

March 2014

Frank W. Nelte

JESUS CHRIST'S LAST PASSOVER

Over the years there have been a number of attempts to dispute that Jesus Christ kept the Passover before He was crucified. The approaches used by various people have been different, but the goal has always been the same: to claim that Jesus Christ could not possibly have kept a real Passover.

Some have appealed to the Jewish custom of keeping their Passover at the end of the 14th day (actually the Jews keep it on the 15th, and they don't do anything at all Passover-wise on the 14th). Others have claimed that we today are supposed to observe "the Lord's Supper" and not the Passover. And others have claimed that Christ could not have kept the Passover because there supposedly wasn't enough time available to kill, roast and eat a lamb.

Whatever the approach, the goal is always the same: **to deny that Jesus Christ kept a real Passover** at the beginning part of the 14th day. In this context I use the expression "beginning part of the 14th day" to refer to the time between sunset and midnight, the first quarter of the 14th day, and in direct contrast to the last quarter of the day (i.e. between noon and sunset). So let's take a closer look at Jesus Christ's own last observance of the Passover.

THE TIME REQUIRED

Let's start by establishing how long it takes to prepare a lamb for eating.

Most of us are not really familiar with killing a lamb and then preparing to eat the lamb. To us the whole process represents a huge amount of work. But in Israel slaughtering a lamb and then cooking the meat was a very common experience. People were experts at slaughtering their own lambs. Many people would have slaughtered a dozen or more lambs and sheep every year, in the process perfecting their slaughtering routine.

So here is the point:

People who regularly slaughter lambs, people who have helpers and an established routine for this, can complete the whole slaughtering process in 30 minutes or less. Within 30 minutes from the time of slitting the lamb's throat they can have pieces of meat ready for putting on the fire. And in two to three hours after putting those pieces of meat on the fire, they can have the meat cooked and ready for eating.

So within two to three hours of killing the animals, the meat can be ready for eating.

Another point to consider is that a lamb is a sheep that is less than one year old. The Passover is typically some time in April. Lambs are mostly born during the winter and on into the spring. Today people will slaughter a lamb just before the animal is one year old, to get the maximum possible slaughter weight, and still be able to call it "lamb". And people who relate to you their personal experience of slaughtering lambs, are in most cases thinking of having slaughtered lambs in the 9-12 months age bracket, which would have given them a reasonable amount of meat. They would only rarely have slaughtered a lamb that was only 2-3 months old, with barely enough meat for one or two meals for a large family.

But at Passover time the lambs available in Israel would overwhelmingly have been only from 1-4 months old. In April there would only have been very few, if any, lambs that were from 5-12 months old. So the typical lamb slaughtered for the Passover would have been 2-4 months old, a fairly small animal, with perhaps 10-15 pounds of edible meat on the slaughtered carcass. That's only about as much meat as a small to medium-size turkey. Slaughtering such a small animal and then cooking its meat requires less time than slaughtering and cooking a larger animal.

As far as the Passover is concerned, this means that if the lamb was killed just after sunset, then it could be ready for eating at around 9:00 p.m.

Starting to eat the meat portion of the Passover meal around 9:00 p.m. is also pretty well the way it would have been at the first Passover in Egypt, where it wasn't until midnight that the death angel passed through the land of Egypt (see Exodus 12:29).

Likewise, Jesus Christ and His apostles very likely ate their Passover meal somewhere around 9:00 p.m. at the starting part of the 14th day, precisely as it had always been done in Old Testament times. It was **during** that meal that Jesus Christ instituted the footwashing. Then **after** that Passover meal had been completed Jesus Christ instituted the new emblems, the bread and wine, and then followed a long talk by Jesus Christ, as recorded in John chapters 13 - 17. Then, probably around 11:00 p.m. to midnight, Jesus Christ and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives, to the place called Gethsemane. One reason the disciples all fell asleep (Matthew 26:40) was because it was very late, and it had been a long day for all of them.

This is all in agreement with the Scriptures. One mistake people sometimes make is that they assume that God instructed us **to eat the Passover soon after sunset!** That **is nonsense!** The instruction was "to kill the Passover at dusk" (Exodus 12:6, JPS), with the obvious understanding that it would then take from two to three hours before the meat would be ready for eating.

Likewise, Jesus Christ and His disciples did not eat the Passover at dusk! They ate it from two to three hours after dusk. They all "sat down" in that upper room at some unspecified point after sunset, but the meat from the Passover lamb was not served the moment they sat down; the meat was only served around three hours after sunset.

There is no instruction anywhere that implies that the Israelites were to observe the eating part of the Passover right after sunset! And likewise, the eating of the New Testament symbols of the Passover can be one or more hours after sunset, but still well before midnight.

To be clear: the statement "when the hour was come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him" (Luke 22:14) refers to **the unspecified time of sitting down**, not the time when they took their first bite of lamb. This Scripture does not tell us whether they sat down a quarter of an hour after sunset or whether they only sat down a full hour or more after sunset. This Scripture, and the same applies to the other New Testament references, does not give us any precise timing in relation to how long after sunset these things took place.

OUR PASSOVER OBSERVANCE TODAY

Consider the way we today observe the Passover.

We have the clearly established sequence of: the footwashing, followed by eating the piece of unleavened bread, followed by drinking the small quantity of wine. Now within that framework we have

placed the reading of various Scriptures. Traditionally we read a few Scriptures before the footwashing, another few Scriptures before eating the bread, another few Scriptures before drinking the wine, and then a lengthy reading of the Scriptures after drinking the wine, before concluding the Passover service.

That is our customary observance today. But within that correct sequence of footwashing followed by bread followed by wine we could read as many or as few Scriptures as we decide. We have the latitude to add the reading of as many Scriptures as we want during any part of the correct sequence of events at the Passover service.

My point is this:

Even when we today may start our Passover service half an hour after sunset, we could very easily take up a full hour of reading Scriptures and commenting on those Scriptures (i.e. in addition to the time required for the footwashing) before we even get around to eating the bread and drinking the wine. In practice we mostly don't take that long.

I can think back to the late 1960's when we had some congregations where several hundred people took the Passover together, and where the footwashing took a long time to complete for the whole group, as did also passing around the bread and the wine.

And then at times we also had some "shut-ins" (elderly people who were not able to attend) to whom a deacon would then deliver a small piece of unleavened bread and a small portion of wine from the Passover service, and these "shut-ins" would be taking their Passover only around 10:00 p.m., if not later.

The point is: **we don't have to eat the bread and drink the wine very soon after sunset!** We can actually eat and drink them somewhat later, if that's how things work out for us.

From a time perspective, it is one thing to sit down and then start our Passover service. But it is another thing to get to the actual eating and drinking of the Passover emblems. There is no scriptural reason of any kind that would prevent us from only getting to the bread and the wine more than an hour after we sat down for the service. That would be like Jesus Christ and His apostles only getting to the eating of the meat of the lamb more than two hours after sunset.

So the point is:

There is no difficulty whatsoever with Jesus Christ and His apostles having had ample time to eat a regular Passover meal, which meal included the meat of a lamb that had just been slaughtered.

SOME OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Consider the time when Jesus Christ and two angels came to **Abraham**, shortly before the destruction of Sodom. Abraham offered his visitors "a morsel of bread" (Genesis 18:5). Abraham then instructed Sarah to quickly bake some (obviously unleavened) bread, while he himself selected a young calf (Genesis 18:7), a bigger animal than a lamb. Abraham's servant then killed the calf and cooked (i.e. roasted) some of the meat. The indication here is that a choice piece of the meat of this calf that had just been slaughtered was ready at about the same time that Sarah's unleavened bread was ready, where Sarah's maidens may have quickly had to grind "three measures of fine meal" (Genesis 18:6).

During this time Abraham's visitors were resting under a tree (Genesis 18:4). The implication is that

Abraham had all the food for his visitors ready within two or three hours or so.

The point here is this: When Abraham was able to slaughter a calf and have it ready for eating within two to three hours, then the preparation of a young lamb would, if anything, be somewhat quicker, a lamb being a smaller animal than a calf.

But there is another point here that we often overlook.

When people in biblical times sat down for a meal, they didn't mind if it took several hours before the food was ready for them. When Abraham extended this invitation for a meal, he knew full well that it would take two to three hours to prepare the meal which he had in mind for his guests. And guests in general didn't expect food to be available immediately they sat down. People had not yet heard of "fast foods".

Consider the example of **Gideon**.

When an angel appeared to him (Judges 6:11), Gideon slaughtered a kid of the goats and he made some unleavened bread (Judges 6:19). Again, while the angel was waiting for Gideon, this whole process of preparing this food took Gideon perhaps two hours or slightly longer. Gideon had an established routine for preparing this type of meal.

The point is: the people of Israel knew how to kill a small animal (a calf, lamb or kid) and very quickly and efficiently have the meat of that animal ready for eating. They didn't get their meat from butcher shops. For most of us today slaughtering such an animal and then cooking the meat would be a daunting task, but for Israelites back then this would all have been "no big deal".

THE CLAIM THAT "IT WASN'T A REAL PASSOVER" EXAMINED

There is another point that we should consider here.

When someone tells you that "it wasn't a real Passover", then you should ask that person: "Alright, then are you saying that Jesus Christ and His apostles ate **A MEATLESS MEAL**?" If they ate a meatless meal, what did they actually eat that evening? And if they ate no meat at that meal, what had Jesus Christ "dipped the sop" into (see John 13:26)? So did they eat some meat at that meal? The person must give you an answer to these questions. They need to give account for their assertion.

It seems highly unlikely to me that someone who makes the assertion that "it wasn't a real Passover" will also insist that Jesus Christ and His apostles did not have any meat at all at that meal. Such a claim (that no meat at all was eaten at that meal) would put the person way out on a limb, with a very difficult to defend position.

Now if the person concedes that **SOME** meat would have been eaten at that meal, then **the next question** you should ask the person is: "Now since people back then didn't have refrigeration, are you saying that the meat they ate at that meal was from an animal that had been slaughtered one or two or more days earlier? Are you saying that some Jews in Jerusalem would have slaughtered a lamb on the afternoon of the 13th day (i.e. from one to five hours before the sunset that started the 14th day), when every Jew knew full well that the 14th day was specifically designated for slaughtering a lamb, as per the instructions of the God of Israel? Some may have argued about "the first quarter" or "the last quarter" of the 14th day; but at that time all accepted that the lamb had to be killed on the 14th day, and not on the 13th or the 15th day.

Ask the person: "Consider the alternative to a real Passover. Would any Jew in Jerusalem in his right mind possibly have considered slaughtering a lamb on the 12th or 13th day of the first month, so that Christ could have had some meat at His supposedly non-Passover meal? Would such an average Jew be slaughtering lambs on two or more consecutive days in the first month, when all his lambs were still very young?

So from what animal did the meat come that Jesus Christ and His apostles ate at Christ's last Passover, if it wasn't from a lamb that had been slaughtered after sunset, at the very beginning part of the 14th day? What is the alternative that you propose? (The answer here is typically "none".)

The point to note here is this:

Such people usually only have one goal! Their goal is to deny the possibility of a real Passover. They make no attempt to explain what supposedly actually did take place; i.e. in this case explaining where the meat of a lamb that Jesus Christ ate at that meal did come from. Their only goal is to argue that it couldn't possibly have been a real Passover lamb. But they don't care where the meat for that meal came from. Their arguments are invariably negative in nature.

MARK 14:12

A Scripture to note is Mark 14:12.

And the first day of unleavened bread, **when they killed the passover**, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? (Mark 14:12)

Consider the following:

All of us today understand that a day starts and ends at sunset. That knowledge does not prevent us from including the time after sunset in **our personal thinking** as constituting a part of the same day. So if, for example, we attend a Bible Study on Tuesday evenings, we might say to someone on Tuesday morning: "This is the day when I go to a Bible Study".

The fact that you made this statement about 8 hours before sunset, while the Bible Study does not start till a full hour after sunset, doesn't stop you from commonly thinking of events that take place after sunset as still being on the same day. In our everyday common speech we are not really concerned with being technically correct in such statements. If anything, being technically correct in such everyday speech would only confuse the people you are talking to. You follow?

Technically, on a Tuesday morning you should say "Tomorrow I will attend a Bible Study", when you refer to a Study that is scheduled for after sunset on Tuesday evening. **But nobody speaks that way!** It would only confuse your listeners. No, we expect people to refer to the time after sunset and before midnight as still being a part of the same day as when they first woke up that morning.

The apostles did exactly the same thing 2000 years ago!

It is a mistake to try to evaluate every statement from the "technically correct" perspective. So now let's look at Mark 14:12.

Mark is writing about "the day when they killed the Passover". So Mark was speaking about the morning or early afternoon of **the 13th day**. At sunset the 14th day started, and then the Passover lambs were

killed. In common everyday speaking, that event right after sunset (i.e. killing the lambs) was still a part of events that took place on the 13th day.

Replace the words "they killed the Passover" with the words "they kept a Bible Study", to see how that worked.

And on a Tuesday, **when they kept Bible Studies**, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare **that Thou mayest conduct a Bible Study?** (Mark 14:12 adapted)

Technically there is a sunset between the question being asked and the Bible Study actually taking place. But most people would view the question and the actual Bible Study as having been on the same day. And in this example technically speaking the Bible Study only takes place at the very start of Wednesday (Wednesday starts Tuesday evening after sunset). But we don't think of a Tuesday evening study as being on a Wednesday. Nobody speaks that way!

So back to Mark 14:12.

On a Tuesday morning or early afternoon, the 13th day of the 1st month, the disciples asked Jesus Christ: "Where do You want us to prepare the Passover for You?"

Now the most significant thing about Mark 14:12 is that Mark identifies that day as **the day when the Passover was killed!**

Technically the Passover was only killed after sunset, after the 14th day had started. But in practical speaking the daylight part of the 13th day was seen as "the day" when the Passover was killed.

SO THAT EVENING WAS THE CORRECT TIME FOR KILLING THE PASSOVER! THAT IS WHAT MARK 14:12 TELLS US!

This means that all this garbage about the Jews supposedly having to kill the Passover late on the 14th is just that ... garbage! Mark 14:12 tells us that the Passover Jesus Christ observed was at the exact time "when they killed the Passover"! Every part of the timing of Jesus Christ's observance of the Passover was correct! Mark 14:12 allows for no other conclusion!

Mark 14:12 shows that the apostles understood that the Passover was to be killed right after sunset, at the very start of the 14th day. There is no possibility whatsoever that Mark 14:12 could somehow imply a late-14th day Passover.

Mark was referring to a day just like we do, and just like people have always done. We think of "a day" as the time from when we get up in the morning until the time we go to bed at night. The sunset that takes place before we go to bed that night has no influence on how we think about a day. The same was true for Mark. That is why Mark referred to an event that was to take place after sunset as still being on the same day as the events that took place before sunset.

Mark 14:12 absolutely demolishes any claims that the Passover was only supposed to be killed late on the 14th day.

Now let's consider some of Jesus Christ's own statements.

IT WAS A PASSOVER!

Notice how Matthew recorded these things.

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**? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; **I will keep the passover at thy house** with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and **they made ready the passover**. (Matthew 26:17-19)

The apostles themselves expected Jesus Christ to eat the Passover, not some other kind of meal. They had all kept the Passover with Him in the preceding years of His ministry, and they knew quite clearly what to expect for a Passover observance with Jesus Christ. And none of them expressed any surprise at this Passover observance, because something was supposedly different from previous years.

A question to consider:

IF the apostles felt that what they had observed with Jesus Christ that night was not "a real Passover observance", then all of them would have felt conscience-bound to observe "a real Passover" the next night! But they didn't do that.

None of Jesus Christ's comments leading up to that Passover and then observing that Passover in any way hinted that Jesus Christ intended to do away with the Passover observance and replace it with some kind of "Lord's Supper observance".

Rather, when at that last Passover observance Jesus Christ said "this is My body" and "this is My blood" (Matthew 26:26-28), clearly tying these statements to the blood of the lamb that was killed for the Passover, Jesus Christ was saying in practical terms "this is how you are to observe the Passover from now onwards". The expression "this do in remembrance of Me" in Luke 22:19 is also another way of saying "this is how you are to observe the Passover in future".

All of the apostles very clearly believed that they had observed a real Passover with Jesus Christ.

To get back to Christ's last Passover observance: the apostles were not going to prepare everything themselves. They would only do certain preparations themselves. For the actual Passover meal they were in fact going to have a catered option. This we will see from Mark's account.

So the disciples were to tell the caterer that there would be 13 people for a Passover meal for him to cater at his premises. The caterer likewise knew quite clearly that his guests would be eating a Passover meal and not some other kind of meal, because **that is what he had been told** in very clear terms.

To be clear: 2000 years ago in Jerusalem you could find people who had rooms available for hire for any specific function or party you might have had in mind. The owners of those premises then did all the catering for your function with their own servants, something that was calculated into the price you would pay. But people didn't go to a stranger like that and say:

"Listen, we want to rent a large room from you, but we will do our own catering; we'll bring our own cooks and cooking utensils, and animals to slaughter, etc. to prepare a meal and we'll bring our own servants to bring everything out to the guests, and to just look after everything for our function."

No, that is not the way things worked. When Jesus Christ instructed His apostles to find the man who had that large upper room available for other people to use for various functions, and to say to that man "I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples", then that tells us that Jesus Christ was going to **someone who would take care of providing the whole Passover meal**, i.e. someone who would

cater for everything.

Now when it tells us that "they (i.e. Peter and John) made ready the Passover" it means that they checked out the upper room they were shown. They took care of the set-up of the room. They may have given specific instructions to the owner of the house.

Without indoor plumbing available at that time, it was probably standard practice for such caterers to have pitchers of water, basins, towels, etc. available at all the functions they catered. This would anticipate the need to clean up spills, to wash one's hands, etc. So Peter and John may have verified some of these arrangements.

And they may have discussed the price they would pay, though it is far more likely that the owner of the house would have thought it a great honor to host Jesus Christ for the Passover, keeping in mind Christ's great popularity with the common people of Jerusalem (see Matthew 21:8-11), and he would gladly have catered for Christ's Passover without expecting any payment at all.

At any rate, Peter and John were not preparing to do any slaughtering themselves that evening; that was something the caterer was going to do.

While this is a subject for a different article, let's also keep in mind that people could most certainly slaughter their own Passover lambs. They did not have to go to a priest to slaughter their lambs for them. So when the right time had arrived, then people could kill their Passover lambs themselves. That is what would have happened at this Passover Jesus Christ was about to observe, that the owner of that house would have taken care of killing the Passover lamb for Christ's Passover meal.

Now let's look at Mark's account.

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare **that thou mayest eat the passover**? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing **a pitcher of water**: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, **where I shall eat the passover** with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: **there make ready for us**. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and **they made ready the passover**. (Mark 14:12-16)

Mark adds some interesting details. All of the points from Matthew's account are also mentioned here. But there is also an interesting additional detail that many people tend to miss.

Jesus Christ told Peter and John that the caterer would show them "a large upper room". After identifying the room which they would find, Jesus Christ then said: "**there** make ready for us". Do you grasp what this tells us? You don't prepare an animal for slaughter "in a large upper room". You slaughter an animal outside in the open, or perhaps even in a barn. But you don't slaughter an animal upstairs in a house.

Likewise, you don't bake unleavened bread in some large upper room; you bake the bread in the food preparation area of the house where there is a fireplace, which area we today refer to as "the kitchen", where you also prepare all the vegetables and other food items that would be included in the meal.

But Peter and John were not going to make any preparations in the food preparation area of the house on the ground floor. The man wasn't going to show them his "kitchen"; he was only showing them the upper room. And furthermore Peter and John were not going to provide any of the food items that would be needed; the owner of the house was going to take care of that.

The point is that Peter and John confined their "making ready activities" to the things they could do in that large upper room. Such "making ready" included seeing to it that the caterer was aware of all the things they would need. But their "making ready" activities didn't involve anything with the lamb that would be slaughtered; that was the caterer's responsibility. And neither did Peter and John prepare the bread and the vegetables that would be eaten at the Passover. **They got the venue ready**, but they were not involved in any part of the meal preparation. And they didn't get involved in preparing a lamb for slaughter.

The proof for this should be easy to see. Since they all sat down with Jesus Christ at that Passover, therefore they couldn't at the same time be involved with killing the lamb and roasting the meat, or with seeing to it that the unleavened bread would be brought in, etc.

The man they had gone to had one or more function rooms in his house, where he could cater to different types of private parties. If you told him that you wanted to keep the Passover in his premises, then he would prepare in one way; and if you told him that you wanted to have a wedding party at his premises, then he would cater in another way. His premises were for hire.

However, the man also knew precisely when the Jews in Jerusalem would observe the Passover, and, for that matter, when he himself was going to keep the Passover. He would certainly have queried any date that was not recognized as valid for observing the Passover by at least some other Jews in Jerusalem. But he didn't query anything.

Now let's consider Luke's account.

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and **prepare us the passover**, that we may eat. (Luke 22:8)

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, **where I shall eat the passover** with my disciples? (Luke 22:11)

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and **they made ready the passover**. (Luke 22:13)

And he said unto them, With desire **I have desired to eat this passover** with you before I suffer: (Luke 22:15)

In this context the word "Passover" is used four times. Jesus Christ clearly intended to eat the Passover. And the caterer was equally clearly told that his guests would be eating a Passover.

So here is the point: Together Matthew, Mark and Luke state **ten times** that the apostles **prepared for the Passover**, that the caterer was told it would be **a Passover observance**, and that **Jesus Christ desired to eat the Passover**.

It is absolutely mind-boggling that anyone can look at Jesus Christ's statement "with desire I have desired to eat **this Passover** with you before I suffer" and then brazenly claim that Jesus Christ didn't keep a real Passover! That is nothing short of "enmity against Jesus Christ" a la Romans 8:7.

Anyone who, in the face of these clear Scriptures, claims that Jesus Christ did not observe a real Passover is calling Jesus Christ a liar! And calling Jesus Christ a liar most certainly qualifies for Romans 8:7. People who claim that Jesus Christ did not observe a Passover before He was killed are denigrating Jesus Christ's last observance to some inconsequential status! **They are insulting Jesus Christ!** Claims that Jesus Christ observed some kind of "Lord's Supper" are garbage and highly offensive to Jesus Christ!

If ten times is not enough, then how many times do the gospels have to tell us that it was a Passover that Jesus Christ observed? The word "Passover" in the above verses is not a mistranslation! Therefore people who reject that Jesus Christ observed a real Passover must explain why these ten statements supposedly don't mean what they plainly state!

TAKE NOTE OF THIS DISTINCTION

Have you ever noticed the difference between the people who claim that Jesus Christ did not observe a real Passover and those of us who unflinchingly assert that Jesus Christ did observe a real Passover? There is a major difference between these two sides, a difference which frequently flies under the radar; i.e. it frequently goes unnoticed.

Here is that difference in the simplest terms:

Those who deny that Jesus Christ kept a real Passover invariably rely on non-biblical reasoning! They reason from the customs and traditions the Pharisees had established around the Passover observance. They reason from Jewish thinking about the Passover. They reason from the time required for slaughtering and then cooking a lamb. They reason from history. They reason from omission, from some things that supposedly should have been done to qualify that observance being called a Passover. They reason from what supposedly constitutes a Passover and what doesn't constitute a Passover. But they don't reason from the plainest Scriptures of all, as far as Jesus Christ's Passover observance is concerned. No, the plainest Scriptures of all on this subject they avoid like the plague!

Those of us who insist that Jesus Christ did observe a real Passover invariably rely on the most basic and plainest biblical statements of all on this issue (i.e. the above 10 references regarding Jesus Christ planning to keep the Passover, etc.). And any reasoning that does not take these clear biblical statements into account is of no more value to us than some "papal bull"! It is the clear gospel statements that tell us that Jesus Christ observed a Passover. If any line of reasoning attempts to discredit Jesus Christ's plain statements, then for us that calls into question the motive underlying that attempt to discredit the words of Jesus Christ.

So the next time you hear or read about Jesus Christ supposedly not having observed a real Passover, examine the line of reasoning that is presented: does it actually address these clear Scriptures or does it avoid them? And if the clear Scriptures are not addressed, are you being presented with nothing more than another "papal bull"?

Now let's come to the "Lord's Supper" heresy.

THE LORD'S SUPPER HERESY

To refer to the Passover as "the Lord's Supper" is just as much a heresy as it is to refer to it as "Easter".

Never does the Bible refer to the Passover as "the Lord's Supper". Never! Likewise, never does the Bible refer to what Jesus Christ observed before He died as "Lord's Supper". Never! The term "Lord's Supper" is **a heretical term**, you know, like "Christmas".

Yes, this term "Lord's Supper" is used once, and once only by the Apostle Paul, and nowhere else in

the Bible. But Paul used this term "**Lord's Supper**" in a **scorching rebuke** for people in Corinth! In so doing Paul was exposing the roots of some heretical ideas that had gained a foothold amongst the people in Corinth.

Before we examine the relevant verses let me give you an analogy.

Supposing you wanted to rebuke someone, who had done something very wrong, in a way that is clearly offensive. And so you write a letter to the person and you say: "You are nothing but a **mindless idiot!**", clearly an offensive expression. Years down the road someone finds that letter, and they then conclude that the term "mindless idiot" must be a term of praise or an expression of fond affection for someone. So they start using the term "mindless idiot" whenever they want to praise somebody. And whenever someone wants to point out to them that "mindless idiot" is anything but praise, they promptly quote the passage from your letter to support their interpretation of this phrase. Absurd, isn't it?!

But that is exactly what people have done with the term "Lord's Supper"!

Now let's examine 1 Corinthians 11. Verse 17 starts the section that deals with the Passover observance.

Now in this that I declare *unto you* **I praise you not**, that **ye come together** not for the better, but **for the worse**. (1 Corinthians 11:17)

What Paul is saying here is this: when it comes to observing the Passover, you Corinthians have really botched up things in a bad way. You are making the Passover observance bad for everyone else. In modern terms Paul's expression "I praise you not" means "I need to read you the riot act".

In the next two verses (i.e. verses 18-19) Paul identifies the problem in Corinth. Then in the next verse (i.e. verse 20) Paul gives them his most basic correction. And then in the next two verses (i.e. verse 21-22) he elaborates further on the problem. So keep this in mind as we look at these verses.

- Verses 18-19 = Paul identifies the problem;
- Verse 20 = Paul's most fundamental correction for them;
- Verses 21-22 = Paul amplifies further on the problem.

THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED:

For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be **divisions** among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also **heresies** among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (1 Corinthians 11:18-19)

One of the problems in the Corinthian Church at that time was that some people had introduced heresies, and that had led to further divisions amongst the members. Now note! **What Paul is about to mention in the next verse constitutes a heresy!** That is what verse 19 is telling us. Paul is going to expose one particular heresy. So now let's look at verse 20.

THE CORRECTION = THE HERESY EXPOSED:

When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is **not** to eat the Lord's supper. (1 Corinthians 11:20)

So what is Paul saying in this verse? Keep in mind that he is already quite upset with the false teachers there.

In modern language Paul is basically saying:

1) You have a heresy amongst you.

2) That heresy involves two things:

A) **HOW** you observe the Passover, and

B) **WHAT** you call your Passover observance.

3) So let's clear up this name controversy first. When you come together to observe the Passover, that is NOT to eat any kind of supper! You are NOT coming together for a meal! Is that clear, Corinthians?

4) Yes, I am aware of the specious argument that "the meal-pushers" amongst you are using to justify their selfish behavior.

5) When confronted with the clear instructions that for us the Passover involves the bread and wine instead of the OT Passover meal, "the meal-pushers" amongst you respond by saying: Yes, we know those are the instructions, but we **also** want to eat a meal just like Jesus Christ did at His last Passover observance. So **we have called that meal "the Lord's Supper"**, to honor Jesus Christ. What could possibly be wrong if we eat a meal in honor of Jesus Christ?

It was wrong because, amongst other things, it was just an excuse to be selfish, as Paul then proceeds to point out in verses 21-22.

6) So let me make this plain to you Corinthians: when you are coming together for the Passover, you are not supposed to try to eat what you arrogantly call "the Lord's Supper"! Do you understand me? It is a stupid and perverse and diabolical and heretical idea to justify your selfish conduct by claiming that you are eating "the Lord's Supper".

7) So don't ever do that again! Do you understand me?

That's more or less what Paul was trying to get across in verse 20.

FURTHER AMPLIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM:

For in eating every one taketh before *other his own supper*: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? **I praise you not.** (1 Corinthians 11:21-22)

Here Paul identifies the problem further. "The meal-pushers", the ones who had invented the term "Lord's Supper", were in fact eating a sumptuous supper at what was supposed to be the Passover service. That's the heresy Paul was speaking about in verse 19. Can you see that?

It was "the meal-pushers" at the Passover service that had coined the heretical term "Lord's Supper" and Paul is correcting them. In plain words: heretics had invented the term "Lord's Supper". This term "Lord's Supper" is the parallel to the expression "mindless idiot" in my earlier analogy. The term "Lord's Supper" is not in any way praiseworthy or commendable; it is only insulting and offensive, just like the term "mindless idiot".

One last point about "Lord's Supper":

At the Passover we eat a small piece of unleavened bread, and we drink a very small amount of red wine. As far as I am concerned, it is a gigantic scam and utterly disgusting and revolting to refer to this observance as "**a supper**"! The term "Lord's **Supper**" makes a mockery of the changed emblems for the Passover which Jesus Christ instituted at that time. Those emblems are anything but "a supper"! I can picture the term "Lord's Supper" oozing with contemptuous disdain from Satan's mouth, accompanied by a scornful look of hatred. And I have no intention of co-existing with the term "Lord's Supper".

So in conclusion:

Don't let anybody tell you that there wasn't enough time for Jesus Christ to eat a real Passover. Jesus Christ and His apostles had plenty of time to eat the Passover meal between 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., though it seems very likely that they concluded eating their meal well before 11:00 p.m.

Likewise, the Israelites in Egypt had also had plenty of time between sunset and midnight to eat their Passover lambs. It is not the Church's teaching that Jesus Christ actually "ate" the Passover just after sunset, any more than the Israelites in Egypt ate their Passover lambs just after sunset.

It has always been the Church's understanding that Jesus Christ and His apostles ate their Passover meal somewhere around 9:00 p.m., with Jesus Christ introducing the new Passover emblems after the meal had been completed, and then continuing to talk to them for a considerable period of time until they went out to the mount of Olives.

And don't let anyone talk you into referring to the Passover as "the Lord's Supper", a term that Paul identified as a heresy.

Frank W Nelte