

# PREPARATION FOR PASSOVER

## Matthew 26:17–19

### CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEM

- the Day of Passover was Nisan 14 and the Feast of Unleavened Bread ran from Nisan 15 to 21
- passover lambs were sacrificed from 3 to 5 PM on Nisan 14 = the Day of Passover = the First Day of Unleavened Bread
- four facts must be harmonized: (1) Jesus died when the passover lambs were being slain to fulfill typology (1 Cor 5:7), (2) the Last Supper is clearly a passover meal in the synoptics (Mark 14:14, 16; Luke 22:15), so Jesus died at 3 PM on the afternoon of Nisan 15, (3) the Last Supper takes place a day earlier in John, at the beginning of Nisan 14 (John 18:28; 19:14), so Jesus died when the people began sacrificing their passover lambs (3 PM at the end of Nisan 14) before the passover meal, (4) yet John describes the same meal as Matthew, Mark, and Luke, so the Last Supper must be a passover supper in John
- how could Jesus die when the passover lambs were being slain and still eat the passover meal? something is missing: perhaps two calendars existed for reckoning the Passover—the Galilean (sunrise-to-sunrise) and Judean (sunset-to-sunset)—with two consecutive days of slaughtering paschal lambs (3–5 PM on Nisan 14 and 3–5 PM on Nisan 15) [H. W. Hoehner's view]
- the chronological difference between the synoptic gospels and John cannot be reconciled without new information

### DISCIPLES WONDER WHERE TO PREPARE THE PASSOVER MEAL (MATTHEW 26:17=MARK 14:12)

- apparently Jesus and his disciples were in Bethany (comp. Matt 26:6=Mark 14:3; John 12:1 with "Go into the city" Mark 14:13)
- they have been lodging in Bethany for the past six days—since Saturday (John 12:1)—and walked to Jerusalem on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (to be examined for four days and be shown to be an unblemished Lamb, Exod 12:3–6)
- it was the duty of disciples to prepare the Passover for their Rabbis

### MAN WITH A JAR OF WATER (MATTHEW 26:18=MARK 14:13–14=LUKE 22:8–11)

- Jesus sent Peter and John, two of his most trusted disciples, to Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover (Luke 22:8)
  - none of the other disciples, including Judas, knew where they would eat the Passover
- the passover lamb must be eaten "within the gate of Jerusalem" (Sifré on Num 9:10, based on Deut 16:7; M. *Pesachim* 7.9)
  - the man carrying the jar of water was a slave, servant, or son and not the owner of the house
- perhaps he was fetching water from the Pool of Siloam for use in the Feast when he met Peter and John coming from Bethany
  - he (knowingly or unknowingly) led them through the narrow, unfamiliar streets to the house with the upper room
  - was this a prearranged signal (the upper room has been reserved in advance) or supernatural knowledge on Jesus' part?
  - it's unlikely a room would be available without prior arrangement ("my guest room" = "the one I arranged for" Mark 14:14)
    - the owner of the house was a courageous follower of Jesus—no further identification was needed than "Teacher"
    - the name of the man and the location of his house was concealed to keep Judas from betraying Jesus prematurely

### UPPER ROOM (MARK 14:15=LUKE 22:12)

- the owner will show Peter and John a large, furnished, upper room—with carpets, couches, cushions, dishes, and tables
  - "furnished *and* ready" suggests a prior reservation of the upper room by Jesus (Mark 14:15)
    - the owner of this large upper room may have been a rich man

### PETER AND JOHN PREPARE THE PASSOVER (MATTHEW 26:19=MARK 14:16=LUKE 22:13)

- they prepared a lamb, wine, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and Charoseth (sauce with dried fruit, nuts, spices, and wine)
- they sacrificed the lamb in the Temple, brought it to this man's home, and roasted it on a pomegranate spit over an open fire
- perhaps they did not prepare a lamb (no lamb is mentioned in the Gospels) to focus attention on the antitype—Jesus the Lamb