

–Additional Notes–
Passover vs. Last Supper

February 10, 2005

Bob,

Yes, the Last Supper is the Passover meal for Jesus and the disciples. For the parallel passages see Matthew 26:17-29 and Mark 14:12-26. However, Jesus has to celebrate the Passover that year one day ahead of the normal time for celebrating it because He has to institute the emblems of the wine and bread that represent his blood and body. He also gives them the promise that He will celebrate this meal with them in heaven. Matthew 26:29. But the most important reason He has to celebrate the meal one day ahead of the normal time is because He has the appointment with death on the day the lamb must be slain. He cannot eat the meal after He dies. Look at the question you posed:

“She is asking if the Last Supper represents the Passover and why is Christ celebrating the Passover before He has been sacrificed?”

Could Jesus celebrate the Passover after He has been sacrificed?”

Of course not. We know from John 18:28 that the day of His trial was the preparation day and not the Passover day itself because the Jews were looking forward to eating the Passover. The Passover is always eaten on the evening that begins the 15th of the month. If Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified on the 15th, then the Jews would have already eaten the Passover. It was not possible for Jesus to eat the Passover on the 15th that year because He was dead before sunset that began the 15th that year.

The Lord had instructed the people through Moses in Numbers 9:9-13 that the Passover must always be celebrated on the 14th of the first month and not at any other time, except in the event that a person had become unclean or was on a trip. In that event, the Passover was to be celebrated on the 14th day of the second month. If both of these days were missed, the individual had to wait until the next year to celebrate the Passover. Remember, the 14th is the preparation day when the lamb is killed and the meal prepared, and the 15th is the day the Passover is eaten. Passover involves two days. It is not possible to eat the meal on the 15th without preparing it on the 14th. The Lord gave this instruction to strictly observe the Passover at the specified time because He did not want His people to invent their own religion. Inventing one's religion results in paganism. Read Deuteronomy 10:16-18 to see what His people were to do with the Cananites. But to see how wicked they were, turn back to Deuteronomy 18:9-13 to see that what was obnoxious about their behavior is that they were practicing divination, soothsaying, observing omens, applying sorcery, listening to a charmer, a medium, a wizard, or a necromancer (zodiac). All of these things are human inventions on how to play God. What is so wicked about all of them is that they pretend to be in the role of God when all they rely on is their own human imagination. It is deceptive. Satan is the father of lies and all of that is directly from him. This is the result of making up one's own religion and rejecting the Lord's leading. This is why God is so strict with His people -- it is for our protection. Sin leads to death.

Paul has some significant things to say about celebrating the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. This is the only passage outside of the gospels that discusses the Lord's Supper. The people in Corinth were not celebrating it correctly and Paul reproved them.

I suggest that this passage takes on a much larger importance regarding our understanding of the proper observance of the LORD's Supper in modern times and needs to be examined more carefully in the context of the observance of the LORD's Supper as a substitute for the Passover meal. We know from 1 Corinthians 5:8 that Paul has just complimented the Corinthians for keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread and encourages them to continue keeping the feast. Passover is clearly part of the celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as the first holy convocation day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread falls on the 15th of the first month which is the same day as the Passover Sabbath. It appears that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:17-28, is chastising the Corinthians for improperly keeping the LORD's Supper which was to be kept in the place of the Passover meal. Yes, it is to be a meal and not just a sip from a common cup or a sliver of unleavened bread followed by a thimble full of grape juice. Everyone in the church is to participate equally in this meal. While no one is to become a glutton or drunk at this meal, neither is anyone to go away hungry. Moreover, if the LORD's Supper has now taken the place of the Passover meal, it is to be celebrated once each year and not otherwise. The phrase "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup" is a reference to the annual celebration of the LORD's Supper and not to eating and drinking to the glory of God in a general, daily sense. To deny that this is a discussion regarding the proper observance of the LORD's Supper is to minimize our understanding of Paul's advice to them.

Ellen White agrees that the LORD's Supper was substituted into the place of the Passover meal. She states in *Desire of Ages* page 652:

“As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice.”

Surely, the service that is the memorial of His great sacrifice is the LORD's Supper. What other possibility could there be? If the LORD's Supper is to be celebrated in the place of the Passover meal, what justification is there for celebrating communion every week as is common in some traditional churches or four times a year as the SDA church does? Throughout scripture God is clear that His people are to worship Him according to His instructions and are not to make up their own rules for how they worship

Him. Whenever the people made up their own rules for worshiping God, it was displeasing to Him. Moses was very explicit that the annual festivals were to be celebrated once each year at the LORD's appointed times and not otherwise unless one was on a journey or ritually unclean in which case Passover could be celebrated one month late. Exodus 12:3-20, Numbers 9:5 & 11. Are we to assume that the rest of the requirements of this annual festival of the LORD have been abolished when He told His prophets that His people are to keep it for all time and in all places? Leviticus 23:14, 2 Chronicles 2:4, Isaiah 24:5; 55:3; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26. Without an explicit instruction in scripture that the annual festivals of the LORD have been abolished, we disobey the voice of God by not keeping all the LORD's festivals just as we teach that the rest of Christianity disobeys the voice of God by not keeping the weekly Sabbath. Where is that explicit instruction in scripture that the LORD's annual festivals have been abolished? I can't find one.

That's how I see it. Hope it helps.

Cordially,
Jerry

----- Original Message -----

Hi Jerry,

I was talking on the phone with a friend who lives in Ireland...she is also the Mother Superior of an enclosed order.... anyway, she asked me about Luke 22:7.

She says this is the chapter where the Eucharist is derived from.

Reference is made to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and killing of the Passover lamb. She is asking if the Last Supper represents the Passover and why is Christ celebrating the Passover before He has been sacrificed?

Bob