

380 Two Special Suppers

In this Reflection for Holy Week, Good Friday and Resurrection Morning, we read in John 12.1, "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany ... There they made him a supper ...". At that supper Mary anointed the head and feet of Jesus with precious ointment (Matthew 26.6-13 / Mark 14.3-9 / John 12.3), but why?

Before we go on we must explain two underlying textual features which are relevant for us here; (see "The Restored Vision" by A E Ware, please email info@fsmains.org for details). Firstly, and for two reasons, (the long day of Joshua 10.12-14, and the one-day difference between the actual New Moon and the first appearance (the "phasis") of the New Moon), God's days had become one day ahead of the Jews' days. This means that in that Holy Week there were TWO Passovers, "Jehovah's" on the Thursday evening and the Jews' on the Friday evening, and TWO Sabbaths, Jehovah's on the Friday and the Jews' on the Saturday.

Next, we find that Matthew, Mark and Luke only mention Jehovah's Passover, though not naming it as such, and John only mentions the Jews' Passover, usually naming it as such (see "Passover" Gospel references in your Concordance). These two features underlying the biblical texts help explain any apparent discrepancies in the Gospel accounts.

So, by measuring six days back from the Jews' Passover on the Friday evening, (measured "inclusively", with Friday as the first day of the six), we establish that the Bethany supper was held on the Sunday evening, which we know for that year (AD 33) in the divine calendar was the tenth day of the first month, "Nisan" – a very significant date.

For in Exodus 12.1-6 we read that the Lord instructed that each sacrificial lamb for the annual Passover was to be set aside - on the tenth day of the first month, Nisan. The Passover lamb was to be killed four days later on the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan. Why did the Lord insert this four-day gap?

It is well-established that the Genesis creation accounts, of six days plus one day, can be understood also as a picture of the 6,000 years plus 1,000 years of the time-span of biblical history. As the "Bible Watchmen" under A. E. Ware applied this principle in their chronology studies, they discovered that the four-day gap between the Passover lamb being set aside on the tenth day and then slain on the fourteenth day, did indeed

represent a period of 4,000 years of Bible history, even to the point of establishing that the Bethany supper was held 4,000 years, to the day, from the date of the Fall in Genesis Chapter 3.

Thus on the day of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, when the promise was made concerning “the seed of the woman” (3.15), Jesus was, even then, praise God, figuratively “set aside” as “the Lamb of God”. Every year thereafter, the set-aside lamb was both a picture of future redemption, and also a “Type”, pointing forward to the Antitype, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the real Lamb of God, would come to “take away the sin of the world” (John 1.29). The annual four-day interval thus represented the 4,000-year time-span until the Messiah would come.

At the Bethany supper, Mary alone had “got it”! - realising that Jesus was the Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God, who in His forthcoming, sinless death was indeed going to “take away the sin of the world”. This is why she anointed Him as she did, figuratively setting Him aside as the true Passover Lamb on the 10th day of Nisan, and this is why Jesus told how her deed related to His burial (John 12.7).

Jehovah’s Passover, the “Last Supper”, was duly held later that week, on the 14th day of Nisan in the divine calendar, the very day when the Passover lamb was to be slain (Exodus 12.6). Jesus was so slain, figuratively on that evening at Jehovah’s Passover – hence, “This is my body, this is my blood ...”, and then physically on that cross by 3 pm on the Friday afternoon.

So God the Father had set aside His Son as the Passover Lamb 4,000 years, to the day, before the 10th and 14th days of Nisan in AD 33. “O the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 12.33, KJV).

Before His “giving up the ghost”, the Lord had cried in victory, “It is finished!” (John 19.30) – it is done, it is achieved – and thanks be to God, it still is, as the presence of the Risen Lord on that Resurrection Morning three days later so wonderfully proved.

So amid Covid-19 or come what may, we praise God afresh for all His mercies, so richly focussed in His Son Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God. Truly, “He is risen, He is risen indeed!” Alleluia!

