

Passover, Lord's Supper, Communion, Sacrifice of the Mass—Which?

*Are the “Lord’s Supper” and the “Sacrifice of the Mass”
valid alternatives to the biblical Passover?*

Today, Christendom practices the “Lord’s Supper,” also known as “Communion,” or within Catholicism, the “Eucharist,” or “Sacrifice of the Mass.” Most professing Christians are taught and therefore believe that what they are observing is what Jesus Christ and the apostles also taught and observed. However, the New Testament shows that on the night of His last Passover, Jesus Christ instituted the New Covenant Christian Passover, which the apostolic, primitive Church continued to observe for over 100 years. Moreover, all true Christians down through time have continued to observe the Christian Passover.

After the death of the apostle John in 100 AD, and influenced by pagan Gnostic Hellenistic religious practices emanating out of Rome and Egypt, the early churches were confronted with an intense doctrinal war over the observance of the Christian Passover on the 14th day of the first month. The observance of Easter was eventually adopted in lieu of the Passover. The celebration of the Eucharist (or the sacrifice of the Mass) and other new “Christian” practices—such as a Sunday “Sabbath” instead of the seventh-day Sabbath—were also adopted. Yet, the churches of God in Asia Minor steadfastly retained the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the 14th Passover and all the biblical holy days.

Historian Samuele Bacchiocchi correctly notes that numerous passages show that the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, “still respected and regulated his life by the normative liturgical calendar of the temple” (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 81). There is no doubt that the calendar he is referring to is the sacred calculated Hebrew calendar, which is still used by the true churches of God today. Bacchiocchi further states, “Moreover we know from the Quartodeciman’s sources (i.e. those who kept Passover on Nisan 14 according to the Jewish reckoning), which apparently represented a direct continuation of the custom of the primitive Church, that the paschal feast [the New Covenant Passover] was indeed observed by Christians ... that until AD 135 Christians everywhere [meaning Jewish and Gentile congregations] observed the Passover on the Jewish date ...” (*Ibid.*, p. 81).

In Asia Minor, in 150 AD, Polycrates, a faithful minister of God, withstood the apostate bishops of Rome and Egypt. He defended the apostolic practice of the observance of the Christian Passover on the 14th day of the first month of the calculated Hebrew calendar. Eusebius records the testimony of Polycrates, the leader of the Asia Minor resistance, who held fast against this invasion of false doctrine: “[But] the bishops in Asia were led by Polycrates in persisting that it was necessary to keep the custom which had been handed down to them of old [from Jesus and the apostles]. Polycrates himself in a document which he addressed to Victor and to the church of Rome, expounds the tradition which had come to him as follows: ‘Therefore we keep the day undeviatingly, neither adding nor taking away, for in Asia great luminaries sleep, and they will rise on the day of the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and seek out [and to raise up] all the saints. Such were Phillip of the twelve apostles, and two of his daughters who grew old as virgins, who sleep in Hierapolis, and another daughter of his, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus. Moreover, there is also John, who lay on the Lord’s breast ... the martyr, and teacher. He sleeps at Ephesus. And there is also Polycarp at Smyrna, both bishop and martyr, who sleeps at Laodicea, and Papirius, too, the blessed, and Melito the eunuch, who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit, who lies in Sardis, waiting for the visitation from heaven when he will rise from the dead. **All these kept the fourteenth day of the Passover ac-**

ording to the gospel, never swerving, but following according to the rule of the faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, live according to the tradition of my kinsmen, and some of them have I followed. For seven of my family were bishops and I am the eighth, and my kinsmen ever kept the day when the people put away the leaven. Therefore, brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and conversed with the brethren from every country, and have studied all the holy Scriptures, am not afraid of threats, for they have said who were greater than I, “It is better to obey God rather than men” ’ ’ (Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, pp. 505-507).

After the death of Polycrates and his fellow Christians in Asia Minor, the churches of God continued to resist the relentless pagan conspiracy against the true faith of Jesus Christ. They not only continued to practice the true teachings of the New Testament, but they preserved the authentic Greek New Testament text, now known as the Byzantine text. Other faithful brethren were in the distant Mesopotamian Valley, the mountainous regions of Europe and the British Isles. The true Christian brethren in these regions faithfully preserved the Christian faith from the ravages of Roman, Orthodox, Jewish Orthodox and Gnostic communities. Opposing all corrupting influences, they preserved the testimony of Jesus Christ and the true Christian Passover.

The True Christian Passover: When we closely examine the New Testament Scriptures, it is most evident that Jesus Christ, Who was God manifested in the flesh, instituted the New Covenant Passover—the Christian Passover—on the night of the 14th day of the first month of the calculated Hebrew Calendar. The Passover in the Old Testament was originally instituted by God Himself on the 14th day of the first month in 1488 BC (Genesis 15; Exodus 12 and Lev. 23:4-5). It was to be observed once a year on that date. Under the Old Covenant, Passover was celebrated as a memorial of Israel’s deliverance from bondage in Egyptian. Israel’s slavery in Egypt was a physical forerunner pointing to mankind’s spiritual slavery to sin. We see the fulfillment of this “type” as Jesus is sacrificed as the ultimate Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7). Just as the Passover lamb in the Old Testament symbolized God’s deliverance from certain death, Christ, through His sacrifice, has delivered those called into “spiritual Israel”—the Church—from eternal death.

Passover reveals the love of God in the giving of His only begotten son to redeem mankind, bringing remission of sin through His blood. Through His sacrifice, the New Covenant has been ushered in, promising eternal life. For those under the New Covenant, the Christian Passover is a time of renewal and rededication of one’s covenant relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

When Jesus instituted the new ceremony of the Christian Passover, He did not change the day or the frequency of observance. The new ceremony consists of the foot washing, the eating of unleavened bread and the drinking of wine. The Christian Passover was never to be observed more than once a year—and then, only on the night of the 14th day of the first month.

The Lord’s Supper: Paul wrote his two epistles to the Corinthian congregation to correct them concerning many things. Most of these wrong practices and heresies were apparently the result of false apostles, whom the brethren had allowed to come into their congregations and teach false doctrines and another Jesus to them: “For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different gospel, which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good” (II Cor. 11:4). He further warned them that regardless of how they appeared or what they said, they were of Satan and not of God: “For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works” (verses 13-15).

One practice in question was the so-called “Lord’s Supper,” noted in I Corinthians 11:20.

Some mistakenly believe that Paul was correcting the Corinthians for inappropriately eating the “Lord’s Supper.” In reality, he was correcting a heresy: “Now *in this that* I am commanding you, I do not praise you, because when you assemble together, it is not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, I hear that there are divisions among you when you are assembled together in the church, and I partly believe *it*. For it is necessary that **heresies be among you**, so that the ones who are approved may become manifest among you” (verses, 17-19).

Paul explained that the teachings concerning the Passover were those that he had personally received from the Lord: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread” (I Cor. 11:23). The night that Jesus was betrayed was the Passover night: “Now on the first of the unleaveneds, the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You desire *that* we prepare for You to **eat the Passover?**’ And He said, ‘Go into the city to such a man, and say to him, “The Teacher says, ‘My time is near; **I will keep the Passover with My disciples** at your *house.*’ ” ’ Then the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and **prepared the Passover**. And after evening had come, He sat down with the twelve” (Matt. 26:17-20). Luke’s account reads: “Then they went *and* found *everything* exactly as He had said to them; and **they prepared the Passover**. Now when the hour had come, He sat *down*, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said to them, ‘With *earnest* desire **I have desired to eat this Passover with you** before I suffer. For I tell you that I will not eat of it again until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God’ ” (Luke 22:13-16).

The apostle Paul wrote, “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For this reason, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth” (I Cor. 5:7-8).

Whatever meal the Corinthians were eating and calling the “Lord’s Supper” was not to be eaten when they assembled. In the strongest negation possible, Paul wrote: “Therefore, when you assemble together in one place, it is **not** to eat *the* Lord’s Supper” (verse 20). The Greek *ouk*, translated “not,” means the impossibility of eating the “Lord’s Supper.” Furthermore, Paul specifically wrote that if anyone was hungry, he or she was to eat at home before coming to observe the Christian Passover: “But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that *there will be* no *cause* for judgment *when* you assemble together. And the other matters I will set in order when I come” (verse 34).

All other references to the “Lord’s Supper” and later the “Eucharist” come from the “early church fathers” in Rome and Egypt. Because the Roman Catholic Church has taught it, most people have assumed, believed and accepted as fact that the “early church fathers” were the true successors of the apostles. However, history shows that they were not the true successors to the apostles, but were the successors of false apostles, as found in the New Testament writings.

Communion: The translators of the King James 1611 Version of the Bible translated the Greek word *koinonia* as “communion” to reflect their later interpretation. However, *koinonia* is translated predominately as “fellowship.” In the KJV, of the 19 times *koinonia* is used in the New Testament Greek text, it is translated 12 times as “fellowship”; 4 times as “communion”; 1 time as “contribution”; 1 time as “communicate”; and 1 time as “communication.”

In First Corinthians 10, the word *koinonia* should be more properly translated “fellowship” instead of “communion” in reference to the Christian Passover. A more accurate translation makes it clear: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to those who are wise; you judge what I say. **The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not *the* fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not *the* fellowship of the body of Christ?** For we, being many, are one body *and* one bread, because we are all partakers of the bread. Consider Israel according to *the* flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything? **But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not wish**

you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink *the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons*” (I Cor. 10:14-21). From these scriptures, it appears that the Corinthian Christians were still practicing some pagan temple rituals.

After the death of the apostles, the Christianization of pagan practices gained momentum. History shows that through the centuries, the Catholic Church appropriated various pagan festivals and renamed them, putting a “Christian” veneer on them and ascribing a new meaning to their observance. The Most Reverend Louis Laravoire Morrow confirms that this is in accordance with the traditions of the Catholic Church: “*In the history of the Church* we find that she often christened pagan festivals, making use of dates and ceremonies, and endowing them with an entirely new and Christian significance” (*My Catholic Faith*, p. 416).

Ancient Israel also adopted pagan practices in direct violation of the commandments of God: “Be careful to observe and obey all these words which I command you, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever when you do *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you **do not ask about their gods**, saying, ‘**How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?**’ **You shall not do so to the LORD your God**; for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. **Whatever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it**” (Deut. 12:28-32).

The Eucharist—the Sacrifice of the Mass: Catholics claim that Jesus instituted the “Eucharist,” the so-called “Sacrifice of the Mass” on the night of His last supper. That is not correct. Jesus instituted the Christian Passover. He never would have instituted a ceremony derived from rank heathen paganism! (See Alexander Hislop’s comprehensive book, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 156-165, for a complete historical/theological dissertation, showing that the Roman Catholic Eucharist or Sacrifice of the Mass was derived from pagan religions, and not from Scripture. The reader may obtain these pages at www.cbcbg.org.)

Moreover, Catholic doctrine purports that the priest conducting the Mass has the power to call Christ down from heaven and command Him to put the presence of his literal body and blood into the consecrated wafers and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist. This is heresy. No man can command God to do anything at any time. If that were so, then *man* would be God and God would be his slave.

In addition, it is an absolute impossibility for the literal flesh and blood of Jesus Christ to be present—anywhere. Regardless of the claims of the Roman Church and the prayers of the priests, Jesus Christ’s flesh is not present in the communion wafer, nor is His blood present in the wine. His blood, shed on the Passover day in 30 AD, was shed **ONCE** for all time for all human sins (Heb. 9:28; 10:10, 12).

Finally, Jesus Christ, Who is seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven above, is not composed of flesh and blood. His flesh was transformed into spirit when He was resurrected from the dead. As a spirit being, He lives eternally. In a vision, Jesus revealed His full-glorified spirit form to the apostle John. In the beginning of the book of Revelation, John wrote:

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending*,’ says the Lord, ‘Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.’ I, John, who *am* also your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that *is* called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in *the Spirit* on the

day of the Lord; and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last'; and, 'What you see, write in a book, and send *it* to the churches that *are* in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.'

"And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands; and in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like *the* Son of man, clothed in a *garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters. And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword went out of His mouth, and His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, even the one Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the* grave and of death' " (Rev. 1:7-18).

What Does it Mean to Eat Jesus' Flesh and Drink His Blood? Jesus instituted the New Covenant Christian Passover ceremony on the night of His last Passover. After instituting the foot washing ceremony by washing the apostles' feet, He then instituted the ceremony of eating the broken unleavened bread and of drinking the wine: "Jesus took the bread and blessed *it*; *then* He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And He took the cup; and after giving thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, 'All of you drink of it; for this is My blood, the *blood* of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for *the* remission of sins' " (Matt. 26:26-28).

When Jesus instituted the first Christian Passover ceremony, the bread was *symbolic* of His flesh and the wine was *symbolic* of His blood. His literal flesh and blood were not present in the bread and wine at that initial Passover or in any subsequent Passover.

Jesus Himself explained what eating His flesh and drinking His blood meant: "Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day; for My flesh is truly food, and My blood is truly drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood is dwelling in Me, and I in him. **As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me**'" (John 6:53-57).

In Psalm 34, David prophesied of this when He wrote: "O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him" (verse 8). The action of "trusting" in the Lord is symbolized by "tasting" the Lord and tasting (or eating) is "living by" the Lord, as Jesus declared. In the same way that David did not mean that one was to literally taste or eat the Lord, Jesus did not mean that one was to literally eat His flesh and drink His blood transubstantiated in the bread and wine. Therefore, when one eats the bread and drinks the wine of the Christian Passover service, he or she is pledging before God the Father that they will live by Jesus Christ—by His every word—as God manifested in the flesh.

We must live by Jesus Christ, for He and He alone is our personal Savior.