

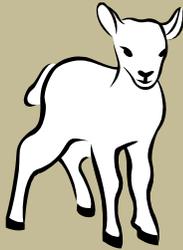


## Observing The LORD'S SUPPER On The 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan?

By Steven J. Wallace

It has been argued by Jehovah's Witnesses that Jesus died on the Passover, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, and that since He instituted the Lord's Supper on that very day, it must be that day which the Lord's Supper is observed. There are several things wrong with this. Below are five considerations.

One, Jesus' death is not so much a *replacement* of the Passover, as it is a *fulfilment* of the Passover (Lk. 22:16). Therefore, the Passover and Exodus were designed to be like the coming crucifixion and Lord's Supper, not the other way around. The Passover was a "shadow" of things to come. Paul wrote of all the feast days, new moons, and yearly festivals as being *shadows of things to come* (see Col. 2:16). This means that the Passover was not the *real*, but only a *dim image* of what was intended to take place. Hence, when Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Scripture and became our Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; Jn. 1:29).



Two, with the death of Christ, a "NEW COVENANT" came into existence. Such requires that even the times of worship be defined.

"For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives" (Heb. 9:17).

When Jesus died, it was not ONLY for our sins but, often unnoticed by the masses, was also a putting away of the former covenant and a bringing in of the new and

better covenant. Jesus Christ's New Testament came "in force" by His own blood, and yet, when it came "in force," the other covenant, by necessity, was taken away. Previous to the *shadows* mentioned in Colossians 2:16, Paul argued that Jesus wiped out the law associated with those shadows, "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). "It" was nailed to the cross and "taken out of the way"! Hebrews 10:9, 10 further affirms that when Jesus offered His body to establish the "second" testament, the "first" testament was also taken away. Since the two testaments cannot coexist, the Passover, with its sacrifices and its defined days, were *done away*. Even in Luke 22:19, 20 we see that when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He was anticipating the New Testament. The Lord instituted His Supper during the Passover because He was fulfilling the Passover. He had not died yet, and was still under the Law of Moses. There was no other day to institute the Lord's Supper than on the Passover.

Three, Jesus did not wait for one whole year. In the Passover scene, Jesus told His disciples that there was a new covenant by His blood (Lk. 22:20). As of yet, they would not know when to observe the Lord's Supper unless the Lord would explain such to them. But now notice something very important, which is destructive to the one-time-of-year position. During that night He said, "...With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Notice the Passover needed to be fulfilled, and afterwards, Jesus would eat. A straightforward reading of it shows that Jesus anticipates eating after Passover is fulfilled in the kingdom. If this eating were literal, then He would have had to eat within the 40 days that remained prior to His ascension (Acts 1:3). If it is spiritual as in the drinking of the fruit of the vine then it was not a year later, but only 50 days! The Lord said, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it **new** with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29, emp. mine). This drinking of the fruit of the vine "new" was in the Kingdom which began on the Day of Pentecost, a first

day of the week (Acts 2:1-4; 42). We share of Him when we partake (1 Cor. 10:16). Either way, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan contention crumbles.

Four, the resurrection and the day of the resurrection are most certainly important! The death of Jesus means very little **if** He did not rise from the dead “and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). Likewise, Paul affirmed, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1 Cor. 15:14). If Jesus not rising makes faith empty, then in the same manner it would make the Lord’s Supper empty. If not, why not? Significantly, we read that on the first day of the week Jesus arose from the dead and that He made Himself known through the breaking of bread to His disciples (see Lk. 24:1, 13, 30, 31). Later, He instructed the apostles to observe His death on the day He arose, the first day of the week. We know this is certain because of the approved example of the church at Troas. They gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). This was not a common meal, because Paul, who was there, would not allow the church to come together to eat common meals (1 Cor. 11:34). And yet, since Paul was there with this church, He gives the apostolic stamp of approval on their breaking the bread of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. Obviously, we *necessarily* infer that the Lord had approved of that practice (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1; 12:27; 14:37; Eph. 3:1-5; Jn. 16:13, 14; etc.).

Finally, the prophecy of David supports the first day for partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>22</sup> The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. <sup>23</sup> This was the LORD’S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> **This is the day** the LORD has made; We will rejoice and **be glad in it**” (Ps. 118:22-24, emp. mine).

First, please note carefully, this passage speaks of the suffering of Christ (v. 22). Second, this passage also speaks of something *marvelous* in our eyes which brought great joy (v. 23, 24). Third, this passage also speaks of a certain “day” when we marveled and rejoiced. That this “day” was not the day Jesus was

rejected and died is obvious. That day was filled with anything but joy. But rather that day was full of sorrow, fear, exhaustion, confusion and distress (Lk. 22:45; Mk. 14:27, 29-31, 33, 34, 40, 71, 72; etc.). In fact, the evangelist tells us that such sorrow continued even until the first day of the week (Mk. 16:9, 10). Yet when He was presented alive on the first day of the week, it brought joy and marvel to all.

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. **Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord**” (Jn. 20:19, 20, emp. mine).

This very Psalm of David was quoted from on the first day of the week just prior to the crucifixion in Mark 11:1-10. Its fulfillment is in the death and resurrection of Jesus. More could be said, but this should be sufficient for anyone to know that the first day of the week *is the day the Lord has made for us to rejoice and be glad in.*