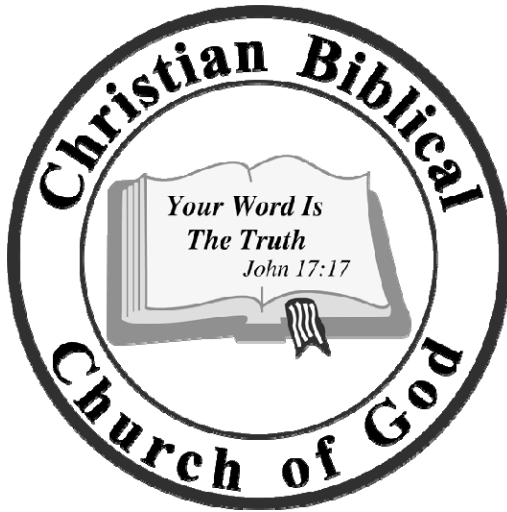


# *Christ's Last Passover— Leavened or Unleavened?*



*By*  
*Ben T. Ambrose*

*Those who observe the New Testament Christian Passover are being confronted with many false teachings which challenge their beliefs. One false teaching claims that Jesus Christ and His disciples partook of leavened bread and not unleavened bread at His last Passover. This booklet proves from the Scriptures that they ate unleavened bread not leavened bread.*

© Copyright 1997, 2010, 2012, 2014  
Christian Biblical Church of God  
P.O Box 1442  
Hollister, CA 95024-1442

[www.cbcg.org](http://www.cbcg.org)  
[www.biblicaltruthministries.org](http://www.biblicaltruthministries.org)  
[www.churchathome.org](http://www.churchathome.org)  
[www.restoringtheoriginalbible.com](http://www.restoringtheoriginalbible.com)

*May be freely copied with full acknowledgment of copyright holder.*

# **Christ's Last Passover Leavened or Unleavened?**

*by  
Ben T. Ambrose*

For over 50 years, the Churches of God have kept the Biblical New Testament Passover ceremony commemorating the death of Jesus Christ. There are three parts required to partake of the Christian Passover: 1) footwashing service which renews our baptismal vows in Christ and symbolizes what our relationship should be to God and to our fellow man, 2) partaking of unleavened bread symbolizing Christ's broken body which we are to eat, and 3) partaking of the wine symbolizing His shed blood representing the sacrifice of His life as the Redeemer of mankind.

Following the apostasy within the various Churches of God, confusion has arisen concerning whether leavened or unleavened bread should be eaten when one partakes of the Passover. Some claim that since Christ had the "law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2) within His human nature, the bread which He and the disciples ate at His last Passover was leavened, therefore we should be partaking of leavened bread in the Passover observance instead of unleavened bread, as God originally commanded (Exodus 12:8).

In Scripture, leaven is used to depict sin. Christians are admonished to remove the old leaven of malice and wickedness and to replace it with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). This is why Christians are to remove physical leaven from their homes. In other words we are to put sin out and put in truth and righteousness. Additionally, leaven depicts false doctrines. In Matthew 16:11, Christ warned His disciples to "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" referring to their false doctrine, so Christians are to remove false doctrine and teaching as well.

While leaven symbolizes sin, it is never used in Scripture to symbolize the "law of sin and death" within a person. Christ had the "law of sin and death" within Him because His mother was human. Though He was tempted in all points as we are

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

(Hebrews 4:15) and had the law of sin and death within him, He never sinned. Voluntarily, He took upon Himself the sins of the world bringing the death penalty upon Himself. Our sins were responsible for His death, not “the law of sin and death” within Him. Therefore, why would He use leaven which pictures sin to depict Himself when He never sinned?

Christ instituted the New Testament (Covenant) Passover using the footwashing, the bread and the wine during His last Passover before His death. What are the Biblical instructions concerning the manner in which Passover should be taken? It is absolutely imperative that the Passover be properly administered and understood.

“Partaking of the true Christian Passover with the New Testament symbols, as Jesus taught, is absolutely essential for salvation and to receive the full gift of eternal life at the resurrection. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is the True Passover Lamb of God for all time, by the one perfect sacrifice of Himself....At His last Passover meal with the disciples, Jesus instituted the new symbols representing His body and His blood: “Jesus took 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*’ ” (Matthew 26:26-28).

When God instituted the first Passover for Israel, how important was it for Israel to follow God’s instructions precisely to spare the lives of their firstborn when the Lord passed over their houses? Wasn’t it a matter of life and death? How important is it for true Christians to take the Passover as instructed? Is it not also a matter of life and death? The consequences for not following instructions in the Old Testament was physical death. What would be the consequences for a true Christian to take the Passover improperly? Would it not be eternal death?

Due to the seriousness of this question, this article was written to establish what the Scripture instructs us concerning the eating of unleavened bread at Passover. Not only should we establish what the Bible says, but what it DOES NOT SAY as well.

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

### **Leavened or Unleavened?**

The two words translated bread, or in conjunction with bread, in the New Testament are the Greek words: 1) *artos* (bread, loaf) and 2) *azumos* (unleavened). In addition, the word sop is translated from the word “*psomion*” which means “morsel or crumb.” Why did Christ inspire “*artos*” to be used without distinguishing whether it was leavened or unleavened? Why did He inspire “*azumos*” to be used only when speaking of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a title? Why did Christ inspire the word “*psomion*” to be used in John 13 instead of the word “*artos*” or “*azumos*”?

Before going to the New Testament to examine this subject, let’s look briefly at the original Passover instituted under the Old Covenant. For an in-depth study into the time the Passover is to be kept, the events involved in the Passover, and the meaning of the Old Testament Passover, you will find an excellent account given in *The Christian Passover*.

God had brought Egypt to utter ruin through the miraculous exploits performed through Moses. In preparation for the release of all Israelites held in bondage in Egypt, God was about to send the last plague which would bring Egypt to it’s knees. God was positioning His people to escape Egypt through His divine intervention, direction and protection. This last plague was to be the most devastating of all—the killing of all the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt. It was not God’s intention to kill His people. The Egyptians refused to let the children of Israel leave Egypt, therefore God was going to slay the firstborn of every man and beast.

God instructed the Israelites to distinguish their homes by putting the blood of a lamb on the doorposts. Wherever this blood appeared, the LORD would pass over their homes sparing their firstborn. Why did God have them do this? Did God need to have the mark to distinguish who His people were? Or was this a test of the obedience for the congregation of Israel? Did it not also have symbolic meaning to serve in teaching them an object lesson? What would have been the consequences had they not done as they were instructed? Their firstborn would have been killed as well.

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

God instructed all Israelites to enter their homes and to remain there throughout the entire night until day break. They were to prepare a meal consisting of roasted lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. He told them to be dressed, to eat it in trepidation and be ready to leave at the signal of daybreak. These instructions were very explicit down to the last detail—including burning all the remains of the lamb before morning. If you knew that the LORD would pass through Egypt in a few short hours, and would kill every firstborn of man and beast of the disobedient, would you have taken those instructions lightly? If you did, you would have been struck dead if you were a firstborn.

The New Testament reveals that the One Who became Christ was the God of the Old Testament. The One Who became Christ performed these exploits through Moses. Christ is the One Who commanded that unleavened bread be eaten for the Passover (Exodus 12:8). Christ is the Author of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Was it just coincidental that the bread was unleavened because there was no time to prepare leavened bread? Or did God intend that it be unleavened throughout the Passover day and the seven days of Unleavened Bread? Would Christ eat leavened bread at His last Passover meal when He was the One Who commanded that unleavened bread be eaten at the original Passover? If Christ changed the bread from unleavened bread to leavened bread at His last Passover, why did He not command this and explain why he was changing the symbols?

In the greater festival area surrounding Jerusalem, the majority of the Jews kept a domestic Passover in private homes on the correct date of Nisan 14 and in the proper manner. However, many Jews and the religious leaders of Judaism kept the Passover incorrectly on Nisan 15 with a temple sacrificed lamb. The Passover meal was eventually replaced with the traditional Jewish seder meal. In addition, they had combined the two feasts into one which became known as the “Passover of the Jews.” John distinguishes it from the true Passover of God by calling it the “Passover of the Jews.” Jesus Christ did not keep the Passover of the Jews. He kept the Passover that He instituted in the Old Testament at the same time, on the same day, and in the same way. At His last Passover, He changed its ceremonial symbolism to reflect

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

the conditions of the New Covenant. The account of this is in John 13, Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22.

Why didn't Christ simply leave the ceremony as it was? What was the purpose of changing it? Did each ceremony have it's own individual symbolism and significance depicting two different things and serving two different purposes altogether?

Christ knew that the Jews were going to kill Him the following day. He knew the betrayal of Judas completed Judaism's total rejection of Him. Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Old Testament Passover ceremony. Since His death would completely fulfill the conditions of the Old Covenant, He replaced that ceremony with a new ceremony yet to be fulfilled. The Passover meal that the Jews would keep following His crucifixion was the Passover of the Rejected—not the Passover of God.

Let's look at the Scriptures concerning the eating of bread during the New Covenant Passover ceremony.

“And as they were eating, 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’ ” (Matthew 26:26).

In every case where bread is mentioned in the gospel account of this meal, the word is translated from the Greek word “*artos*.” The word “sop” in John 13:26, 27 and 30 is translated from the Greek word “*psomion*” and means “morsel or crumb.” Why did Christ use bread (*artos*) without prefacing it with the word for unleavened “*azumos*”? Can we judge from the original language whether these scriptures using the word “bread” determines whether the bread was leavened or unleavened? Can we determine that the word “sop” means a morsel of food or a piece of bread? What did the word “sop” mean to them? As found in the Passover accounts, was a “loaf of bread” the same as what we know as a “leavened loaf of bread” today. These are thought-provoking questions.

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

Below are the Scriptures in question and the Greek/English words used in each instance:

Matthew 26:26	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
Mark 14:22	loaf/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
Luke 22:19	loaf/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
John 13: 18	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
1 Co. 11:23	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
1 Co. 11:26, 27	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread
John 13:26, 27, 30	morsel/ <i>psomion</i> /πισομιο	crumb or morsel

As we examine the above scriptures, the New Testament **DOES NOT** show the bread to be leavened or unleavened. Why does God omit something this important? He had a purpose for doing so. What was that purpose? Could it have been the same purpose that He had Israel paint the doorpost with blood? A test command? Since we don't always know why God chose to inspire the New Testament scriptures to be written in the way that He did, we should take the approach that Mary took in Luke 2:51 and Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12.

“...But His mother kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51).

“For now we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Let's look at the following Scriptures where the word bread (*artos*) is used:

“And as they were eating, Jesus took the **bread** (*artos*/ αρτος), and blessed *it*, then *He* broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (Matthew 26:26).

“And as they were eating, Jesus took **bread** (*artos*/ αρτος); *and* after blessing *it*, He broke *it* and gave *it*



## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

to them, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’ ” (Mark 14:22).

“And He took **bread** (artos/αρτος), *and* after giving thanks, He broke *it* and gave *it* to them, saying, ‘This is My body, which is given for you. This do in the remembrance of Me’ ” (Luke 22:19).

“I am not speaking of you all; *for* I know whom I have chosen, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled: ‘He who eats **bread** (artos/αρτος) with Me has lifted up his heel against Me’ ” (John 13:18).

“Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I shall give a **sop** (morsel/psomion/πσομιον) after I have dipped *it*.’ And when He had dipped the **sop** (morsel/psomion/πσομιον), He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*. And after the **sop** (morsel/psomion/πσομιον), Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly’ ” (John 13:26-27).

“So then, after receiving the **sop** (morsel/psomion/πσομιον) he immediately went out; and it was night” (John 13:30).

“For as often as you eat this **bread** (artos/αρτος), and drink this cup, you *solemnly* proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes. For this reason, *if* anyone shall eat this **bread** (artos/αρτος) or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and *the* blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and let him eat of the **bread** (artos/αρτος) and drink of the cup accordingly” (1 Corinthians 11:26-28).

The above Scriptures **DO NOT** refer to the state of bread that is being consumed. The word for “unleavened” in the Greek

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

is not preceding the Greek word(s) for bread thus signifying the specific act of the eating of leavened or unleavened bread.

Since the Greek word(s) used for bread at the eating of Jesus' last Passover is the same word(s) used elsewhere to denote leavened bread, then how do we know Scriptures say that Jesus ate unleavened bread at the Passover? (See the Appendix at the end of the booklet that contains most of the Greek words for bread throughout the New Testament.)

We have looked at the Scriptures of Christ's last Passover concerning bread and sop, now let's look at Scriptures that pertain to **unleavened bread**.

“Now on the first of the **unleaveneds** (*azumos*), the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You desire *that* we prepare for You to eat the Passover’ ” (Matthew 26:17).

“Now after two days was the Passover and the *feast of unleavened* (*azumos*) bread, and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might stealthily lay hold of Him *and* kill Him” (Mark 14:1).

“And on the first day of the **unleaveneds** (*azumos*), when they were killing the Passover *lambs*, His disciples said to him, ‘Where do You desire that we go and prepare, so that You may eat the Passover’ ” (Mark 14:12).

“Now the feast of **unleavened** (*azumos*) *bread*, which *is* called Passover was approaching;” (Luke 22:1).

“Then came the day of the **unleaveneds** (*azumos*), in which it was obligatory to kill the Passover *lambs*” (Luke 22:7).

“And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

proceeded to take Peter also. (Now those were *the* days of **unleavened** (*azumos*) **bread**” (Acts 12:3).

“But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of **Unleavened** (*azumos*) **Bread**, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed *for* seven days” (Acts 20:6).

“Therefore, purge out the old leaven (*zume*), so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are **unleavened** (*azumos*). For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For this reason, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven (*zume*), nor with *the* leaven (*zume*) of malice and wickedness, but with *the* **unleavened** (*azumos*) *bread* of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

The above scriptures are the only verses where the word “unleavened” is used in the New Testament (according to the Bauer’s Greek/English Lexicon). This word is always referring to a period of time known as the “**unleavened**” —not a specific piece or loaf of physical bread. The last two verses do not refer to bread but the spiritual condition of the individual being addressed. There is **NOT ONE** scripture in the New Testament dealing with an individual(s) eating bread where that bread is specified as being unleavened.

Now, let’s look at the scriptures concerning (*zume*) leaven:

“Another parable He spoke to them; ‘The kingdom of heaven is compared to **leaven** (*zumoo*, dzoo-mo’-o; from; to cause to ferment:—leaven.,) which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until all was **leavened** (*zume*, dzoo’-may; prob.; ferment (as if boiling up:—leaven)” (Matthew 13:33).

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Watch out, and be on guard against the **leaven** (*zume*) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees’ ” (Matthew 16:6).

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

“Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the **leaven** (*zume*) of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matthew 16:12).

“Then He charged them, saying, ‘Watch out! Be on guard against the **leaven** (*zume*) of the Pharisees and of the **leaven** (*zume*) of Herod’ ” (Mark 8:15).

“During this *time*, an innumerable multitude was gathering, *crowding* so close together that they were stepping on one another. First of all He began to speak to His disciples, *saying*, ‘Guard yourselves from the **leaven** (*zume*) of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy’ ” (Luke 12:1).

“It is like **leaven** (*zume*), which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until all was **leavened** (*zumoo*)” (Luke 13:21).

“Your glorying *is* not good. Don’t you know that a little **leaven** (*zume*) **leavens** (*zumoo*) the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old **leaven** (*zume*), so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are **unleavened** (*zumos*). For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For this reason, let us keep the feast, not with old **leaven** (*zume*), nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* **unleavened** (*zumos*) *bread* of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).

“A little **leaven** (*zume*) leavens the whole lump” (Galations 5:9).

The only conclusion is that one cannot determine from specific New Testament scriptures that the bread being eaten is unleavened bread or leavened bread. **NOT** a single one of these scriptures describe the fermented state of bread that was being eaten. All of these scriptures are using leaven either as an object

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

lesson (such as a parable) or a character flaw or spiritual condition of someone. Therefore, one must go beyond the verse containing the word “bread” to determine whether it was leavened or unleavened bread being eaten.

To read a single verse in the New Testament where one is consuming bread and state that the bread being eaten was leavened based on the Greek word(s) runs the risk of making a false assumption. Due to the seriousness of the question, we cannot afford to do that.

Having determined that the New Testament makes no distinction concerning leavened or unleavened in this particular case, how does the Old Testament treat the subject? Looking at the scriptures below, can we determine if the bread is leavened or unleavened?

“But he urgently pressed upon them, and they turned in to him and entered into his house. And he made them a feast, and baked **unleavened bread**, and they ate” (Genesis 19:3).

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and **unleavened bread**. They shall eat it with *bitter* herbs” (Exodus 12:8).

“And Moses said to the people, ‘Remember this day *in* which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for the LORD brought you out from this place by the strength of His hand. There shall be no **leavened bread** be eaten’ ” (Exodus 13:3).

“And **unleavened bread**, and **cakes unleavened** mixed with oil, and **wafers unleavened** anointed with oil. You shall make them *of* wheat flour” (Exodus 29:2).

“Along with the cakes, he shall offer *for* his offering **leavened bread** with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings” (Leviticus 7:13).

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

Without question the Old Testament clearly distinguishes whether the bread is **leavened** or **unleavened**. For Old Testament purposes, God inspired it to be written that way. God inspired it to be written in the New Testament the way He did for a very special purpose. If we place our faith in God by rightfully dividing the Word of God, we will understand its correct meaning.

### **IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. God gave the direct commands about when to eat unleavened bread in the Old Testament.
2. The New Testament carries the spiritual connotation of leavened and unleavened.
3. The just shall live by faith and obey God's commands.
4. The New Testament is written to true Christians who are commanded to live by faith.
5. God has established what we are to do and observe. (Exodus. 12:17; 13:10; Deuteronomy 16:1-8)

While the New Testament doesn't necessarily differentiate between leavened and unleavened, in view of all the Scriptures pertaining to the symbolism and meaning of leavened and unleavened bread in the New Testament and taken in the context of the Old Testament Passover, the conclusion is that unleavened bread should be eaten at the Passover ceremony. We are to eat Christ in the sense of taking into our minds the truth He lived and taught which should be completely void of leaven or false teaching. We are to eat the broken bread symbolizing His broken body acknowledging our sins were part and parcel in causing His death, that He is now our Savior and His shed blood has atoned for our sins.

There are other examples where the Old Testament differentiates and the New Testament does not, such as, "clean and unclean meats," "keeping the seventh-day Sabbath," "paying tithes (10%)," and yes, "eating unleavened bread" at the appointed season.

Where in the New Testament does it say, "You shall not eat," and then lists the unclean animals like it does in the Old Testament? Yet, what do true New Testament Christians eat? Where

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

in the New Testament does it say, “You shall keep the seventh day a Sabbath,” etc? Why didn’t God just make all these doctrines iron-clad sure so no one today could deny what the Scripture says on a given subject? Why didn’t Christ just plainly say that the Passover was on the 14th and that we are to eat unleavened bread and not to eat any leavened bread for a week during the days of unleavened bread?

Did God make a mistake or overlook something between the time He inspired the Old Testament and the time that He inspired the writing of the New Testament? True Christians should give thought and careful meditation as to why. It may be that God deliberately left things out of the Scripture—both Old and New Testament. In the accounts of Jacob in Genesis 37:11 and Mary the mother of Jesus in Luke 2:57, they didn’t fully understand, but they didn’t make unfounded assumptions. If we don’t understand a given Scripture where it may appear to be a conflict, do we assume as this world does that Scripture contradicts itself? What does 1 Corinthians 13:9-12 mean? Surely we don’t understand all things in the Scriptures. However, it is God’s intent that His called-out ones understand the mystery of God hidden from this world (Colossians. 2:2-10). If we do not fully understand something, should we not look at our inadequacies for the moment and instead have faith in God that in due time He will give us the understanding we lack.

The question should not be, what does one Greek word in a verse of Scripture mean, but rather in light of both the Old and New Testament, what did Christ do, or what would He do? This is what we should be seeking—what Christ would do in any given situation. Then we can follow directly in His footsteps, imitating Him in every way.

A simple example might help. When I was a child, my family ate two kinds of cornbread. One was leavened made with corn meal, eggs, shortening, buttermilk, salt, and baking powder, and baked in the oven. The other type was unleavened, made of cornmeal, water, and salt cooked on top of the stove in a hot skillet in oil. The former would rise and puff up, the latter was thin, flat and solid and crispy around the edges. My mother cooked

## *Christ's Last Passover—*

these two types of cornbread interchangeably from meal to meal, week to week. We called both types cornbread.

Let's say that in July, you came to visit. My family was sitting at the dining room table eating when you arrived. You were invited to join the family for dinner, but since you had just eaten, you declined and sat down in the sitting room OUT OF SIGHT of the dining table and the food until the family finished their meal. While you were waiting, you heard a family member in the dining room say, "Pass the cornbread, please." Based on the above, let's suppose you were now put in the position of having to answer the question: "Were they eating leavened cornbread or were they eating unleavened cornbread?" Let's say that this was a life or death question. What would your answer be? Rest assured, your chance of survival would be only 50%. Let's repeat the same drama, but alter only one small detail.

You came in the house and sat in the sitting room out of sight of the dining room table and heard someone say, "Pass the cornbread, please." You were again put to the "life or death" test. What kind of cornbread were they eating? Was it leavened or unleavened? You now have the added facts that this was 1952 and you and this family attended the Church of God and it was during the days of Unleavened Bread. What would your answer be? You would know that it was unleavened cornbread. Now your chance of survival would have increased from 50% to a fully assured 100%.

Let's shift our story now from our present day experience as outlined above, to Jesus' last Passover. We know the scriptures of the Pentateuch and we believe and live by these scriptures.

We are sitting outside the door to the upper room. We cannot see the food, but we can hear every word that is said by Jesus. We hear the discourse between John and Jesus. "...Lord, who is it?" Then Jesus answers, "After dipping this sop it is he to whom I shall give it." Within a minute we see Judas hurriedly pass by us and disappear into the night from where we are sitting by the door (John 13:26). After listening a while longer we hear Jesus pray a prayer of thanks over the bread. He then tells his disciples to eat it (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19).



Suppose we were now brought back to the present day. We find ourselves in a “life or death” situation to answer a question. Did Jesus eat leavened or unleavened bread at his last Passover?

What is the answer? If God Himself were to ask you this question, what would be your answer? This writer’s answer is: Jesus ate unleavened bread!

What about eating leavened bread during the daylight portion of Nisan 14 as was the custom of the some of the churches of God.

“The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ last Passover with His disciples clearly describes the Passover day as “the first day of the unleaveneds.” There is no question that the Gospel writers were referring to Nisan 14, as explained in detail in the book *The Christian Passover*. Understanding that the Passover Day was observed by Jesus Christ and the disciples as “the first day of the unleaveneds” may lead to questions in the minds of some Christians concerning the eating of leavened bread on the day portion of the Passover day—Nisan 14.

“It is clear that in the Old Testament, unleavened bread was commanded to be eaten for the Passover meal on the night of the 14th, but there is no clear command concerning the remainder of the 14th. The commands of God state only that all leaven must be removed and destroyed before the beginning of the 15th without any reference to the eating leavened bread on the day portion of the 14th. By the commandment of God there are seven days of unleavened bread for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is not eight days long. However, the Passover is an additional feast day, and combined with the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread makes a total of eight days.

### *Christ's Last Passover—*

“It is evident that in New Testament times the Passover day was by practice an unleavened bread day, as recorded in the New Testament scriptures of Matthew, Mark and Luke. While there is no command in the Old Testament which forbids eating leavened bread on the day portion of the Passover day, neither is there any statement allowing it. But it was the common practice in Judea, during Jesus’ day, to collect all the leaven on the 13th of Nisan and to destroy the leaven on the morning of the 14th. In view of this practice, it is unlikely that Jesus and the disciples ate any leavened bread during the day portion of the Passover day. Nor is there any account that they did so. While the Gospels do not specifically tell us, it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus and the disciples observed the entirety of Nisan 14 as an unleavened day. Such a practice would be in accord with the first Passover observance in Egypt. The Old Testament records show that only unleavened bread was eaten on the day portion of the first Passover day, the 14th of Nisan. Although it is not a clear command of God in the Old Testament to keep the Passover day as an unleavened bread day today, it, nevertheless, is in accord with the New Testament practice which was followed by Jesus and the apostles, as recorded in the Gospel accounts. Since Jesus did not sin in any way, at any time, Jesus Christ and the apostles were clearly honoring God by observing the Passover day as an additional day of unleavened bread. The apostle Peter also wrote that we are to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:2 1). If they had not observed this practice, the Gospel writers would not have called the Passover day ‘the first day of the unleavened.’ They would have referred to it as just the Passover day with no reference to its ‘unleavenedness.’ Luke, who wrote his gospel account under Paul’s supervision for the Gentiles, was most specific in designating the Passover day as an unleavened bread day; ‘Then came the day of

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

the unleaveneds, in which it was obligatory to kill the Passover *lambs*' (Luke 22:7. (*Concerning the Eating of Unleavened Bread*, Fred R. Coulter)

Not only do the Gospel writers specifically designate the Passover day, as a full day of unleavenedness, but nearly all first century writers use the same terminology when writing of that day. It is clearly understood from the Greek text that Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 were not referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, the translators incorrectly inserted the word feast into the phrase "*on the first of the unleaveneds*," because the Gospel writers were not referring to the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, but to the Passover day itself; Nisan 14. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on Nisan 15. This improper insertion of the word *feast* has caused much confusion.

Notice what Richard A. Parker, University of Chicago wrote concerning Nisan 14. "But on what authority should Hebrew translators, as Salkinson and Delitzch, introduce the word [the Hebrew word for feast, *chag* or *chagag*, or the Greek word for feast], into these texts, when the corresponding Greek phrase has no word [in it] for 'feast,' and only speaks of the 'first of the unleavened bread'— **a common expression for the Jewish 14th with practically all first century writers**. Furthermore, why attempt to change Luke's account of an actual passover meal (22:15) to agree with a common meal..." (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Volume LXII 1944, "Ancient Jewish Calendation: A Criticism", emphasis added).

This is clear historical documentation that the Passover day itself; Nisan 14, was commonly called *the first of the unleavens*, or the *first day of the unleaveneds* by all first century writers.

Therefore, we can conclude, without a doubt that the Passover day was a full day of unleavenedness, most particularly bread. Furthermore, we can conclude with absolute certainty that the word "bread/*artos/αρτος*" used in the Gospel Passover accounts was unleavened. It is impossible for the bread used by Jesus and the disciples at Jesus' last Passover to have been leavened.

APPENDIX

A NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDY ON “BREAD”

VERSE	JP GREEN INTERLINEAR	KJV	COULTER
Matt4:3 bread	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	loaves of
Matt. 4:4	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 6:11	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 7:9	loaf/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 15:2	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	meal
Matt. 15:26	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 15:33	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	loaves
Matt. 15:34	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	loaves	loaves
Matt. 15:36	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	loaves	loaves
Matt. 16:5	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	loaves
Matt. 16:7	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	loaves
Matt. 16:8	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	loaves
Matt. 16:9	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	loaves	loaves
Matt. 16:10	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	loaves	loaves
Matt. 16:11	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 16:12	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Matt. 26:17	unleaven/ <i>zumos</i> /ζυμος	unlv brd	unlv bread
Matt. 26:26	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 3:20	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	meal
Mark 6:8	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 6:36	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 6:37	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 7:2	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 7:5	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 7:27	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 8:4	bread/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 8:14	loaves/loaf/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread/loaf	bread/loaf
Mark 8:16	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 8:17	loaves/ <i>artos</i> /αρτος	bread	bread
Mark 14:1	unlv brd/ <i>zumos</i> /ζυμος	unlv brd	unlv bread

## *Leavened or Unleavened?*

Mark 14:12	unlvn/zumos/ζυμος	unlv brd	unlv bread
Mark 14:22	loaf/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
Luke 4:3	loaf/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
Luke 4:4	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
Luke 7:33	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
Luke 15:17	loaves/artos/αρτος	bread	food
Luke 22:1	unln (brd) zumos	unln brd	unlvn brd
Luke 22:7	unln/zumos/ζυμος		unlvn brd
Luke 22:19	a loaf/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
*Luke 24:30	loaf/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
*Luke 24:35	loaf/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 6:33	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 6:34	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 6:35	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 6:41	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 6:48	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
John 13:18	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
**John 21:9	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
**John 21:13	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
Acts 2:42	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
Acts 12:3	bread/artos/αρτος	unlv brd	N/A
Acts 20:6	bread/artos/αρτος	unlv brd	N/A
Acts 20:7	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
Acts 27:35	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
1 Co. 5:8	unlv/zumos	unlv (brd)	N/A
*1 Co. 10:16	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
1 Co. 10:17	brd/brd/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
*1 Co. 11:23	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	N/A
*1 Co. 11:26	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
*1 Co. 11:27	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread
*1 Co. 11:28	bread/artos/αρτος	bread	bread

\*The context and the context only defines whether the bread referred to in these scriptures was leavened or unleavened. The Greek word(s) for bread as used in these New Testament scriptures **DO NOT** signify whether it was leavened or unleavened. However, the **CONTEXT MUST** be used to supply the correct understanding. The context in these verses show that this bread was **UNLEAVENED**. To

### *Christ's Last Passover—*

say or believe otherwise is to say that Jesus broke the command of God given in Exodus 12:8 and Deuteronomy 16:1-8.

\*\*These two scriptures serve as an example of where it is impossible for us to state emphatically whether the bread here referred to is either leavened or unleavened. In my understanding of this incident, there is nothing in the CONTEXT that can be used to show what kind of bread was to be eaten (leavened or unleavened). It may have been leavened or unleavened. God has so inspired the writing of the New Testament concerning this subject that the determination must be made by the individual, not only in faith, looking at the context in which it is written.



***Christian Biblical Church of God Offices:***

***United States***

Post Office Box 1442  
Hollister, California 95024-1442

***Canada***

Post Office Box 125  
Brockville, Ontario  
K6V 5V2 Canada

***Australia***

GPO 1574  
Sydney 2001  
Australia

***United Kingdom***

Post Office Box 8224  
Witham CM8 1WZ  
United Kingdom

***New Zealand***

Post Office Box 73  
Pokeno 2473  
New Zealand

***Republic of South Africa***

Post Office Box 494  
Frankfort 9830  
Rep. of South Africa

***Iglesia de Dios Cristiana y Bíblica***

[www.iglesiadedioscristianaybiblica.org](http://www.iglesiadedioscristianaybiblica.org)  
PO Box 831241  
San Antonio, TX 78283

[www.cbcbg.org](http://www.cbcbg.org)  
[www.churchathome.org](http://www.churchathome.org)  
[www.theoriginalbiberestored.org](http://www.theoriginalbiberestored.org)  
[www.afaithfulversion.org](http://www.afaithfulversion.org)