HAVING PAST, Mary the Magdalene, and Mary of James, and Salome, \*\*\*\*\*"BOUGHT"\*\*\*\*\*spices, that having come, they may anoint him" (Mark 16:1).

(The above direct quote is taken from YLT – Young's Literal Translation, your most favoured Bible version!!!).

So it is crystal clear that they bought spices after the next day high Sabbath!!!

So spices activity cannot be on the crucifixion day. Sorry!

\*\*\*\*\*

//”J engages in paralogism either because he is confused, or because he wants to confuse others, or both.” – Rick//

I am not a preacher / teacher to be confused and to confuse others.

Anyone can reject my position outright. But I like to be “proven” wrong “logically”!

\*\*\*\*\*

//”I have destroyed J’s credibility continuously during this discussion” – Rick//

Yes. You are absolutely right!

Instead of refuting my **\*\*points\*\*** logically one by one, all you have tried until now is only to discredit me by saying I am not “born again”, I cannot “grasp” spiritual things, I am “heretic”, I am “unteachable”, I am not spiritually “hungry” etc etc.

And that is a wrong attitude in a public discussion. We need to concentrate on the topic NOT on the person!

## SUMMARY

I again say that the Scripture is emphatic that – Jewish Seder or no Jewish Seder – Jesus DID eat the Passover meal as per the Torah on Nissan 14th night. He was crucified in the afternoon of Passover, still Nissan 14th making Him our Passover Lamb.

The next high day Sabbath was the first day of Unleavened Bread when no work was allowed to be done, followed by a working holyday and then by a weekly Sabbath!

[Reply](#)

### 115. *Rick Mauck* says:

[March 27, 2013 at 1:43 pm](#)

Please notice again the heretical rantings of Josephgpall, he states: “Note it carefully! Mark says “AFTER” the Sabbath, the ladies went to the market, bought spices and prepared it ready for use.”

Here is what Mark 16:1 KJV, ” really says: “...Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.”

Where is this addition to Scripture that J has inserted: “the ladies went to the market”. Amazing, it is not in Mark 16:1. There is no time reference in Mark 16:1 that tells when the spices were bought.

However, Luke 23:55-56 does give us a time reference. They went to the sepulchre (following Joseph and Nicodemus) to learn where His body was going to be laid. Then they returned and prepared spices. This all occurred on Thursday, crucifixion day, also known as the last preparation day before the single day of Passover. So, prior to preparing the spices, they must have obtained those spices. So, they obtained the spices on Thursday. Not only that, but it was already sundown when they left the tomb, so they most likely obtained the spices prior to going to the tomb.

So Luke gives us clues as to when the spices were bought and Mark tells us when those prepared spices were brought to the sepulchre. J engages in paralogism either because he is confused, or because he wants to confuse others, or both.

I have destroyed J's credibility continuously during this discussion, but BAR has edited out most of those entries, because they too engage in paralogism and are burying the evidence. I could re-post those entries. But if anyone sincerely wants to learn the truth, then email me [rickdmauck@gmail.com](mailto:rickdmauck@gmail.com). That way you can learn without the interference of the hyenas who desire to consume your flesh.

So, Faye was correct and I am correct. There were two back to back sabbaths at the end of crucifixion week.

To Daniel. I'm not sure exactly what you mean by your remarks or who they are directed to. However, the Last Supper was on Wednesday and it was not a Passover meal. Christ taught us communion at the Last Supper. Passover, according to the Scriptures, was two days later on Friday of that week. In fact, at the Last Supper, in Luke 22:15-16, our Messiah tells his disciples (and us) that He will not be eating the Passover this year. That year He was going to be our Passover sacrifice.

[Reply](#)

116. *Daniel* says:

March 27, 2013 at 10:38 am

If you want to re-write the Bible you can make it say anything you want. However for me, it is utter nonsense to suggest that the "last supper" had nothing to do with the celebration of Passover. What a ridiculous and naive article. Do your homework! Learn the history of Jewish customs and then come back with your "A-game".

[Reply](#)

117. *Passover Seder and the Last Supper / St. Augustine Young Adult Ministry* says:

March 27, 2013 at 9:50 am

[...] would not have held back mentioning these further vilifying actions. For further reading, see this article by Jonathan Klawans of Boston [...]

[Reply](#)

118. *Josephgal* says:

March 27, 2013 at 5:02 am

// "I thought calendar studies showed that there was likely a double Shabbat, a weekly Shabbat and Passover back to back." – faye//

While it is true that there were TWO Sabbaths – one annual and one weekly – between the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the belief that these two were "back to back" is NOT historically correct!

The Bible says that after the annual Sabbath, the ladies went to the market and bought spices and prepared it.

"And the SABBATH PASSING, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome, \*\*BOUGHT\*\* spices, so that coming they might anoint Him." (Mark 16:1).

Note it carefully! Mark says “AFTER” the Sabbath, the ladies went to the market, bought spices and prepared it ready for use.

The Bible also says that after preparing the spices the ladies rested on the weekly Sabbath according to the commandment.

“Then they went back and prepared spices and perfumes, and on the SABBATH they RESTED according to the commandment.” (Luke 23:56).

Note again carefully! Luke says AFTER preparing the spices and ointments, there was another sabbath “according to the commandment!!! (it is the weekly Saturday sabbath that is mentioned in the 10 commandments!).

The above two Scriptures show clearly that there was an annual Sabbath BEFORE the spice-preparation and a weekly Sabbath AFTER it!

So the two Sabbaths were NOT “back to back”!

[Reply](#)

119. *Josephgal* says:

March 27, 2013 at 2:59 am

Dear Ntube,

Thanks for the appreciation. You are right, I don't have any ill feelings toward Rick because my discussions are 'issue' based and not 'person' based. Have a good day.

\*\*\*\*\*

//”Had it been the Passover Seder, the Greek word used would have been ‘azymos’ – which is unleavened bread and which, outside of the Roman barracks, would have been the only bread available in Jerusalem that day..... because that is what Christ and the disciples ate on that day.” – Brian//

Oh, so you mean to say that Jesus Christ and His disciples WENT TO A ROMAN BARRACK to celebrate the Last Supper because “artos” was available ONLY in Roman barracks and “azymos” was the ONLY bread available in Jerusalem on that day!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thanks for the ever newer and newer information!

[Reply](#)

120. *Rick Mauck* says:

March 27, 2013 at 2:44 am

To Faye,

You are correct. Friday Passover and Saturday (weekly sabbath) are back to back. This Saturday is also the annual sabbath of the first day of the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, please be aware that the Last Supper occurred on Wednesday of this week. One cannot get there by inserting the current Jewish calendar into time and plugging it into crucifixion week, nor can they plug in the Gregorian calendar. Neither of these calendars were in existence at that time in history.

[Reply](#)



121. *Rick Mauck* says:

[March 26, 2013 at 1:54 pm](#)

“What is the point of me?” you ask. What is the point of having a discussion of Christ and the crucifixion and the Last Supper, if one is unwilling to recognize the Self-existing One and the eternal life He holds out to those who will come to Him in humility and servitude?

You must be born again. John 3:3 KJV, “[Yahoshua] answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

[Reply](#)

122. *Rick Mauck* says:

[March 26, 2013 at 1:48 pm](#)

To Brian,

Your point about artos and azumos has been covered here quite thoroughly by me, but it has been edited out by BAR. You are quite correct. However, your eucharist (golden cup) is an abomination. Christians have communion. Repent and be delivered. Revelation 17:4 KJV, “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication[.]”

[Reply](#)

123. *3.26 Today's Interesting News - The Lenz Review » The Lenz Review* says:

[March 26, 2013 at 12:29 pm](#)

[...] Was Jesus' Last Supper A Seder? [...]

[Reply](#)

124. *faye* says:

[March 26, 2013 at 11:57 am](#)

I thought calendar studies showed that there was likely a double Shabbat, a weekly Shabbat and Passover back to back. I have taken Messiah's words at this last supper to be a Shabbat kiddush and kin to Christian Communion, which is celebrated weekly at our home.

Thank for the thought provoking words.

Shalom

[Reply](#)

125. *Brian Finch* says:

[March 26, 2013 at 4:46 am](#)

@Rick

I produced a historical argument. You produced abuse.  
What is the point of you?

[Reply](#)

126. ***Rick Mauck*** says:

[March 26, 2013 at 12:42 am](#)

You guy(s) are quite transparent. So we are to believe that suddenly out of nowhere and all on the same day a Jehovah Witness (Stephania); a gnostic (Krzysztof); an ecumenical (Ntube); and an Orthodox Christian (Brian) just happened to be browsing the internet and found this comment section and found it worthwhile to leave a comment. Oh, there is nothing new under the sun. The hyenas are gathering and plotting: “if we increase our numbers enough and circle enough and yap enough we can confuse our enemy (truth)”. And in John 14:6, Christ said He is truth. He is not confused by your antics and neither am I. But not to worry, as you do so much, how many are really out there looking for that which you are so desperately trying to obscure? And add to that, the editing done by BAR. Tisk, tisk.

[Reply](#)

127. ***Brian Finch*** says:

[March 25, 2013 at 9:02 pm](#)

In the three synoptic Gospels, and in both John and Paul (who, although he did not attend the Last Supper himself, certainly spoke to some who did), the Greek word used for the bread is ‘artos’ – which is common or garden leavened risen bread. Had it been the Passover Seder, the Greek word used would have been ‘azymos’ – which is unleavened bread and which, outside of the Roman barracks, would have been the only bread available in Jerusalem that day. That is why to this day the Orthodox Church uses leavened risen bread in the Eucharist – because that is what Christ and the disciples ate on that day. We do what they did.

[Reply](#)

128. ***Ntube Francis*** says:

[March 25, 2013 at 6:42 pm](#)

Josephgal, thanks for indepth explanations of God’s DAY. I would like to read more from you if you don’t mind contacting me. Don’t mind Rick. We’re all brothers after all, only sometimes men are too fixed to their opinions and don’t want to be challenged. But the Spirit of Christ wants us to accept challenges, to better our understanding. The Lord be praised.

[Reply](#)

129. ***Krzysztof Ciuba*** says:

[March 25, 2013 at 5:12 pm](#)

Thanks all for details. I know absolutely the term “three days” in OT in Hebrew means “very fast, shortly” (now I cannot find probably in prophets this “term”), therefore, it does not really very much matter the

precise numeric value of the day(s) of resurrection. Keep in mind that all NT was written 10's-years after the crucifixion (50.A.D to 100 A.D)and resurrection, therefore all such narrative is always a story (theological) and not a history. It will help to resolve contradictions both in NT writers and in the interpreting it today.

[Reply](#)

130. *Passover 2013 / Near Emmaus* says:

[March 25, 2013 at 5:01 pm](#)

[...] those interested, I found this article by Jonathan Klawans "Was Jesus' Last Supper a Sedar?" thought provoking. It has received at least one response of which I am aware: "Jesus Last [...]"

[Reply](#)

131. *stephania* says:

[March 25, 2013 at 9:44 am](#)

When you go to search into Biblical History FIRST you need an ACCURATE Bible Translation from the Original Hebrew, and Greek Scriptures. Out of 55 Bibles that Hebrew and Greek Scholars read They found The New World Translation was number 1 out of 55 translations. The King James Version which MOST favor is number 53 out of 55. Google the Most accurate Bible. March 26 on the Hebrew Calendar it is Nisan 14. That date is when Jesus Christ died for our sins. Jesus told his disciples to "keep doing this (Commerating his death) in Remembrance of me until HE comes back" Luke 22:19. This memorial is observed Annually. People confuse it with the Israelites PASSOVER. There is ONLY ONE celebration in the Whole Bible and that is Jesus death. We will commerate Jesus Death March 26 at Sundown which is when Jesus died.

[Reply](#)

132. *Passover March 25-April 2 2013 and Easter March 31 / Help! Aging Parents* says:

[March 23, 2013 at 8:45 pm](#)

[...] researched piece by Jonathan Klawans, an assistant professor of religion at Boston University, <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jes...> Skim it (it's long) and decide for yourself. Or just put forth the question. It may provide [...]"

[Reply](#)

133. *Rick Mauck* says:

[January 27, 2013 at 2:29 pm](#)

There are two glaring misrepresentations given in the article. One, that the Passover was a celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Passover had and has absolutely nothing to do with leaving Egypt. When the Hebrews were eating the Passover, they had no clue that they would be leaving Egypt. God's judgment had come to the Egyptians and the first born were going to die that night. The Hebrews who obeyed God's commands to Moses about what to do and not to do on

Passover were going to be spared from the death sentence. The lambs' blood was going to save them. This of course is a picture of that which Christ's Blood has done (He being the Passover Lamb of God). It saves from the penalty of the second death. It is the first day of the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which commemorates their exodus, not Passover. Second, the Bible teaches that a day begins at sunrise, not sunset. Without this basic and necessary knowledge, it is impossible to understand that the four gospels are in agreement. The Hebrews practiced a Biblical day from their beginnings until past the time that Christ ascended. A day start has since been corrupted by the Jews.

[Reply](#)

134. *Allan Richardson* says:

[October 31, 2012 at 10:57 am](#)

The analysis by Bart Ehrman combined with other information (e.g. the Essene Seder explanation) seems to make the most sense to me. If we do not insist on an EXACT LITERAL Divine inspiration (only an inspiration of the general concept, if one is a believer), then given the dating of the Fourth Gospel as over 50 years later than the Synoptic Gospels, the need for John to make a more precise parallel between Jesus and the Paschal Lamb (appropriate for a later era), and the tendency of Jesus to "liberalize" some of the strict RITUALS (not moral teachings) of His faith, it makes sense that either (a) John altered the timeline by one day, possibly not knowing that this would put Jesus' Seder a day early, to have Him slaughtered at the same time as the actual lambs, or (b) Jesus, planning to be executed on the day of preparation, scheduled His personal Seder a day early, either in ACCORDANCE with Essene teachings if He WAS an Essene, or merely for CONVENIENCE, citing the Essene teachings to show that the actual day was a human tradition anyway, only the FACT of Passover observance was Divinely commanded. Some combination of these circumstances would explain everything; but I am not going to guess exactly WHICH combination is the truth.

And yes, the ancient Seder would not have been as elaborate as the later Rabbinical Hagaddah, just as early Christian worship was not as formal as the Catholic Mass, Orthodox Eucharist, or even Protestant services (most likely it was closer to a Quaker meeting, with everyone silent until moved to testify). The important thing is that all devout Jews celebrated a Passover dinner that was more elaborate than a daily meal (like our own holiday gatherings) at home with the family, and the Apostles and other close associates were His family.

Imagine Jesus saying to His disciples, "I will not be able to have ANY Passover dinner with you, because I will be killed before the holiday starts; you will have to remember LAST year until I come again in glory." No, a day early or not, He wanted one last memorable teaching event before His death (and remember, the Apostles did not really have His degree of expectation of the Resurrection before it happened). The Synoptic Gospels show Him comparing Himself to the Paschal Lamb being sacrificed, and John insists on taking that to the point of the exact timeline (or possibly it WAS the exact timeline). The teaching is the same either way.

By the way, are there any other languages of traditionally Christian nations, other than English, that do NOT have a variation of Pesach as the word for Easter? I have wondered if there is a reason for this linguistic oddity.

[Reply](#)

135. *White Man* says:

[October 22, 2012 at 8:09 pm](#)

To this days Jews celebrate Passover two nights in a row, lest they had miscalculated the date of the New Moon and been off by one day. If Jesus had decided to be offered as a sacrifice for sin at the exact moment that lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple by their thousands, it only makes sense that he would celebrate Passover the first night only. Thus the oddity of his statement that he would not celebrate it again (when the expectation was that he would celebrate it again the very next night).

[Reply](#)

136. *Dan Bruce* says:

[October 21, 2012 at 2:26 pm](#)

Hi, Al. I agree with what you are saying about the complexity of slaughtering animals from our viewpoint today, but keep in mind that the Temple priests were experts with centuries of tradition and practice. For all we know, the lambs could have been bound when killed to minimize movement, and it is quite possible that all that was necessary after the throat was cut was to collect a bit of blood that could be sprinkled on the altar. All of that could have been done in seconds. The actual dressing and preparation of the lamb for roasting could then have been done at home, where the lamb would be eaten. In an assembly-line scenario, a relatively small number of Temple priests, perhaps numbering in the hundreds, could have dispatched quite a few lambs in just a few hours. I'm not saying that is what happened, but it is a possibility, I think.

[Reply](#)

137. *Al* says:

[October 21, 2012 at 1:29 pm](#)

Dan, I know that sounds right, but if you have ever actually slaughtered an animal the process is significantly more involved and time consuming. Cut an animal's throat and it takes a while to die. I now live in a rural area where people do this for real and watching it is somewhat disturbing to ex-city folks like me.

Watch the videos of the modern Samaritan Passover sacrifice and you get some idea of what's involved

[Reply](#)

138. *Dallas* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 10:27 pm](#)

To reinforce the point about the seder (again, not the Haggadah text): while the few central pieces of the seder are very old and probably pre-date the Babylonian exile, the bulk of the structured meal is Hellenistic, both in style and the names for some of its parts. It speaks of Alexandria and Antioch, not Shushan (Susa).

However, for a variety of reasons, the Babylonian Jewish community rose to dominance in the Jewish world between the early first and the mid-third centuries. So most of textual elaboration of rabbinic Judaism as we know it today was filtered through its long-dominant culture, that stretched over almost a thousand years. Hence, the Haggadah text is mainly a product of that time and place and in a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic.

But this character of the Haggadah shouldn't be confused with the practice of the seder. I get the impression that some scholars are confused about this.

[Reply](#)

139. *Dallas* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 10:12 pm](#)

The theory that tries to date the seder late seems pretty dubious. (I mean the seder, not the Haggadah text, which is mostly late-antique/medieval.) Not only do the Samaritans (who split from Judaism in the fifth century BCE, not the second) do it, so do the Ethiopian Jews (whose understanding of Judaism seems to partly predate the Babylonian exile).

The watershed of the destruction of the Second Temple gave rise to a large shifts in rabbinic practice. (Yes, there was rabbinic practice before the Second Temple was destroyed — didn't the Dead Sea Scrolls settle that issue?) That shift, evident today in rabbinic thinking, went from taking care not to do Temple-like things outside the Temple, to creating "as-if" substitutes once the Temple was destroyed. That shift already started before the Temple was destroyed, to enable Jewish practice in the pre-Destruction diaspora in the Greek- and Aramaic-speaking worlds.

The seder as we know it today combines some very old basic practices, probably from immediately after the Babylonian exile, with a fully developed Hellenistic symposium (dinner party). That can't date from later than the second or first century BCE. It probably took on its symposium form in the third-second centuries BCE, the era of "high Hellenism."

Another very important distinction is the difference not only between before and after the Destruction, but between what was done in the Land of Israel, especially in Jerusalem and in the Temple; and what was done outside the Land of Israel. Again, rabbinic literature is a reliable guide to at least one type, and probably already the dominant type, of Jewish practice. Once the Temple was destroyed, "diaspora practice" became the practice of all Jews, because anything connected with the Temple was no longer possible. A good example is the Amidah, the prayer that was said instead of making offerings in the Temple. Later, it became the full and only formal substitute for the offering system. Before, you could always go to Jerusalem and make the offerings, in which case, the Amidah was not necessary. Why do the substitute when you can do the real thing?

With all that in mind, it may be that what happened (a) in the Land of Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, (b) before the Temple was destroyed, was different from the pre-Destruction diaspora practice, which later became the sole source of Jewish practice, with the Temple practice remaining only a formally remembered memory. This crucial distinction probably lies at the heart of certain things recorded (sometimes in garbled form) in the Gospels that sound strongly Jewish, yet don't quite match later rabbinic practice.

[Reply](#)

140. *Biblical Archaeology Society: Week in Review* « *The Ginger Jar* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 3:55 pm](#)

[...] Three out of four of the canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) agree that the Last Supper was held only after the Jewish holiday had begun. Moreover, one of the best known and painstakingly detailed



studies of the Last Supper—Joachim Jeremias’s book *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*—lists no fewer than 14 distinct parallels between the Last Supper tradition and the Passover Seder.<sup>1</sup> [...]

[Reply](#)

141. *Nathaniel Sherrill* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 3:36 pm](#)

Nathaniel Sherrill says:

I’m all for dialogue and the voicing of differing opinions in BAR (thank you, Mr. Shanks) and admit being amused to see this decrepit theory being rehashed twice in the last two years on BAR online. This weary, centuries-old debate was answered and resolved definitely by the exceedingly authoritative polyglot Talmudic scholar Alfred Edersheim in his classic work “The Temple” in the 1870s. With simple, elegant reasoning, and a far more trustworthy grasp of ancient Passover liturgy, Edersheim shows convincingly that the four Gospels report the exact same Passion Week chronology: a Thursday Passover and communion meal followed by a Friday crucifixion on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Can anything less be expected from four divinely inspired texts reporting historic events? But pitting John against the Synoptics is now a tradition of academic orthodoxy and inspired devotional scholars like Edersheim are discounted. So it goes. However it takes some real chutzpa to imagine one is in a position to perpetuate a gross misinterpretation John 18:28 and 19:14 in a public forum and presume against the creedal statements of the church. I suspect there is a more viable career in demonstrating the unity of the four Gospels as accurate historic records and thus promoting gospel literacy in the general populace, rather than impugning the credibility of texts and discouraging the study of them.

[Sherrill is the author of the forthcoming “The Layman’s Gospel Harmony” which demonstrates through verse-by-verse analysis the unified four-gospel time line of the Gospels, available soon at <http://www.movemountainpress.com>, with an ad appearing in the January/February 2013 issue of BAR.

[Reply](#)

142. *Dan Bruce* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 3:34 pm](#)

Al, assuming that the only requirement for ritually sacrificing a lamb for Passover was to have a Temple priest ritually slice through the lamb’s throat with a ritually clean knife, then 144 priests slicing 12 lambs a minute (5 seconds per lamb, assuming the men were lined up in a moving line holding their lamb in the right position for easy sacrifice), then it would have taken only 2 to 3 hours to sacrifice 256,000 lambs.

[Reply](#)

143. *Al* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 2:18 pm](#)

Just two quick comments:

1. The author doesn’t see to address a reasonable theory: that Jesus ate his Passover meal in an Essene household. The Essenes used a different method to calculate Passover. In 30 AD it was a day earlier. Given the tradition that the room the last supper was eaten in was near (or in) the Essene quarter of

Jerusalem, Jesus could easily have eaten an Essene Passover meal in 30AD and been tried on the eve of mainline Jewish Passover the next day. The Synoptics and John could both have been right.

2. Documents aside, there must have been some spreading out of the Passover feast simply because of the daunting task of sacrificing the lambs. Josephus suggests that 256,500 lambs were slaughtered for Passover. Let's assume that's one of his exaggerations and cut the number in half; say 125,000.

If the priests worked 24 hours without stopping, they would have to sacrifice and prepare 87 lambs per minute to get to this number. The logistics of this are simply impossible for the Temple environment (cut the number in half and they're still impossible).

So, Rabbinical literature aside, in the real world there must have been some flexibility as to when lambs were slaughtered and when Passover meals were eaten.

[Reply](#)

144. *Chris L* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 1:29 pm](#)

Interesting article. I think the "Passoverization" of the Last Supper is encouraged/supported by the scriptures themselves. What that means exactly, in terms of how it was regularly practiced at the time of Christ, may be (and probably should be) debatable. Most Christians today obviously identify the elements of a Passover meal with modern Jewish ritual (right or wrong). I have sat in on demonstrations of the Christian interpretation of the Jewish Passover myself. And with such an emphasis on Old Testament scripture being the foundation from which New Testament scripture springs, from where else will Christians draw thier explanations of Christian ritual in the New Testament after the link between Christ's death and the Passover has been made so obvious? I also cant help but think that threats to "orthodox" catholic interpretations from guys like Marcion would have only strengthened this Jewish OT link even among an early increasingly Gentile Greek-speaking church who may not have cared much for Jews themselves.

[Reply](#)

145. *Dan Bruce* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 11:34 am](#)

The accounts of the Last Supper in the Synoptics and in John synchronize exactly when it is understood that they were using different times for the start of the day (the Synoptics starting the day at sunset and John at sunrise), when it is understood that at least the first meal (and probably all meals) eaten during the Feast of Unleavened Bread was called a Passover meal in Luke 22:1, and when it is recalled that the Feast of Unleavened Bread started on 14th of Nisan in the Synoptics according to Exodus 12:18, and on the 15th of Nisan in John according to Leviticus 23:6. The explanation of how all of these variables fit together to show that the Last Supper was held the night before THE Passover Seder (i.e., the memorial seder meal when the lamb was eaten) is too detailed and lengthy to post here, but anyone wishing to check it out can do so at <http://www.prophecysociety.org/wordpress/?p=500>

[Reply](#)

146. *Stephen Funck* says:

[October 20, 2012 at 11:02 am](#)

Since 250,000 lambs were sacrificed for Passover and many were not eaten in the Jerusalem area. Possibly a ruling was made that the day began when the sun started to go down after noon so many were killed on Thursday. Lambs could be delivered more than 80 miles away over the whole nation. Non Christians have Christmas trees – Hanukah bushes, everyone could have eaten lamb. We have no idea what a Galilean peasant seder was like. Certainly it was much simpler than the scholars hundreds of years later. Certain elements of the seder have Christian parallels ( 3 loaves, center broken, hidden found ). Those elements must be ancient, they would not have been invented by anti-christians.

[Reply](#)

147. *Brian Jorgensen* says:

[October 19, 2012 at 1:19 pm](#)

Jesus commissioned a passover feast ( Mark 14:12-16), he concluded this feast and any further feasts that week with (Mark 14:25) “Verily I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God”. John’s passover account begins in chapter 13, it includes Seder activities such as leaning to the left (V25 -this is John sitting a the right of Jesus) and sopping of the bread in wine (v27 -remember Jesus said in effect no more wine for me until the kingdom).

The synoptic gospels and John are describing the same passover event, the exact day is a different theological argument.

[Reply](#)