

THE LAST PASSOVER

(Matthew 26:20-56; Mark 14:17-52; Luke 22:14-54; John 14-18:2)

THE DAY OF OUR LORD'S DEATH OPENS WITH HIS TAKING THE PASSOVER WITH HIS TWELVE APOSTLES AT THE CLOSE OF THE **TRUE 14TH DAY OF THE MOON**, ACCORDING TO THE LAW.

The transcendent significance of the date of this last Passover

One has to be extremely careful in reading the Holy Scriptures not to miss the importance of an event because of the paucity of words employed in recording it. For instance, Matthew, Mark and Luke in the briefest possible terms record the fact that the Lord and the twelve Apostles kept the Passover on the evening before He was put to death (Luke 22:13, 14; Matt. 26:20 and Mark 14:17).

The importance of this occasion is impossible to estimate. Never before had our Lord and Master been Host at one of the Levitical Feasts and, doubtless He alone knew the significance of the occasion. He was not only the Host Who provided the Offering; He Himself was the Offering, seeing that He was present as "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

He was in fact present as THE ANTITYPE of every Passover lamb that had ever been sacrificed in Israel since the Exodus in 1639 B.C. -1,671 years previously. He was now the antitypical Passover present as God's Passover Lamb and would that very day be sacrificed for us.

John's account of the last Supper is found in Chapter 13. It is most touching to note his reference to the Lord's love for His own and how He expressed that love when He knew "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father" (verse 1).

It was after the feet-washing when He sat down again that "He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me: (verses 12,21). It is at this point that the other three Gospels harmonize with John's account. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ at the departure of Judas from the company denote that a supreme crisis in His Passion had thereby been reached. When Judas left, our Lord knew the hour had come in which, through His death upon the Cross, He would forever annul Satan's power which held the whole human race in bondage (II Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14, 15). At that time He declared, "Now is the son of Man glorified, and God would be glorified in Him". Now, by the work of Redemption the Son would glorify the Father here on earth before all men; and in due course would Himself be glorified by the Father, when He returned to Heaven as Head of the New Creation. Little did Satan realize, however that he was, through Judas, really encompassing his own final overthrow, for the same prophecy foretold that Christ "the seed of the woman" should "bruise" his head, and this we know was accomplished through His death upon the Cross (Genesis 3:15).

How wondrous and solemn, to realize that the One Who was both Host and Victim at the last Passover had Himself been present at the assize (court session) in the Garden of Eden after the Fall, and had there and then been set apart by the Lord God to die as our Redeemer at the end of FOUR "DAYS" OF A THOUSAND YEARS each. The Apostle Peter bears witness to this fact when he writes, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:18-20).

So when our Lord Jesus Christ entered the Upper Room in the early evening of Thursday, 30th April, which was the opening of the 15th of the 1st month in A.D. 33, in order to keep the Passover of Jehovah with His Apostles, He knew that the allotted span of 4,000 Redemption Years had passed and that He was there as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world; or, in other words, He was there to accomplish our redemption by the shedding of His own blood. Furthermore, He had been anointed precisely four days previously at the Bethany Supper and had been thus set apart for death just as the typical lambs were on every 10th of Nisan. What a meaning these facts give to our Lord's message to the owner of the house, when He said, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples" (Matt.26:18).

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