

References to Passover in New Testament

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BIG SANDY, Texas—As Bible students, let’s embark upon a little adventure. Let’s look at all 19 verses in the New Testament that mention the word *Passover*.

Last Saturday (on March 6), I gave a sermon titled “The Passover and the Memorial.” In that presentation, I expressed my appreciation for two aspects of my opportunity for 50 years to keep a memorial of the suffering and death of our Lord.

- For 50 years, I kept the memorial at the time picturing the night upon which He was betrayed (1 Corinthians 11:23).
- For 50 years, I have kept the memorial with New Testament symbols (foot-washing, broken bread and a sip of wine).

In that sermon, I also explained that my understanding of the history of the Old Testament Passover has changed through the years—but that different understanding does *not* change what I have done for 50 years or what I intend to continue doing.

My different understanding about the history of the Old Testament Passover does not change the New Testament teaching of picturing the night upon which He was betrayed (1 Corinthians 11:23).

My different understanding about the history of the Old Testament Passover does not change the New Testament symbols (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) that I love.

Different view of history

Here are three quick statements about my changed view of the history of the Old Testament Passover.

- Like the past 50 years, I still believe that the Old Testament Passover occurred on the 14th day of the first month (Exodus 12:2).
- I previously believed that the events occurred on the part of that day called the “early 14th” of that day.
- I now believe that the events occurred on the part of that day called the “late 14th” of that day.

Three simple statements

I realize that much can be written about the subject of the history of the Old Testament Passover. However, my view of the history can be summarized by three simple statements.

1. Christ is my Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).
2. Christ died at 3:00 p.m. (Matthew 27:45-46).
3. Although the Exodus Passover was a "domestic" Passover (in the home), the scriptures show that the Old Testament generally described a "sanctuary" Passover (in the tabernacle or temple).

Old Testament first

Before we embark upon our adventure to look at all 19 verses in the New Testament that mention the word Passover, let's see what the Old Testament says.

Let's look at scriptures that show us how the Exodus Passover began as a "domestic" Passover (in the home) and how it was later described as a "sanctuary" Passover (involving the tabernacle/temple and the priesthood).

I ask that God bless you with peace as you read these verses.

Domestic Passover first

Exodus 12:7— "And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it."

Exodus 12:13—"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

Exodus 12:22-23—"And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you."

Instructions about tabernacle

Exodus 25:8—"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

Exodus 25:21-22—"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel."

Instructions about priesthood

Exodus 28:1—"Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar."

Exodus 29:42-45—“This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.”

Sanctuary Passover

Numbers 9:6—“Now there were certain men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day.”

Numbers 9:13—“But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.”

Deuteronomy 16:2—“Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name.”

Deuteronomy 16:5-6—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.”

Time of Hezekiah

2 Chronicles 29:2-5—“And he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, and said to them: ‘Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place.’ ”

2 Chronicles 29:18—“Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, ‘We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles.’ ”

2 Chronicles 29:31-33—“Then Hezekiah answered and said, ‘Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD.’ So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. The consecrated things were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep.”

2 Chronicles 30:1—“And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.”

2 Chronicles 30:5—"So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner."

2 Chronicles 30:17—"For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was not clean, to sanctify them to the LORD."

2 Chronicles 30:24—"For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves."

2 Chronicles 30:26—"So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem."

Time of Josiah

2 Kings 23:21—"Then the king [Josiah] commanded all the people, saying, 'Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.' "

2 Chronicles 34:2—"And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."

2 Chronicles 34:10—"Then they put it in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house."

2 Chronicles 34:14—"Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses."

2 Chronicles 34:21—"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

2 Chronicles 35:1-6—"Now Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month. And he set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD. Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: 'Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the lay people, and according to the division of the father's house of the Levites. So slaughter the Passover offerings, consecrate yourselves, and prepare them for your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.' "

2 Chronicles 35:7-9—“Then Josiah gave the lay people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover offerings for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these were from the king’s possessions. And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings two thousand six hundred from the flock, and three hundred cattle. Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover offerings five thousand from the flock and five hundred cattle.”

2 Chronicles 35:11-12—“And they slaughtered the Passover offerings; and the priests sprinkled the blood with their hands, while the Levites skinned the animals. Then they removed the burnt offerings that they might give them to the divisions of the fathers’ houses of the lay people, to offer to the LORD, as it is written in the Book of Moses. And so they did with the cattle.”

2 Chronicles 35:14—“Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.”

2 Chronicles 35:16—“So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah.”

2 Chronicles 35:17-18—“And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Patient with me

I now realize that many of my friends had already come to the understanding about the history of the Old Testament Passover being a sanctuary event on the “late 14” on the first month.

I thank those individuals for being patient with me.

Patient with you

Someone may ask: Will you be patient with me if I don’t initially agree with your perspective about the history of the Old Testament Passover?

My answer: Of course.

The following four thoughts should help you realize that it is not necessary for you to agree with me.

1. Remember—Most of the people who have different opinions about the history of the Old Testament Passover observe the memorial of the suffering and death of our Lord on the *same* day and with the *same* symbols.

2. I generally have no desire to have conflict with people over doctrinal interpretations.
3. And I certainly have no desire to have conflict with people over aspects involving the memorial of the suffering and death of our Lord.
4. I have no intention of imitating the mistake of the disciples in Luke 22:24.

Notice the Greek word

Someone could ask: What does the New Testament say about the "Passover"? Excellent question. Hence, we are going to embark upon our adventure.

First, let's look at the Greek word for Passover.

The word *Passover* in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *pascha* (from *Strong's Concordance*—No. 3957). *Strong's Concordance* gives the following four definitions: "Passover, Passover week; Passover meal; Passover lamb."

Now notice the scriptures

After reading the previous Old Testament scriptures, now let's continue by reading the New Testament scriptures that mention the Passover.

I ask that God bless you with peace as you read these verses.

Moses and Passover

Hebrews 11:28—"By faith he [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them."

Christ's observance in Jerusalem

Luke 2:41-42—"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast."

John 2:13-14—"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business."

John 2:23—"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did."

Time drew near

John 11:55-57—"And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?' Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him."

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

Matthew 26:2—"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Mark 14:1—"After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death."

Luke 22:1-2—"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people."

There was a meal

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

Mark 14:12-16—"Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?' And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' " Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us. So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover."

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

Luke 22:14-15—"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.' "

John 13:1-2—"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him."

Passover customs

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

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

Historical references

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

Acts 12:4—“So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.”

Important truth

1 Corinthians 5:7—“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”