

## THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

### Lesson 87, Chapter 25 and 26

Last week the ending portion of our study was essentially a word picture of the final judgment that also goes by the name Judgment Day. This is one of those things that isn't particularly pleasant for a Pastor or Bible teacher to talk about because it concerns billions of people being permanently separated from God and sent off to an eternal state of torment, destruction, or both. What is also challenging is to wrestle with Yeshua's words that many who thought they were safe, will not be deemed so by God. An individual's eternal safety (or lack of it) will be judged not solely on what he or she claims to believe (that Jesus Christ is Savior), but it will also include the requirement of obedience to do the will of the Father. Yeshua has used a couple of parables to make this point that much too often is played down within our Churches. That is, doing, producing, working as one of the duties of a redeemed person is in some denominations said to be a bad thing; it means we're trying to "work our way to Heaven". So, the concept is that we say the sinner's prayer, show up for Church and go on living as we had before, until we die. Perhaps the most memorable of Yeshua's illustrations and parables concerning this matter uses the metaphor of a fruit tree. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit; a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. And in the case of the fig tree example, He cursed it was because it produced no fruit at all. Bottom line, a person's claim of being a good fruit tree (a saved follower of Christ) must be outwardly validated by exposing their inward state through producing fruit... good fruit. No fruit or bad fruit exposes that person's inward state as not what they claim it to be. But more importantly, God doesn't accept their claim of salvation because He doesn't see it as sincere.

Verses 31 – 34 of Matthew chapter 25 employ new metaphors of sheep and goats to illustrate the Judgment Day process. Essentially the Great Judge, who is

the Son of Man, assembles all the people of the world to stand before Him as He issues His verdict upon each individual. He divides people up into two groups. Those He judges as righteous are called the sheep, and those He judges as the wicked are called the goats. The sheep are told to stand at His right hand whereby He formally tells them that the moment has come when they receive their inheritance, which is to be permanent members of the Kingdom of Heaven. In verse 41 the goats are told to stand at His left hand whereby He formally tells them that the moment has come when they lose their inheritance, and instead are cursed to go into the same fire prepared for Satan and his demons. Especially in the West, when we go on trial we are used to a judicial process that has many nuances, exceptions to the rule, and suspended sentences... that is, our civil justice system operates within many shades of gray. Yeshua has told us unequivocally that when Judgment Day comes, there will be no shades of gray; only black or white. Eternal life or eternal damnation. What I've just told you to this point ought to be sobering. What comes next from Jesus also must be taken seriously and as more than merely nice thoughts or warm wishes for others.

Starting in verse 35, Yeshua speaks about the visible, tangible characteristics (the good fruit) that define a sheep... a righteous person... in His eyes. What He describes is not exhaustive, and is more poetic than a detailed list of tasks. Let's re-read this section to refresh our memories.

### **RE-READ MATTHEW 25:31 – end**

For the sake of keeping continuity, we'll do a lot of Bible reading in this slightly longer than usual lesson; so please do your best to stay focused. Interestingly, the first of the characteristics of the sheep, those deemed as righteous, are something that every Middle Easterner... Jew or Arab... would recognize. They are the characteristics of the highest virtue there is in Middle Eastern cultures: hospitality. Hospitality trumps nearly everything else for these folks. Hospitality is not an issue of legality; it's an issue of social obligation and status... a status of shame or honor. Social status matters so much that hosts will put their lives on the line for guests... even strangers... that show up at their homes. They will give respite, food, and drink at times even to enemies who ask for hospitality. For a person to turn down offered hospitality brings shame on both guest and host. To not offer hospitality to the person needing it brings shame to the entire household. This can be hard for Westerners to understand because these values aren't super high on our to-do list; but the Jews hearing Yeshua and later the ones reading Matthew's Gospel would have immediately grasped that verse 35

is all about the traits of proper hospitality that He expects of His disciples as a demonstration of their allegiance to Him. The requirement to provide safe and secure shelter, food and water even to strangers isn't being used as a metaphor; it is meant literally. Now, how such elements of hospitality as it was done in that era versus how we might accomplish this in the 21<sup>st</sup> century... and it will be dependent upon which of the many of the world's cultures one lives in... is something we must think through and deal with. But it can't simply be swept under the carpet by allegorizing Jesus's message away.

Verse 36 heads in a little different direction and deals with mercy. Both hospitality and mercy were traits that expressed not only good, but also wise, behavior of the righteous. Clothing the naked isn't **fully** literal; it meant to give clothing to someone that didn't have sufficient clothing. Maybe a person had no sandals, or no cloak to protect from the cold or to use as a blanket. Visiting the sick or those in prison is a little odd in that this doesn't really fit the customary list of Jewish virtuous conduct. Might Yeshua have been remembering His martyred cousin, John the Baptist, as he languished in Herod's prison awaiting his fate? Nonetheless, it helps us to better understand Christ's view of what loving your neighbor as yourself can entail... it entails showing mercy to strangers that need our help. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, jailed people were visited by their family members not merely for the sake of conversation but mainly to bring food. Typically, the jailers provided no food; so, if someone didn't bring a prisoner his meals, either he suffered horribly from malnutrition or he eventually died of starvation as he awaited trial. It's a bit different story today. Those who do visit the ill in their homes or in hospitals or institutions, and also those involved in prison ministries (a special calling indeed), bring mainly compassion and caring; and hopefully Believers also bring a message of God's love and the availability of divine forgiveness and peace.

It is truly breathtaking how Yeshua uses the term "I" each time He calls out one of the virtues and mercies; placing Himself in the role of the needy person... a stranger. Perhaps it might help us when we deal especially with the unlovely, the unkept, the anti-social, the illiterate and the outcasts if we use this mental image Jesus just created as it being He we are comforting and caring for when we tend to them.

Yeshua goes on to create a sort of straw man that responds to His instruction to provide hospitality to everyone as though it were He, with the straw man asking when did he ever provide hospitality to Christ? And Christ responds with:

<sup>CJB</sup> **Matthew 25:40** <sup>40</sup> *The King will say to them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!'*

It's a little startling the way that Jesus suddenly inserts the word King into the mix. Without doubt He is referring to Himself, and the disciples would have taken it that way. But what would that have meant to them? Those of us who study His words so many centuries later and have the benefit of time and the written record of many of His words at our fingertips, also have the luxury of seeing in it all in a deeper meaning; but I very much doubt that His disciples did as they were hearing it directly from His mouth. When Christ said "king", they knew He was applying it to Himself... but no doubt as the hoped-for Jewish king that would sit on a throne, in a Holy Land that was rid of the Romans. However just as if someone in our day says President or Prime Minister or some such thing in a conversation, we all sub-consciously know the characteristics of those office holders. It was the same with the mention of the word "king" in 1st century Jewish conversation. At that time a king was usually thought of as somewhat of a tyrant. Even a good king had nearly unlimited power over his subjects. A king was above all others in the kingdom; he only associated with his top officials and aristocrats, and lived a life of luxury. Yeshua redefines the office of king as it pertains to Himself. As a king He identifies Himself with the downtrodden and the under privileged, not with the elite. He doesn't see people as His loyal subjects only there to serve Him; but rather as brothers. In fact, He identifies with common folks so strongly that He can say that whatever hospitality and care given to even the poorest and most afflicted of them is the same as giving it to Him, the king. So how are we take the term "brothers" in this context? Who are Christ's brothers?

In Christendom, calling fellow Believers brothers or sisters is common. We see all Believers in Yeshua has having a common spiritual family bond with us. So is Yeshua speaking only about brothers meaning Believers... His followers... and only in a spiritual sense? Or does it include others as well? Is He meaning the Jewish people in general, or does this include gentiles? There continues to be some healthy debates about this, but here is my conclusion. We must remember that this part of the narrative wherein Yeshua is defining the notable characteristics of the sheep... the righteous who are standing at His right hand on Judgment Day... is using those valued characteristics of Middle Eastern hospitality plus adding the instruction to visit the sick and those in prison. I think there are at least 2 levels of interpretation to His words present here; maybe 3 or even 4. At

the most literal level, the **P'shat**, “brothers” means His fellow Jewish countrymen. And more specifically, the common and the afflicted Jews that make up the bulk of the Holy Land Jewish population of that era. There's not a doubt in my mind that this is how the listening disciples would have taken it. Therefore, Yeshua is not only validating and encouraging the continuation of the social custom of hospitality, but also, He is adding in an instruction to visit the ill and those in prison. By doing so He is changing the motive for doing those things from societal obligation to avoid shame, to compassion to please God. It is such a similar message that He offered on the Sermon on the Mount. There He told people that it was their motive and intent for obeying the Law of Moses that mattered more than merely doing any particular law in some rigid or mechanical way. And yet He reminded them that by this He didn't mean that any person's spirit-driven internal motive and intent was a replacement of the Torah and the Prophets (the Law of Moses and the Prophets).

On the hint level, the **Remez**, the term “brothers” narrows the group from all Jewish people to only those Jews who put their eternal trust in Christ. On the other hand, it expands the group by including people of all nations... gentiles... who have made themselves part of ideal Israel on a spiritual level by putting their trust in Israel's Messiah; the Jewish Son of Man. Therefore, in the **Remez** interpretation the sheep mean all those who trust in Yeshua. And, yet, there has also always been this mysterious thread in the Scriptures of those who haven't heard of The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; nonetheless they do what the Father wants. I believe we can view this from the **Sod** level... the mysterious level. That is, the ancients before Noah and even for a long time after, lived a righteous life based on what some call the Natural Law or the Noachide Law. Natural Law doesn't mean natural as in the term “nature” as we think of it today... as Mother Nature or environmentalism. It means natural in the sense that from the Garden of Eden onward, in various ways God made His fundamental commandments known to humanity although it would be a very long time before those commands were codified and written down in more concrete ways at Mt. Sinai. In a sense we can legitimately say that God's most fundamental laws are built-in to our human essence... our invisible human nature. They are also written into the cosmos, as well as into the many eco-systems of the earth that operate in harmony and usually to the benefit of mankind. Everything... all... near, far, known, unknown, energy and matter, physical and spiritual... are made by the same Creator, cut from the same cloth. There was a natural Torah from the beginning long before there was a written Torah; however, the fundamental principles are the same, have always remained the same, and will be the same

until there is a new heavens and earth.

It is for this reason that the Lord created Abraham's Bosom; to house those souls of the righteous dead before the Son of Man was born and then crucified to atone for their sins and to make them pure enough to enter Heaven. That population consisted of those who lived long before there was a written Torah, yet obeyed God's Natural Law (His fundamental principles), and later it included those who obeyed the written Torah (once it was given) in spirit and truth; all of these over the ages deemed righteous by God. Every one of these ancient residents of the now empty Abraham's Bosom are part of the sheep who will be directed to stand at Jesus's right hand at Judgment Day so that they will receive their inheritance.

So; verses 35 – 40 pertain to the sheep... the righteous. Now verses 41 – 46 pertain to the goats... the wicked. Using the same code of hospitality, Jesus reverses the situation. The righteous obeyed the hospitality code; the wicked did not. The wicked didn't offer respite, food and water to the needy or to strangers. They didn't offer shelter and clothing. And so, using the same logic that these needy and strangers are representative of Him (not in a literal sense but rather as Christ identifying with this group), since the goats didn't offer care for these people it amounts to them not offering care for Him. Not caring for that group, and therefore not caring for Him, is willful disobedience in that their actions are without compassion and mercy; and therefore, it reveals a hidden wicked nature. It disobeys the most fundamental principle of loving your neighbor. As it pertains to Jesus, it amounts to a form of rejection. Rejecting the King and Son of Man brings with it an eternal death sentence. We can use the same structure of interpreting these verses on 3 or 4 levels as we did in understanding the verses about the righteous, the sheep, so we don't need to go through all the levels again... just reverse what we discussed a couple of minutes ago. Here's the terrifying point; you can't get away with claiming you're a Believer, and that you're saved and therefore safe, but then turn your back on the needy, or bear bad fruit or no fruit. At various points in our lives, we all have to pause and take a long, pragmatic look in the mirror, with some deep and honest introspection. Do we really know what we believe and why we believe it? Do we live out what we claim to others, and to ourselves, that we believe? If we don't, then according to Jesus's reckoning, we are deceiving ourselves into thinking we are saved. We are not saved in His eyes; only in our own. Salvation has always and will always be directly linked with good works (good works as defined by God, not by our own sensibilities). It is **not** doing good works to attain salvation; but rather good

works ought to flow naturally from our salvation. Let's move on to chapter 26.

### **READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 26:1 - 25**

This begins what is widely called the Passion Narrative; that is, everything now focuses on Yeshua's march to the cross and his final 48 hours before He is executed. As I am fond of reminding you, just sort of mentally scratch out those chapter numbers in your Bibles because they give us the sense of one thing ending and another thing starting. The first words of chapter 26 are still Jesus talking with His disciples on the Mount of Olives; that is, this is a continuing conversation from chapter 25.

Christ delivers a bomb shell: he's going to be crucified almost immediately. One can only imagine what raced through His disciples' minds. Was He serious? Was He being literal? How could He predict such a thing that depended on the actions and decisions of several others, all happening in a sequence, unless He fully intended to try to cause it to happen? As intriguing as these questions are, there's another issue hiding in plain sight that we must deal with as it is another one of those matters that is deeply controversial (and rightly so). The controversy is when we read that Jesus said: "As you know, Pesach (Passover) is 2 days away..." Other Bible versions phrase it slightly differently but all with the identical meaning. We need to explore a couple of other things to begin to set the stage not only for the controversy itself, but to understand the nuances that cause it to exist.

This same thought is spoken in Mark, Luke, and John. Let's look at them all.

**CJB Mark 14:1 *It was now two days before Pesach (that is, the festival of Matzah), and the head cohanim and the Torah-teachers were trying to find some way to arrest Yeshua surreptitiously and have him put to death;***

**CJB Luke 22:1 *But the festival of Matzah, known as Pesach, was approaching;***

**CJB John 13:1 *It was just before the festival of Pesach, and Yeshua knew that the time had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. Having loved his own people in the world, he loved them to the end.***

So; according to Matthew and Mark this scene on the Mount of Olives was taking

place 2 days before Passover. But there is no mention of a specified time-frame from either Luke or John other than that Jesus was speaking shortly before Passover or Matzah was to begin. We have the additional twist in that Mark says Passover is the Festival of Matzah, and so does Luke. Matthew and John only refer to it as Passover, with no mention of the Festival of Matzah (the Feast of Unleavened Bread). Any student of the Torah knows that Passover and the Festival of Matzah are not synonyms; they are two different God appointed times... two different Festivals... each to be celebrated differently. These details ought to eventually lead us to exactly what day it was that Yeshua was executed on the cross: but was it Nisan 14<sup>th</sup> (Passover day), or Nisan 15<sup>th</sup> (on the Feast of Matzah) ? These are not trivial points as they have much to do with whether or not Jesus fulfilled the sign of Jonah of being in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights. So, we have a great deal to unpack here, and I'll tell you at the outset that the answer will not be straightforward. In fact, we're going to address it several times in upcoming lessons. Here we go.

In the modern era of the Western world, we speak of occasions like Christmas, the Christmas season, Christmas Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas vacation, and then New Year's Day and eve. Sometimes we just roll all these things together and call them the Holiday Season. No Westerner has much trouble understanding what someone is speaking about when they use any of these terms because the context of the conversation will establish it. For sure, these days all happen in the last half of December plus maybe the first 2 or 3 of days of January. And, depending on what Western nation (or even some Eastern nations) you're in, how this period of time is spoken of is about the same although how this is all observed varies substantially. We all understand this and don't stress over it. There are specifics and there are generalities, and we're quite capable of sorting them out. It worked exactly that way about the time of year, and the celebration of the festivals, which is being narrated to begin Matthew chapter 26. The principle is this: when speaking of holidays and festivals in the Bible (especially in the New Testament), sometimes they are spoken of in their most technical sense, and at other times within common conversation (as we reading in Matthew) they are spoken of in their more casual, general sense; sort of a street language as opposed to a scholar's language.

There were three biblical feast celebrations that Yeshua and thousands of other Jews had come to Jerusalem to celebrate. These holidays not only happened in rapid succession but in some ways they overlapped. They always occurred in the springtime, and the series of festivals always began on Nisan 14<sup>th</sup>. The first was



Passover (***Pesach*** in Hebrew). The second was the Feast of Unleavened Bread (***Matza*** in Hebrew). The final was Firstfruits (***Bikkurim*** in Hebrew). About 50 days later is another Festival, known in Christendom as Pentecost (which is actually a Greek loan word meaning 50). In Hebrew it is ***Shavuot*** (which means weeks). I think the best way to get a handle on how this works is to go to the source: Leviticus chapter 23. I want you all you open your Bibles to that chapter along with me.

### **READ LEVITICUS CHAPTER 23:1 – 21**

For now, the salient points are these: Passover starts on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, and is a 1-day event. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins the instant Passover ends, which means it starts on Nisan 15<sup>th</sup> and goes for 7 days. The next festival is Firstfruits and exactly when it is to be celebrated is a little more complicated. The biblical instruction in Leviticus 23 is that Firstfruits is to be observed on the first day AFTER the next Sabbath day that happens after the Feast of Matzah. So, just like in the Julian Calendar we all use, the particular name of a day (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) doesn't stay the same as the date. That is, August the 25th for example, can be a Monday one year, a Tuesday another year, etc. So, while Passover and the first day of the Festival of Matzah starts on different named days of the week, they always start on the same monthly calendar dates: Nisan 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Firstfruits is observed differently. It is instructed to be observed on the day after the Sabbath (the Sabbath in modern terms is a Saturday), which means Firstfruits always falls on a Sunday, but the monthly calendar date will differ year to year.

The Book of Deuteronomy has a bit different take on this. Go to Deuteronomy chapter 16.

### **READ DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 16:1 – 12**

Instructions get a little more specific about Passover in that the Passover meal is to be eaten after the sunset. Biblical days are always counted as beginning and ending at sunset, totally unlike the world today that uses a clock to determine the beginning and ending of days. We count 12 midnight as the ending of one day and beginning of the next. Thus, according to Deuteronomy, the Passover meal is to be prepared and cooked on Passover, but it is not to be eaten until the sun goes down... meaning that the day changes. It changes to Nisan 15<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the Feast of Matza. So, the Passover meal (or seder) occurs just after

dark, in the first hour or so of Nisan 15<sup>th</sup>... it is NOT eaten on the festival day of Passover. On the festival day of Passover what happens is that the Passover lamb is slaughtered, prepared and roasted in an oven. But, I say again; it is not eaten until after sunset, which is the start of a new day.

Also notice that no mention is made in Deuteronomy of the feast of Firstfruits. Why, I don't know. Oh, but it gets even better. In Leviticus 23:11, it was not clear to the ancient Torah scholars whether the verse that speaks of a Sabbath is referring to the weekly Sabbath or to the special Sabbath that is ordained for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15<sup>th</sup> (there are two special or great Sabbaths during the Feast of Unleavened Bread; one to begin it and one on the final day of it). In Yeshua's time, the meaning of this verse was hotly debated between the Pharisees and the sect of the Sadducees. The Sadducees interpreted Leviticus 23 concerning the "day after the Sabbath" as being Sunday (the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week), therefore never having a fixed "date" on the Hebrew calendar. However, the Pharisees interpreted this verse to mean the Sabbath refers to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15<sup>th</sup>, a Great Sabbath), therefore Firstfruits being the day after it would always fall on the 16th of Nisan, not on a fixed day of the week. It seems likely that in Joshua 5:10-12 that the Israelites celebrated Firstfruits on the 16th of Nisan. Let's take a moment to read that.

CJB **Joshua 5:10-12** <sup>10</sup> *The people of Isra'el camped at Gilgal, and they observed Pesach on the fourteenth day of the month, there on the plains of Yericho.* <sup>11</sup> *The day after Pesach they ate what the land produced, matzah and roasted ears of grain that day.* <sup>12</sup> *The following day, after they had eaten food produced in the land, the man ended. From then on the people of Isra'el no longer had man; instead, that year, they ate the produce of the land of Kena'an.*

Flavius Josephus, who was at one time member of the priesthood, wrote that **"On the second day of Unleavened Bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth."** Another 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish eyewitness reported, **"There is also a festival during Unleavened Bread, which succeeds the first day, and this is named the sheaf."** The sheaf is another name for the day the sheaf is waved... which is Firstfruits. Both witnesses agree that Firstfruits was observed in accordance with the reckoning of the Pharisees in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. That is, the Pharisees seem to have prevailed in this disagreement with the Sadducees and as a result most of modern Judaism

celebrates Firstfruits on Nisan 16. So, in modern Jewish Tradition (and it seems it was this way in Yeshua's era), Passover was always Nisan 14<sup>th</sup>, the first day of Unleavened Bread was always the 15<sup>th</sup>, and Firstfruits was always the 16<sup>th</sup>. However; it seems that even though that is how the Jewish residents of Judea observed it, it wasn't the same for the Galileans. Getting pretty complicated, isn't it? Well, indeed it was complicated and like every other large religion, Judaism had much earlier broken into different factions, each deciding on their own doctrines, which even went so far as to involve different observances of different holy day. About the only day that never seemed to be in dispute was the weekly 7<sup>th</sup> day Shabbat that is our equivalent of sundown Friday to sundown on Saturday. Although it is complex and confusing for us, it is nearly exactly that way in Christianity with our religion fractured into literary thousands of factions, each having their own doctrines and ways of celebrating holy days. So, such a circumstance ought not be very hard for us to mentally picture, even though the details of it can be challenging.

So, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, just as it is today, various Jewish traditions from various Jewish groups, ruled not only about how to do Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits, but exactly when. Then we get into the matter of the Galileans (Jesus and all of His disciples, and a large portion of the people who came to Jerusalem for the festivals) who didn't find it necessary to do much of anything that the Judean Pharisees or the Sadducees decided upon. The reality was that the Galileans and the Judeans didn't much like one another, and so they celebrated festivals and holy days a little differently at times.

While we'll revisit this again because it is not just complicated it is important, let's fast forward and leap to the day after the Last Supper and then the Crucifixion. Things get really dicey here. In the Book of John, we read the following

**<sup>CJB</sup> John 19:31 <sup>31</sup> *It was Preparation Day, and the Judeans did not want the bodies to remain on the stake on Shabbat, since it was an especially important Shabbat. So, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies removed.***

John calls the day that Christ died "Preparation Day", and that the next day (that would begin at sunset) was an especially important Sabbath. OK; time for a little more understanding of the feast days. 3 of the biblical feasts are called **chag**, or pilgrimage, feasts. These are feasts that the Law of Moses says all Israelites are

to make a journey to the Temple to have a holy assembly and to make sacrifices. Since in the New Testament we read that everyone seems to show up for Passover then it is regularly assumed that Passover is 1 of those 3 pilgrimage feasts of the year; not so. The first pilgrimage feast is actually the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, customarily, Jews who didn't live in Judea (such as Jews living in the Galilee) would travel to Jerusalem and they would arrive in time to celebrate Passover there, since they needed to be there for the Feast of Unleavened Bread that began the following day. Just as many Christians think that it's somehow better and more effective to go to a church to pray than to pray at home, so it was that Jews felt it was better to kill and cook their lambs in the Holy City of Jerusalem, slaughtered by Levite Priests at the Temple, than to do at home. So, they would travel and arrive a day or two early (before the pilgrimage Feast of Matza) to be able to do that. However; since the first day of Unleavened Bread was a special Sabbath (not the weekly Sabbath, but a different one), then whatever preparations (including meal preparations) had to be completed the day before. And the day before was Passover. So, Passover was quite literally also known as Preparation Day for the 1st day of Unleavened Bread. And that is what John was talking about.

One more thing and we'll end for today. Since the lambs were killed on Passover day, and by most accounts Jesus was killed on Passover; and since the cooked lamb was the centerpiece of the Passover meal, then what was the Lord's Supper that took place the night **before** the lambs were killed? Christ seems to have died about the same time the lambs were being slaughtered. If this wasn't the case, then He died on the first day of Unleavened Bread (and not on Passover); and the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Unleavened Bread was a Great Sabbath. The problem is we read that the Jews were in a hurry to get his body down and buried **BEFORE** the Great Sabbath began. So, He had to have died on Preparation Day, also technically called Passover. And because that is the case, His famous Last Supper could not possibly have been the Passover meal (or seder) as Christianity traditionally says it is, because the lambs hadn't even been killed and cooked, yet.

We'll re-open this can of worms when we meet again, after you've had a chance to digest this information, and I'll offer some solutions.