



The  
Last  
Supper

A Dialogue



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# The Last Supper

*And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?—Mark 14:12*

*Carl Hagensick*

**M**any topics in the Bible are explained in such vague or seemingly contradictory terms that they are open for multiple interpretations. One of these is the timing of the Last Supper as coordinated with the Jewish Passover.

In the March/April 2004 issue of *The Herald*, a solution to the various texts in both the Old and New Testaments was put forward with the suggestion that the Last Supper was not a passover meal, but a meal that preceded that feast. Comments were received, both in favor of and in opposition to the view expressed in that article. This publication has been prepared to place before the reader the Scriptures which favor each of three different views of that meal.

While the main issue is whether or not the Last Supper was a Passover meal, other matters are of necessity also considered in the thought-provoking essays which follow. Prominent among these are:

- » Did Jesus die at the same time of day that the typical Passover lamb was slain?
- » Was there a distinction between the Passover and the Feast of the Passover?
- » Was the original Passover eaten on the 14th of Nisan or at the beginning of the 15th?
- » How was the beginning of the day reckoned in the days of ancient Egypt?

It is not our object to stir up controversy on this subject, but to look objectively at the support for each view. Therefore we have sought to have a proponent for each viewpoint utilize only the points in support of his views and not the weaknesses he perceives in any of the other views. In this we have achieved only partial success.

The chart below illustrates visually some of the similarities and some of the differences between the views expressed in this presentation.

<b>Question</b>	<b>View 1</b>	<b>View 2</b>	<b>View 3</b>	<b>Reader's View?</b>
When did the Jewish day begin in Ancient Egypt?	sunset	sunset	sunrise	
Was the Passover meal a part of the Feast of the Passover?	No	Yes	In Egypt: Yes Afterward: No	
Was the original Passover eaten on the 14th or the 15th of Nisan?	14th	15th	14th	
Did Jesus die at the same time of day the Passover lambs in Egypt were slain?	No	Yes	No	
Was the Last Supper the authorized Passover meal?	Yes	No	Yes, probably	

It is our desire that this booklet be read in the spirit of dialogue and that it may help clarify the various issues involved in this discussion.



# The Passover Supper on Nisan 14

*Now all these things happened to them [as] types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.—1 Corinthians 10:11, Darby*

*Rick Hill*

**W**e are all familiar with the wonderful story of the exodus from Egypt and particularly the role the Passover had in that story. While we love to examine and harmonize all texts of Scripture related to this wonderful event, it is well that in so doing we keep the “big picture” in mind. So what is the “big picture”?

By remembering the basic facts of the story we will keep ourselves on sure ground. First, it is called “Pass-over” because the firstborn of Israel were spared from death, i.e., they were “passed over” by the death angel on the night in which they ate the Passover meal. No one else was in danger of death that night, only the firstborn.

This well pictures the passing over of the antitypical firstborn (the true church of God, the 144,000) during the night time of the Gospel age. The world of mankind in general is not in danger of the second death during this period, only the antitypical firstborn, the saints. Others do not yet have enough light, have not been released from Adamic condemnation, and therefore do not have that level of responsibility.

## **Passover: What Day was the Supper?**

This has been a question for some time and it needs to be addressed in the proper manner. As in all such endeavors we should begin by approaching the throne of grace to seek for the Lord’s guidance in finding his truth and in setting aside our own preferences. Next we should

gather those Scriptures that have a bearing on the matter. After examining those texts we should search for the most reasonable method of harmonizing them. **Never** force an interpretation into the Lord's Word. If the matter does not become clear after diligent and prayerful consideration, let the matter rest for a while. Sometimes the Lord sees that in granting us the understanding too quickly we may be in danger of developing spiritual pride. It may take the remarks of someone else before the matter begins to clear up for us.

### **When did Israel leave Egypt? What Say the Scriptures?**

“And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and **strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason**; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and **when he seeth the blood** upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, **the LORD will pass over the door**, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”—Exodus 12:22, 23

What would happen to any of the firstborn of Israel if they came out from their houses during that night? They would die. What protected them from death? It was **the blood of the lamb**. This forms an unmistakable picture of the Lord's people remaining under the blood of Christ until the night time of the Gospel age is over. If we were to leave the protection of being under the blood of Christ we would die the second death.

“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the **fourteenth day** of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening [literally: ‘between the evenings’]. ... And they shall eat the flesh **in that night**.”—Exodus 12:5,6,8

The lamb pictures Jesus.

- » It was without blemish. Jesus was perfect, he had no sin.
- » It was kept until the 14th of Nisan.
- » It was to be killed “in the evening.”
- » It was to be eaten that night.

At first glance this seems fairly simple and straightforward. However, when we remember that the Jewish day begins at sunset, a question naturally arises: What is intended by the instruction that Israel was to eat of the lamb “**in THAT night**”?

If they killed the lamb shortly after sunset, “that night” would still be on the 14th. If they killed the lamb during the daylight hours of the 14th, “that night” would be on the 15th.

Then consideration needs to be given to the instruction that “Israel shall kill it **in the evening** [literally: ‘between the evenings’].”

One Jewish tradition of “between the evenings” is briefly explained in a 1902 article:

#### “**Between Evenings**”—A Jewish View

“In the Jewish faith ... between the evenings, that is, between the sun’s declining west and his setting about three o’clock p.m. For the Jews observe two evenings in each day. The first commences after twelve o’clock at noon, and the second at three o’clock p.m.”—*Reprints* p. 2953

If Jewish tradition concerning “between the evenings” is followed, the Passover supper would be the night of the 15th of Nisan. However, when we remember our Lord’s chastisement of Israel for giving too much weight to their traditions (Matthew 15:1-9), it seems better to **leave tradition** (even supportive tradition) **completely out of the discussion**. To be sure of our position, our answers can only come from the Word of God itself.

The word “evening” is Strong’s #6153 (‘ereb):  
*eh’-reb*; from Hebrew #6150 (‘arab); *dusk* :- +day,  
 even (-ing, tide), night.

We note how this is used in the following Scriptures.

“Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: but at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at **even** [Strong’s #6153], at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.”—Deuteronomy 16:5,6

“And the **evening** [Strong’s #6153] and the morning were the first day.”—Genesis 1:5

The Hebrew wording of Deuteronomy 16:6, “at the going down of the sun,” is repeated in 23:11, and in 24:13 where the poor man’s clothing must be returned when the sun goes down, which evidently is not mid-afternoon but sunset. And clearly in the Genesis account “evening” does not refer to a time from 3:00 p.m. to sunset.

### **What Say the Scriptures about the Timing of the Original Passover and Exodus from Egypt?**

The correct understanding must include all Scripture. Let us then consider the Scriptures which seem to bear most directly on the timing of the events surrounding the first Passover and the exodus from Egypt.

Here are some details of the type:

Fact	Scripture References
The lamb was slain on the 14th.	Exodus 12:6
Blood put on doorposts of the houses.	Exodus 12:7
Passover supper was eaten that night.	Exodus 12:8-10
Firstborn of Israel passed over and Egyptian firstborn slain at midnight.	Exodus 12:29

After eating the Passover meal, Israel was to <b>remain in their houses until the morning.</b>	Exodus 12:21,22
They left Egypt <b>by night.</b>	Deuteronomy 16:1
Israel departed from Egypt with 600,000 men, giving a total estimated population of about two million.	Exodus 12:37
Israel left with their flocks and their herds.	Exodus 12:32
Israel <b>instructed</b> to ‘borrow’ from Egyptians.	Exodus 11:2
Israel <b>takes</b> spoils from Egypt.	Exodus 12:33-36
Israel left Egypt <b>from Rameses</b> on the 15th, “the morrow after the Passover.”	Exodus 12:37; Numbers 33:3
Israel did as God commanded.	Exodus 12:28,35,50

From these facts we should be able to determine that the Passover meal had to be eaten on the 14th, not the 15th.

Since we know the Jewish day begins at sunset, it becomes an easy matter to narrow down what had to take place, and when. Let us see what happens when we try to make the case for eating the meal on either the 15th or the 14th. In both cases we focus only on those facts which directly impact the timing. We will use the Bible terms “Evening” and “Morning” as they were used in the creative week.

Remember, the Jewish day begins at sunset, therefore ‘evening’ comes first, followed by ‘morning’.

**Case #1: Passover supper was eaten on the 15th**

Nisan 14		Nisan 15	
Evening	Morning	Evening	Morning
	Lamb slain (3:00 p.m.)	Supper eaten that night. Firstborn of Israel passed over. Travel from Goshen to Rameses. Leave Egypt from Rameses on the night of 15th.	<b>Remain in the house until morning.</b> By this account they would have already left Egypt the night before (Deut. 16:1). <b>This does not work.</b>

Eating the Passover on the night of the 15th does not take into account the instruction that **“none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning”** (Exodus 12:22).

**Case #2: Passover supper was eaten on the 15th**

Nisan 14		Nisan 15	
Evening	Morning	Evening	Morning
	Lamb slain (3:00 p.m.)	Supper eaten that night. Firstborn of Israel passed over. Remain in house until morning.	Leave Egypt from Rameses on 15th. <b>Deut. 16:1 tells us they left Egypt the night of the 15th, not the morning.</b> <b>This does not work.</b>

Case #2 fails to take into account that **they left Egypt by night** (Deuteronomy 16:1).

By examining the above we see the problem more clearly. How could Israel have left Egypt on the **night** of the 15th (which **preceded** the morning of the 15th) while at the same time remaining in their houses until the morning of the 15th? This is a physical impossibility.



### Case #3: Passover supper was eaten on the 14th

Nisan 14		Nisan 15	
Evening	Morning	Evening	Morning
Lamb slain (after 6 p.m.) Supper eaten that night. Firstborn of Israel passed over. Remain in house until morning.	Gather their flocks and their herds and (all two million of them) travel from Goshen to Rameses.  Spoil the Egyptians.	Leave Egypt from Rameses on 15th.  Leave Egypt by night.	This approach accounts for all the above mentioned Scriptures and does so without any conflict.  <b>This works!</b>

We see there is **no conflict** between leaving Egypt on the night of the 15th and staying in the house until the morning on the night they eat the Passover meal because the two events take place on two separate days, the meal and remaining in the house on the 14th and leaving Egypt on the night of the 15th.

Because Israel could not have been in two places at the same time (both in their houses while simultaneously leaving Egypt) on the night of the 15th, it seems that the question as to what night the Passover meal was eaten simply answers itself.

### Supposed Objections

The suggestion has been made that since the Pharaoh called for God's special representatives Moses and Aaron that night, that this in some way seems to prove that Israel did not (as the Scriptures say) obey the command of God to remain in their houses until the morning, or that God did not really mean it when he gave them this command; rather he meant that they should stay in their houses only until the death angel passed over them.

The list of Scriptures given below contains every Old Testament reference where "until the morning"

[Strong's #5704 and #1242] is used. An examination of these verses should make it plain that "until the morning" means exactly what it says. We believe that any command from God must be taken seriously.

Exodus 12:10; 12:22; 16:19-20; 16:23-24; 23:18; Leviticus 7:15; 19:13; Numbers 9:15; Judges 6:31; 19:25; Ruth 3:13,14; 1 Samuel 3:15; 14:36; 19:2; 25:36; 2 Kings 7:9; 10:8; Proverbs 7:18; Isaiah 38:13; Ezekiel 33:22

While all of these Scriptures associate "until the morning" with sunrise or morning light, Leviticus 19:13, Numbers, 9:15,16, Judges 6:28-31, 1 Samuel 14:36, and 2 Kings 7:5,9 seem to be more direct. Numbers 9:15,16 says, "At even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night." Thus, "until the morning" is clearly associated with the day, and not with any part of the night.

### **Recent Events Help our Understanding**

In 2005 as hurricane Katrina approached the U.S. gulf coast, many saw the attempted evacuation of coastal cities, then saw it repeated again some weeks later when hurricane Rita hit the same area. Despite all of our modern roads and methods of transportation, there still were multiple problems to move that many people.

Now consider evacuating two million Israelites from Goshen to Rameses in approximately twelve hours: no cars, no buses, no helicopters! The wonder is how Moses was able to accomplish this amazing task at all. It becomes even more amazing when we remember that they went with their flocks and their herds (Exodus 12:37,38).

Remembering that sunset marks the end of one day and the beginning of the next, if this evacuation of Goshen was done in the morning of the 15th, how could they possibly make it from Goshen to Rameses, spoil the

Egyptians and still leave Egypt from Rameses before sunset, as the Scriptures say, on the 15th?

However, if this takes place on the morning of the 14th, as we contend, this gives them several more hours to get to Rameses because they do not have to be there prior to sunset. By leaving Goshen in the morning of the 14th they had nearly twenty-four hours to both spoil the Egyptians and to leave Rameses on the 15th.

### **Other Supposed Objections**

The suggestion has also been made that the Land of Goshen and the land of Rameses are one and the same, based on the account in Genesis 47:11. But we should not overlook the fact that in the book of Exodus, God refers to the place where his children lived not as “Rameses,” nor as “the land of Rameses,” but as “the land of Goshen.” Thus in Exodus 8:22 and 9:26 God indicates a separation between Egypt and “the land of Goshen.”

How appropriate that they should use Rameses as the place to gather and organize for the journey. Rameses was a “treasure [storage] city” (Exodus 1:11) which they were compelled to build. Since they were to “spoil” (really it was only receiving payment for their forced labor) the Egyptians, and Rameses was adjacent to the land of Goshen, we see the logic of gathering and organizing there.

Another supposed objection is that Israel was told by God to “spoil” the Egyptians prior to the tenth plague: “Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.” (Exodus 11:2,3).

“And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so

that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” (Exodus 12:35,36).

God gives the instructions for the “spoiling” of the Egyptians in chapter 11 and those instructions are executed in chapter 12. Lest we misunderstand this, the Lord gives the needed information in the above verses. In 11:2 is the instruction, in 12:35 is the carrying out of that instruction. In 11:3 we are told “the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians” (nothing about the Israelites actually receiving anything). In 12:36 he repeats this phrase and then adds “so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” The contrast is clear. There is no indication in 11:2,3 that anything was actually received from the Egyptians. And so Israel “spoiled” the Egyptians after the tenth plague.

### **Passover in the Days of King Josiah (2 Chronicles. 35:1-19)**

More help comes to us when we examine the Passover in the days of King Josiah. While the entire account is remarkable, we will focus on only some of the verses:

“And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them. And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people. And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of **burnt offerings** and the fat **until night**; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. ... So all the service of the LORD **was prepared THE SAME DAY, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings** upon the altar of the LORD, according

to the commandment of king Josiah.”—2 Chronicles 35:11-14,16

In this account we see that the priests offered the burnt offerings until night. This cannot refer merely to sunset for that is a completely different word and always precedes the night. This is the same word used in Exodus 12:8,12,30,31. How does this relate to the timing of the Passover? The answer is found in verse 16 where we are told that “all the service of the LORD was **prepared the same day!**” What day was it? It was the day “to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings.”

In other words, since the burnt offerings were being prepared up to night (i.e., after sunset and thus the beginning of a new calendar day) and it was the same day as the Passover, we conclude that the Passover was also the same day as the preparing of the burnt offerings and this work was being done after sunset.

According to Josephus, in 70 A.D. they sacrificed over 250,000 animals in about two hours (from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.). By using this as a measuring rod we see that with the Passover in Josiah’s day there were about **one sixth** as many animals sacrificed (41,400—see verses 7-9), so there appears to have been enough time to complete the task between sunset and night.

### **New Testament — The Jews’ Passover**

“Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is **called** the Passover” (Luke 22:1).

“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (John 2:13).

“And the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves” (John 11:55).

Why would John have made reference to “the Jews’ Passover”? Who aside from the Jews celebrated the Passover? We find in this an inference that what the Jews of our Lord’s day were celebrating was different than what Jesus and his disciples were celebrating. The meaning was not different; rather the Jews had once

again become so entrenched in the tradition of the elders they had gotten the celebration mixed up with the feast of Unleavened Bread which was supposed to follow the Passover.

With this in mind certain Scriptures become a little easier to understand. Consider:

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead” (John 12:1).

This was Sunday evening the 9th of Nisan, the day prior to his triumphant entry in to Jerusalem (see verses 12-15). Six days later would be Saturday the 15th. Our Lord and his disciples celebrated the Passover on the 14th of Nisan (sunset Thursday to sunset Friday). Why the difference? Because one was “the Jew’s Passover” and the other was “the LORD’s Passover” (Exodus 12:11).

#### **“I shall eat the Passover”**

“If our faith is true and simple,  
we will take him at his word”

Was our Lord’s ‘Last Supper’ a Passover meal? This should be one of the easiest questions in the New Testament to answer. All we have to do is attend to our Lord’s own words. We find the account given in three of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; **I will keep the passover** at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.” (Matthew 26:17-19).

“And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall

meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where **I shall eat the passover** with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.” (Mark 14:12-16).

“Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where **I shall eat the passover** with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.” (Luke 22:7-13).

While this seems clear enough to many, there are some who still question just what is meant. With this in mind, let us more closely examine the Luke passage. Here we will insert our remarks [within square brackets]:

“Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover [not just any meal, nor any other feast] must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us [not just the disciples but Jesus and his disciples] the Passover [exactly what it says, the Passover], that we [Jesus and his disciples] may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith [Peter and John are here relaying Jesus’ own words to the goodman of

the house; thus, if these words were untrue and it is not the Passover, Jesus would not be truthful] unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where **I shall eat the Passover** [at this point there can be **NO DOUBT** Jesus is declaring that he is going to eat the **Passover**] with my disciples [thus the meal they shared together was indeed a Passover meal]? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover [exactly what it says, the Passover].” (Luke 22:7-13).

We should all remember that to be our Redeemer, Jesus had to keep the law (the measure of a perfect man’s ability). In Isaiah 53:9 we read prophetically of him: “neither was any deceit in his mouth.” If in the above texts our Lord said he was going to eat the Passover, but had never really intended to do so, then he would have deceived the goodman of the house. How then could he be said to have fulfilled the prophetic description of Isaiah 53:9? Let the reader consider the consequences to the plan of God if this were true.

We conclude therefore the following:

1. On the first Passover the lamb was slain after sunset on Nisan 14 and the Passover supper was eaten the night of the 14th.
2. At some time between then and our Lord’s first advent, the Jewish practice changed and the lamb was slain about 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon of Nisan 14, while the Passover supper was on the evening of the 15th.
3. On Nisan 14 Jesus and his disciples ate the “Last Supper” at God’s appointed time. It was, as Jesus called it, “the Passover.”





# Time Elements of the Passover in Type and Antitype

*George Tabac*

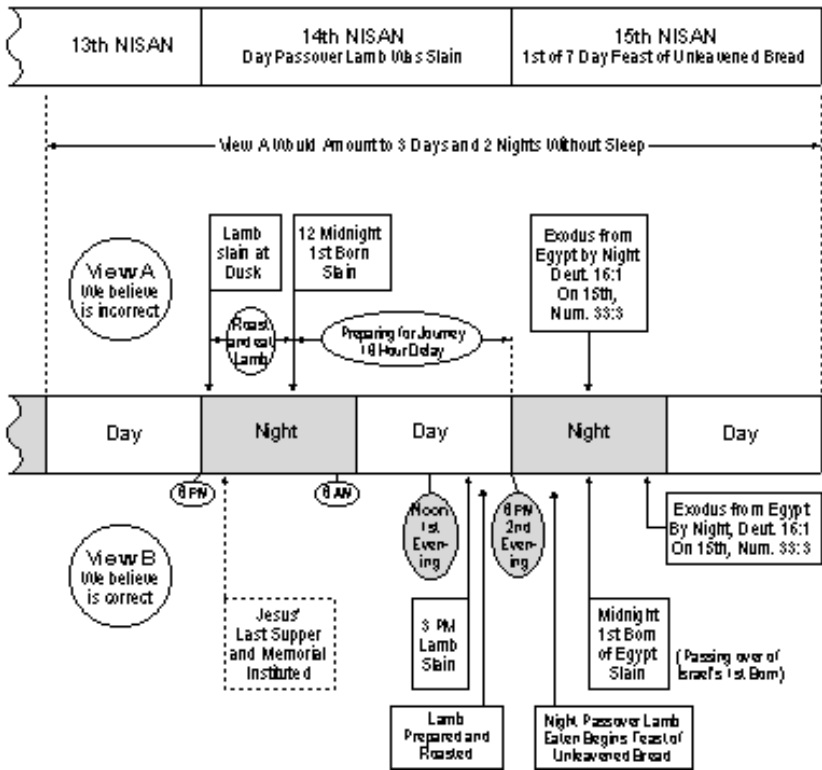
**E**xodus chapter 12 records how the Passover lamb of Israel protected the firstborn from death and resulted in Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It is a beautiful type of Jesus being our antitypical Passover lamb, which will ultimately deliver not only the Church of the Firstborn, but all mankind, from Adamic death.

As we consider the type and anti-type of the Passover, we will reflect on two of the perplexing issues that have faced brethren and biblical scholars for centuries. These are: 1) the time the Passover lamb was slain, and 2) our Lord's Last Supper when he instituted the Memorial. The apostle John places the last supper the night before Israel slew their Passover lambs, whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem to imply that the last supper was the Passover meal.

Bro. Russell also recognized this inconsistency when he wrote: "Our lesson points us to the first institution of this memorial, indicating that it was celebrated on the **day before** the Passover proper began" (*Reprints*, p. 2771).

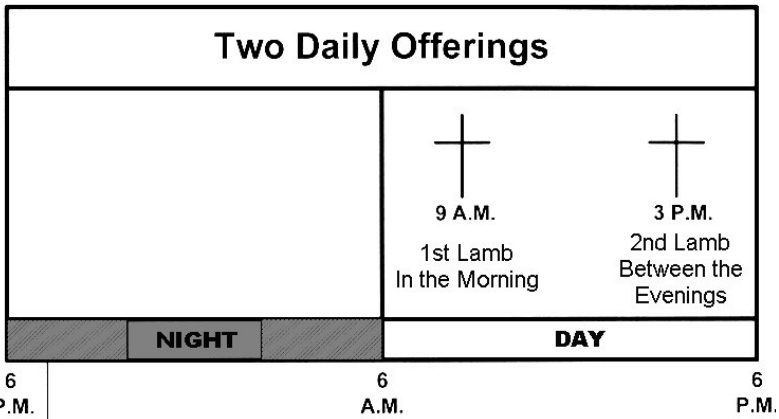
We might think it is not too important because whichever view is correct our overall understanding of the plan of God is not affected. This is true. However, for years, many brethren have been troubled by this seeming lack of harmony. Bible Students realize that God's word should be completely harmonious. Now recent translation clarifications have come to light which we believe make it possible to harmonize all the Scriptures in the type and antitype pertaining to this subject.

TWO DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER FEAST



**Time the Passover Was Slain**

The first difference of opinion is the time of day the Passover lamb was to be slain. Israel was to take the Passover lamb into their homes on the 10th of Nisan. Then Exodus 12:6 says, “Ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” This is the King James translation, which is incorrect when it says “in the evening.” It should actually be “between the two evenings.” Rotherham translates it: “So shall it be yours to keep, until the fourteenth day of this month—then shall all the convocation of the assembly of Israel slay it **between the two evenings.**”



If "Between the Evenings" means here after 6 P.M. - then it would be the 1st Offering of the Day Not the Second.

“Between the two evenings” is the correct translation of the Hebrew. This does not mean that every time “evening” or “even” appears it should be “between the two evenings.” The Hebrew for evening, or even, is Strong’s #6153, *ereb*, used 134 times in the Old Testament. But in eleven of these cases “evening” is in the dual and preceded by the Hebrew *beyn*, Strong’s #996, which means between—thus “between the two evenings.” These eleven instances are Exodus 12:6, 16:12, 29:39,41, 30:8, Leviticus 23:5, Numbers 9:3,5,11, 28:4,8. Rotherham correctly translates this phrase “between the two evenings” or “between the evenings.”

What time of day is meant by “between the two evenings”? Most biblical scholars accept one of two conclusions: A) The first evening refers to the sunset opening a new Jewish day, and the second evening refers to when it became completely dark. Thus the expression refers to the period sometimes called twilight. In this view “between the two evenings” means a period of time at the beginning of a new Jewish day.

B) The second view is that the first evening was 12 noon when the sun began to set from high noon, and the second evening was at sunset ending the Jewish Day, about 6:00 p.m. Thus “between the two evenings” would

be 3:00 p.m., as the Jewish day was drawing to a close. This is our view.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to prove with absolute certainty which view is correct from any one Scripture. Seven of the references to “between the evenings” refer to the time of the slaying of the Passover lamb. One, Exodus 16:12, refers to a time Israel would eat quail. Another, Exodus 30:8 (NAS), refers to a time Aaron would “trim” the lampstand.<sup>2</sup> Any one of these Scriptures could be open to interpretation. However, we believe “between the evenings” refers to 3:00 p.m., near the end of the Jewish day, based on the combination of several biblical texts, history and reason. Here is the evidence:

In Exodus 29:38,39,41 “between the evenings” is used to describe the time of the **second** daily offering: “Thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of a year old day by day ... The one lamb, shalt thou offer in the morning, and the **second**<sup>3</sup> lamb, shalt thou offer between the evenings” (Rotherham). Notice: every day they were to offer the first lamb in the morning and the **second** lamb “between the evenings”—that is, later in the day. In other words, during any given Jewish day, the morning offering comes first and “between the evenings” offering follows later. If “between the evenings” were to mean

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1. These two views presume the Jewish custom of reckoning a day from sunset to sunset (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. our time). This follows the precedent of Genesis 1:5 which describes a creative day as “the evening and the morning,” in that sequence. Also, Leviticus 23:32 is explicit that a Jewish day ran from “even to even” rather than from morning to morning. If this was not also the reckoning of the Jews in Egypt at the first Passover, then we would expect to find some text referring to a change of reckoning—yet there is none. Even to the present, Jewish days run from sunset to sunset.
  2. The King James’ translation has “lighteth,” but we know from Exodus 27:20 that the lampstand lamps were to “burn always” (see also Leviticus 24:2-4).
  3. This point is missed in the King James, which has “other lamb” rather than “second lamb.” But the correct Hebrew should be second lamb, Strong’s #8145.

the beginning of the Jewish day (after 6:00 p.m. when the Jewish day began,) then it would of necessity be the first offering of the day. But the Scripture says the opposite. This is consistent with view “B” but not with view “A.”

This Scripture yields the first evidence for what we believe is the correct view of “between the evenings” when the Passover was slain. It is between 12 noon and 6:00 p.m., namely 3:00 p.m.—the exact time our Lord died on the cross.

### **The Historian Josephus.**

Josephus lived during the first century A.D., as did our Lord Jesus. He records that the daily sacrifice (“between the evenings” according to the Law) was offered at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.).

When referring to the siege of Jerusalem under Pompey in the first century B.C., he wrote: “Any one may hence learn how very great piety we exercise towards God and the observance of his laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations by their fear during the siege, but did still twice each day, in the morning and about the **ninth hour**, offer their sacrifices on the altar” (*Antiquities* XIV.iv.3). Thus he specifically corroborates that “between the evenings” was at 3:00 p.m. (This accords with Acts 3:1, where the “hour of prayer” is the ninth hour.)

### **The Passover in Josiah’s Time.**

2 Chronicles 35:1-16 records a Passover Judah observed in the days of King Josiah. The animals slain numbered 41,400. Verses 11-16 say, regarding the Levites, “they killed the passover ... and the Levites flayed them ... and they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance ... afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until **night**; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron ... So all the

service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover.”

Notice: because **night** was approaching and there were so many animals to be slain by the priests, the Levites needed to help the priests by preparing the Passover lambs for the priests and themselves before the 14th ended. This implies they began slaying the Passover lambs in the afternoon of the 14th, for there was not enough time before **night** came (when the 15th would begin) for the priests to slay all the animals for the people, as well as slay and prepare for themselves. Whereas, if “between the evenings” began at sunset, and the Passover lambs were slain after 6:00 p.m., then it was already night, which ran from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. when the sun rose.

### **The Evening Sacrifice in Elijah’s Day**

When Elijah confronted the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel, he allowed them to call upon Baal until “mid-day was past,” and continue “until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice”<sup>4</sup> (1 Kings 18:29). Thereafter Elijah addressed the people, repaired the altar of Jehovah, made a trench around the altar, laid wood on the altar and a bullock in pieces upon the wood, called down fire from heaven, had the prophets of Baal slain at the brook Kishon, then had his servant look out toward the sea seven times, until he saw in the distance a small cloud “like a man’s hand” (1 Kings 18:44), and ran before Ahab to Jezreel.

Clearly, all of this took place during daylight hours, but following the time of the evening sacrifice. This is consistent with the time of the evening sacrifice being mid-afternoon, but inconsistent with an evening sacrifice following sunset. Yet the evening sacrifice, and the

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4. The King James has “evening” in italics, meaning it is supplied by the translators. But it is so apparent that the sacrifice intended was the customary evening sacrifice, that Rotherham, *NIV*, and *NAS* translations all freely supply the same word.

Passover lambs, were sacrificed at the same time of day—“between the evenings”—mid-afternoon.

### **The Meaning of “Evening”**

The Hebrew word *`ereb* (“even”), used by itself, simply means the close of the day. It can refer to either the closing period, that is the afternoon, or the closing event, namely sunset. In either case it refers to the close of a day rather than the opening of a day.<sup>5</sup>

This seems clear from Leviticus 23:32, where the term is used to precisely identify the Day of Atonement, which was always the 10th day of the seventh month. “It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” Notice that the 10th day begins at the “even” of day nine—the close of day nine.

This observation is helpful in understanding Deuteronomy 16:6 which says the Passover was to be slain at even. “Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going ... of the sun.”<sup>6</sup> Because it is undisputed that the Passover was slain on the 14th day of Nisan, and it is clear from the Leviticus text above that “even” is the close of a day, it is apparent that this text means the Passover was sacrificed late on the 14th day.

That “even” (*`ereb*) can mean the closing period of the day, when the sun begins declining in the west, explains Exodus 16:12,13. Verse 12 says the Israelites would eat quail between the two evenings (Hebrew), whereas verse 13 says the quail appeared “at even.” Here “even” refers to the afternoon. The quail were caught, cooked quickly, and were being eaten by the Israelites “between the evenings,” before the setting of the sun.

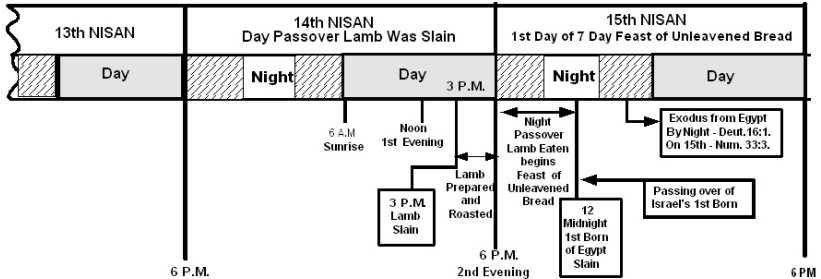
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5. That is, as used in the regulations of the Law. The creative days of Genesis put the evening first and then the morning.

6. The King James says at the “going down” of the sun, but there is no separate Hebrew word for “down” in the text. The “going” of the sun can mean the decline of the sun (mid-afternoon) as well as the setting of the sun.

## Events of the 14th and 15th

As we consider the various accounts of what transpired on the 14th and 15th days, let us follow the time elements of the events which occurred. We believe the events can be harmonized only with the following understanding:



The Passover lamb was slain toward the end of the 14th day of Nisan at 3:00 p.m. (Exodus 12:6, “between the two evenings,” Rotherham). It was then prepared and roasted during the three hours remaining of the 14th day. The 15th day began at 6:00 p.m.

A key point to note is that the Passover lamb was only slain, dressed, and roasted on the 14th. The **eating** of the lamb with unleavened bread was actually at the beginning of the 15th. This is why the 15th is called a Feast Day, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They were literally feasting on the Passover lamb, slain a few hours earlier at the end of the 14th. Recall that with the lamb the Israelites were to eat unleavened bread.

They were to eat the meal in haste, with staff in hand, all dressed ready to leave for a journey quickly (Exodus 12:11). After eating the Passover lamb, Egypt’s firstborn were slain at midnight, and Israel’s firstborn were passed over. Deuteronomy 16:1-3 says Israel began leaving Egypt that night.

“Observe the month of Abib [later known as Nisan], and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt **by night**. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the



herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, [even] the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt **in haste**: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life” (Deuteronomy 16:1-3).

These verses confirm why Israel was told to eat the Passover all dressed, ready to leave Egypt in haste for a journey; namely that the Israelites began to leave that very night. At first this may seem to conflict with Exodus 12:22, which says none were to go out at the door of his house until the morning. Yet we know Moses and Aaron left their houses before morning when Pharaoh called for them. Evidently the point was that all had to remain under the blood until the death angel had passed by. Since this was at midnight, it was safe for Moses and Aaron to leave any time after that.

Leaving at night might seem to conflict with Numbers 33:3 which says they left in the morning, after the Passover. However this is easily harmonized when we realize that after Egypt’s firstborn were slain at midnight, Pharaoh that same night called for Moses and Aaron and urged them to leave Egypt. “At midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the **night**, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by **night**, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people” (Exodus 12:29-31). “It is a **night** to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that **night** of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations” (Exodus 12:42).

Verses 31 and 42 say that the **night** Pharaoh told Moses to leave was to be observed for leaving Egypt. Leaving Egypt began at night when the Israelites' release was granted. It could have been close to the morning daylight when Israel was informed by Moses. They gathered their belongings and left at daybreak of the 15th. That day was celebrated annually as a feast day to commemorate being passed over by the death angel, and released from Egypt.

### **Exodus on the 15th Day**

Numbers 33:3 confirms Israel departed Rameses<sup>7</sup> in Egypt on the 15th day. "So then they brake up from Rameses in the first month, on the **fifteenth day** of the first month, on the morrow [or morning<sup>8</sup>] **of the pass-over**, came forth the sons of Israel with an uplifted hand, in the sight of all the Egyptians" (Rotherham). Notice—Israel departed in the morning hours immediately following the passing over of Israel's firstborn. This confirms that the "passing over" of Israel's firstborn, and the Exodus, were both on the 15th.

However, some who think that the passing over of Israel's firstborn was on the 14th, believe Israel used an extra day to plunder the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35,36) before leaving on the 15th day. But notice the rendering of the NAS. "Now the sons of Israel **had done** according

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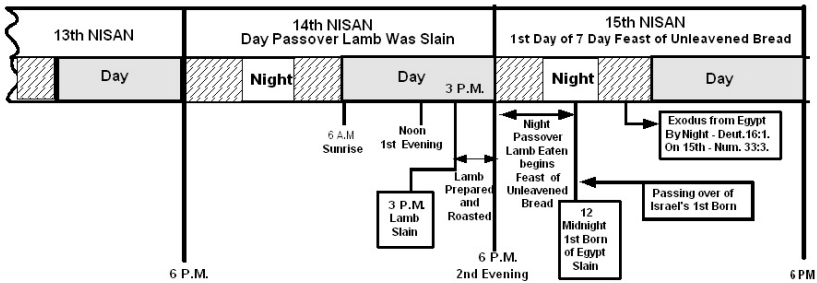
7. The Pharaoh of Joseph's day gave Rameses to Israel for their possession (Genesis 47:11). Genesis 47:6 calls the same region Goshen. Scholars believe either the area had two names or one was an area within the other.

8. That is, the daylight hours following a night. This is a colloquial use of the word. It is used also in the following two texts. A) In Genesis 19:33,34, the daughters of Lot "made their father drink wine that night ... and it came to pass on the morrow," that is, the next morning or daylight period. B) Numbers 11:32, "And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails." The expression "the next day" is from the Hebrew for "morrow" in Numbers 33:3. Evidently it refers to the daylight hours following the previous "night."

to the word of Moses, for they **had requested** from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing, and the LORD **had given** the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:35,36, NAS). That is, the Israelites had done this some time before the tenth plague.

Notice Exodus 11:1-3. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague [more] upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak **now** in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.”

Since the plundering of the Egyptians took place **before** the tenth plague, there was nothing to hold Israel from leaving Egypt that very night/morning when the firstborn were slain. They left promptly. Numbers 33:3 says that day was the 15th.



All of this accords with the chart above—and not otherwise. For if the Passover lamb was slain at 6:00 p.m. at the beginning of the 14th, Israel’s departure “that night” would have been on the 14th. But Numbers 33:3 affirms it was on the 15th.

The force of Numbers 33:3 induces some to suppose an 18 to 30 hour delay after the Passover, before leaving

Egypt. In this case, why would they have been told to eat the meal “in haste,” dressed for a quick departure?

### **Why the 15th was to be a Day of Perpetual Celebration**

The 15th day was to be a special feast day, a holy convocation, and sabbath. “In the fourteenth day of the first month [between the evenings] is the LORD’s passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein” (Leviticus 23:5-7).

If the 14th was the day Israel’s firstborn were passed over, and their deliverance from Egypt began that night, then why should the 15th be a special feast day, holy convocation, and sabbath?

There is no question that the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th. But notice how Exodus 12:11-17 shows us that it was eaten, the firstborn were passed over, and the Exodus occurred, all on the 15th day—which is why that day was memorialized forever.

<sup>11</sup>“Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’s passover. [From this verse alone we wouldn’t know if the eating was the 14th or 15th.] <sup>12</sup>“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn ... <sup>13</sup>When I see the blood, I will pass over you [the same night as the eating of the lamb]. <sup>14</sup>And **this day** shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD ... for ever.” [What day? The same day they ate the Passover and the death angel passed them over.] <sup>15</sup>Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread ... <sup>16</sup>In the first day there shall be an holy convocation ... <sup>17</sup>for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.”—Exodus 12:11-17

Do we notice the import of verse 14 when it says “this day?” Let us concisely tie these verses together.

11—Ye shall eat it in haste.

12—For **this night** I will smite all the firstborn.

14—**This day** shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord ... forever.

17—For in this **selfsame day** have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.

Three outstanding things happened in the same night—eating, being passed over, and leaving Egypt. Therefore that day was to be memorialized forever by a feast, convocation, and sabbath. These were all the same Jewish Day—namely, Nisan 15.

Leviticus 23:5-7 affirms all this, by saying that day was memorialized by a feast, holy convocation and sabbath, on the 15th, the day after they killed the Passover lamb. Thus the Passover lamb was slain toward the end of the 14th day, then dressed and roasted for the Sabbath Day Feast following on the 15th. The Sabbath Day Feast actually consisted of eating the Passover lamb.

What made the passing over and deliverance possible was the slaying of the Passover lamb at 3:00 p.m. of the 14th, which antitypically pictured our Lord dying at 3:00 p.m. on the 14th. His ransom sacrifice on the 14th ultimately brings deliverance not only to the Firstborn Church, but to all mankind.

### **Feast of the Passover**

Three Scriptures refer to the Passover as a “Passover Feast.”

Exodus 12:14—“Ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD ... for ever”

Exodus 34:25—“Neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning”

Ezekiel 45:21—“Ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days”

Exodus 23:14-16 gives only three feasts for Israel: “Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year ... the feast of unleavened bread ... the feast of harvest ...

and feast of ingathering.” Note there is no mention here of the feast of Passover specified in the three texts above. Those texts actually refer to eating the Passover lamb on the 15th day. The Passover lamb was the food feasted upon on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. In other words, the Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are one and the same.

### **“Keeping” the Passover**

Four Scriptures in the King James refer to Israel “keeping” the Passover on the 14th day: Numbers 9:4,5; Joshua 5:10; 2 Chronicles 35:1,17; Ezra 6:19,22.

The word translated “kept” is Strong’s #6213, *ʾâsâh*. It is used 2,633 times in the Old Testament; it is translated 171 different ways in the King James. Thirty seven times it is rendered “prepare” or “prepared.” “Prepared” is the correct thought in these verses and is used in every case by Leeser, a well known Jewish translation.<sup>9</sup>

The meaning of “kept” in Ezra 6:19-22 is clear from the context: “The children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth [**day**] of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity ... And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy.”

“Keeping” the Passover on the 14th day meant killing and preparing it so that it could be eaten on the 15th day as part of the seven day feast of unleavened bread.

### **Unleavened Bread Eaten Seven Days Not Eight**

To further substantiate that the eating of the Passover lamb was on the 15th, we want to recall it was to be eaten with unleavened bread (Exodus 12:8). Then we are told of the feast of unleavened bread that was to last seven days, from the 15th through the 21st (Leviticus 23:6).

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9. Gesenius says “to make,” though in Exodus 12:48 it seems to go further than that.

## Seven Days of Unleavened Bread

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Nisan 14</b> Passover Lamb Slain	<b>15</b> Sabbath Feast of Unleavened Bread	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>

If the eating of the passover lamb was on the 14th, then the total time Israel would have eaten unleavened bread would be eight days (14th through the 21st). Yet in every reference to how long Israel was to eat unleavened bread, and have their homes free of leaven, it always mentions only seven days, never eight.

For example, Deuteronomy 16:2-4 (*NAS*): “You shall sacrifice the passover to the LORD ... You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste) ... For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory.” (Exodus 13:3-7 affirms the same.)

This means the Passover was not a separate meal on the 14th, but rather the main food eaten on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was the 15th.<sup>10</sup>

### **Seven Day Feast Following the Death of the Passover**

The Passover was killed on the 14th day, and the seven day feast followed on days 15 through 21. The first and seventh days were special sabbaths (Leviticus 23:5-8). The antitype is the death of Jesus on the afternoon of Nisan 14, followed by the Gospel age, which Revelation presents as seven periods of time—the seven stages of the Church. The Church was not feasting on the 14th

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10. Exodus 12:18, 19 defines these seven days as “the fourteenth day ... at even ... until the twenty-first day ... at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses.” That is, days 15 through 21 inclusive. (Compare Leviticus 23:32.)

day, picturing the Jewish age in which our Lord died near its end. Our spiritual feasting, appropriating Jesus' ransom merit, began fifty days later at Pentecost, and continues through the Gospel age.

The special sabbaths on days one and seven picture the early and latter rains of truth. The early rains showered on the Church through our Lord and the Apostles. The latter rains shower on the Laodicean Church from our returned Lord through Bro. Russell (Joel 2:23; James 5:7).

### **The Last Supper—New Testament Corroboration**

The synoptic gospels agree that Jesus died on Nisan 14 at the ninth hour, 3:00 p.m. our time (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44-46). Thus Jesus died as the antitypical Passover lamb at the exact same time Israel was to slay their typical Passover lambs.

This timing is confirmed by the Historian Josephus. Referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D., Josephus said, "These high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover ... slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour to the eleventh"—3:00 to 5:00 p.m.<sup>11</sup>

In all of this the gospel of John agrees, as we will show. But there is an apparent difference between John's record, and that of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John says the Israelites killed their Passover lambs **after** Jesus had the last supper, whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem to say the last supper **was** a Passover observance. This apparent difference has caught the notice of Christian commentators for centuries. We believe this difference can now be reconciled.

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11. Wars of the Jews VI.ix.3. Josephus cites the number of lambs at 256,500. This number is sometimes disputed, but in any case this was a large undertaking. The dressing and roasting of the lambs may well have carried into the night beginning the 15th day when the lambs were eaten. The lambs were killed at the Temple according to God's instruction in Deuteronomy 16:2.



First, note that all the gospels refer to Nisan 14 as the “day of preparation.” Matthew 27:62, the day of Jesus’ death, was “the day of the preparation.” Mark 15:42, “it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.” Luke 23:54, “that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.” John 19:42, “There they laid Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day.”

The 14th was called the day of preparation because on this day Israel made preparations for the High Sabbath Feast, which began at 6:00 p.m. opening the 15th. Part of this preparation on the 14th was the slaying of the Passover lamb at 3:00 p.m., then dressing and roasting it in preparation for the feast to follow that night.

The preparation day began with each household making a thorough search to rid their houses of leaven. There was an extreme penalty if any leaven was left until the 15th day. “Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; but on the first day ye shall have [already]<sup>12</sup> put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread, that soul shall be cut off from Israel” (Exodus 12:15, *Leeser*).

In other words, leaven was removed on the 14th, before the feast began on the 15th. Another Jewish translation (the *Stone Edition Tanach*) says, “For a seven-day period shall you eat matzos, but on the previous day [the 14th] you shall nullify the leaven from your homes.”

Thus the preparation day on Nisan 14, 33 A.D., included:

- » Eliminating leaven from the house
- » Obtaining bitter herbs for the Passover meal
- » Taking the Passover lamb to the temple for slaying (mid afternoon)
- » Bringing the lamb home, dressing and roasting it for the 15th day of the feast of unleavened bread.

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12. For leaven to be not found on the 15th, it must have been removed on the 14th, which is consistent with Jewish practice.

On this preparation day, well after Jesus had eaten the last supper, Jesus' Jewish captors had not yet eaten the Passover. "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28). This text is explicit. The Jewish leaders had not yet eaten the Passover—that would be the following night. This is strong evidence that the last supper was **not** the normal Passover.

Some brethren suppose Jesus had to partake of the typical Passover in order to keep the Law perfectly. It truly was obligatory for Jesus to keep the Law perfectly. However, in the year 33 A.D. when he died at the exact time the Passover lamb was to be slain, he died before the Passover meal was due. Instead, he fulfilled the type by dying on the cross as the antitypical Passover lamb at exactly the right time, 3:00 p.m.

### **Events During the Last Supper**

John 13 describes events during the last supper. Verse one begins, "Now before the Feast of the Passover" (*NAS*). At the outset, John tells us the last supper was before the Feast of the Passover.

During the supper Jesus spoke of being betrayed, dipped a sop, gave it to Judas, and said "what thou doest, do quickly" (verse 27, *ASV*). The others did not know "for what purpose" Jesus said this, some supposing because Judas kept the treasury, Jesus was saying to "Buy those things that we have need of against the feast" (verse 29). Thus again John tells us the last supper was before the Feast of Passover.

But we need to harmonize these Scriptures in John with Matthew 26:17-21, Mark 14:12-18, and Luke 22:7-16, which seem to say the last supper was a Passover.

All three passages begin by referring to the time as the first "day of unleavened bread." Since the last supper was on day 14, and the feast of unleavened bread began on day 15, evidently this phrase refers to the

preparations for the feast following, which included the removal of leaven.

These passages say when the disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare the Passover, Jesus told them, so they went and began preparations, as all Israel did on the day of preparation. This started with cleaning every speck of leaven from the room, getting bitter herbs, bringing the lamb they had chosen since the 10th day, and perhaps appointing someone to take it to the temple for killing at the proper time the next afternoon. Then we are told they all came together to eat. But note, nothing is said about this being the Passover meal.

### **Epithumia**

Luke 22:14-16 then adds this important part: “And when the hour was come [for the evening meal], he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

“With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you.” Does this mean the last supper was a Passover meal? Possibly, but not necessarily. Several days before Christmas, we might say “I long to share this Christmas with you, but I won’t be able to”—referring to the approaching occasion. So with Jesus about “this” Passover.

In fact, when we analyze the Greek word for “desire” in the Luke passage, it becomes apparent that Jesus was referring to the Passover planned for the next afternoon. It was this understanding that unlocked the harmony of the New Testament Scriptures with the time element of the type. Let’s see how!

“With desire” is Strong’s #1939, *epithumia*. Professor Strong defines it as “a longing (especially for what is forbidden).” This word is translated in the King James as “lust” thirty-two times out of the thirty-eight times it is used, and three times of a good desire that

cannot be fulfilled.<sup>13</sup> Hence, in all cases, “a longing for that which is forbidden.”

But why would Jesus use this word relative to the Passover—“longing for that which is forbidden”—when there are four other Greek words Jesus could have used that express intense longing desire that was not forbidden?

### **Greek Words Meaning Good Desire**

#1974, *epipothia*, intense longing (Ephesians 1:9)

#1972, *epipotesis*, earnest desire (2 Corinthians 7:7)

#2307, *thelema*, what one wishes (Ephesians 2:3)

#2107, *eudokia*, delight, wish (Philippians 2:13)

The reason Jesus did not use any of these words is that his longing could not be satisfied—it was in a sense forbidden—because he knew he would die before the scheduled Passover of the following night. To paraphrase Luke 22:15: “With longing I have desired to eat this coming Passover with you, but it has been forbidden to me.”

### **Two Notable Incorrect Words**

To confirm this meaning, note two incorrect words in this verse. The King James says, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not **any more** eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:15,16). The words “any more” imply he would eat this time, but not again. But these words are spurious. They are not found in the Sinaitic, Vatican, or Alexandrian manuscripts (or in the ancient Bodmer papyrus, p<sup>75</sup>). The Rotherham and Wilson Diaglott versions both delete these words.

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13. The text we are considering, Luke 22:15, is one of these. The others are Philippians 1:23 and 1 Thessalonians 2:17. In the first Paul desired to go beyond the veil to be with Christ, but it was not due time and he would remain to strengthen the brethren. In the second, Paul expressed “great desire” (verse 17) to see those brethren again, yet “Satan hindered us” (verse 18). In both cases, a longing desire that could not be fulfilled.

**Rotherham:** “I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; For I say unto you—In nowise shall I eat it until it have been fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

**Wilson Diaglott:** “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will not eat of it, till it shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”

The actual Greek contains a double negative for extra emphasis: “I am telling for to you that **not not** I should eat this until when it should be fulfilled in the Kingdom of the God” (*Kingdom Interlinear*). “I say for to you, that **not not** I may eat of it, till it may be fulfilled in the Kingdom of the God” (*Wilson Interlinear*).

Thus in the two best translations we have, the Diaglott and Rotherham, Jesus says he greatly desired to eat the upcoming Passover but “**in no wise,**” “**in no way,**” “I will **not not** eat it”—for he would be dead by that time.

We believe Ferrar Fenton captures the meaning of Christ’s words in his rendering of Luke 22:15,16: “And he said to them, ‘I have longingly desired to eat this Passover with you before my suffering: however, I tell you that **I shall not eat of it,** until it can be administered in the kingdom of God.’”<sup>14</sup>

### **Why Did Jesus Say He Would Eat the Passover?**

Luke 22:11 says, “Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?” Why did Jesus say he would partake of the Passover, if in Luke 22:16 he says he would not. Perhaps because in a sense Jesus did eat “a” Passover with his disciples that night. During the last supper Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death as the Passover Lamb.

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14. “This Passover” refers to the one the disciples anticipated eating with Jesus the next night. It will be fully “administered in the kingdom of God” when the blood of Christ, our Passover Lamb, is applied for the world in the kingdom to remove the Adamic curse.

## Other Incidental Indicators

The following incidental indicators, though not proofs in themselves, do lend evidence that the last supper was not the normal Passover.

None of the four Gospel writers mentions a Passover lamb being eaten at the last supper. The reason is because it was not time for the normal Passover meal. That would be a day later.<sup>15</sup>

**If** the Passover lamb were to be slain after 6:00 p.m. beginning the 14th day, why did Jesus wait until the 14th day began before telling Peter and John to go to prepare the Passover? There was so much to do: travel to find the place, search and rid the house of leaven, purchase bitter herbs, take the lamb to the temple for killing, wait in line as tens of thousands of other lambs were killed, bring the lamb to their arranged location, dress, and roast it. (Whereas, with the Passover meal the following night, the lamb would be slain, dressed and roasted the following afternoon.)

Paul comments on the time of memorial in 1 Corinthians 11:23,24. "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus **the** [same] **night** in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." If the memorial was after a Passover meal, it would be specific and appropriate to say "The Lord Jesus, after the Passover, on the night he was betrayed, took bread ..." etc. But Paul did not.

Thus we believe that the Last Supper Jesus and his disciples ate together was not the normal Passover, but a far greater one. They partook of the memorial of the antitype of the Passover.

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15. If there was no lamb on the table, that would also be one reason our Lord used unleavened bread to represent his body, rather than a piece of lamb.

## **Perspective**

The purpose of this study is to strengthen our faith by harmonizing all the Scriptures on the subject. For unless we could answer in our minds each of the points raised, we would feel uncomfortable, for the Scriptures must be harmonious. We trust the study is beneficial to this end.

But, may we always remember what is of greatest import each year as we approach the memorial season: partaking of the emblems, applying the preciousness of what they symbolize to ourselves, participating with all our brethren in our Lord's ransom merit for our justification, communion in the cup of sin offering experiences, and the opportunity to renew our consecration vows and, with renewed determination, to complete them.



# Hasty Meal and Quick Exit

*J.B. Parkinson*

**T**he fundamental question about the Passover revolves around five scriptures and three resulting assumptions:

“Ye shall keep [the passover lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings ... And they shall eat the flesh in that night” (Exodus 12:6-8).<sup>1</sup>

“And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah’s passover” (Exodus 12:11).

“Kill the passover ... and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning” (Exodus 12:21, 22).

“And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, <sup>2</sup>We shall all be dead men” (Exodus 12:33).

“And they journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the <sup>3</sup>fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn ... And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses, and encamped in Sukkoth” (Numbers 33:3-5).

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1. Citations are from the Revised Versions unless otherwise noted.
  2. Or, Lest we all be dead.
  3. This passage has given rise to three different views of what happened at the Exodus:
    1. The day was reckoned as beginning at sunrise.
    2. The passover lamb was slain before sunset.
    3. Israel delayed their departure by one full day.



If the day were to begin at sunset, the passover lamb be slain after sunset, and the Israelites must leave hastily after sunrise, then how can departure be reckoned a day later than the slaying of the passover lamb? One of these three assumptions must be inaccurate. Each has been questioned, leading to three different explanations.

### **Reckoning the Day**

The reckoning of the beginning of the day has changed from time to time and place to place throughout ancient history. By the first century A.D., which is New Testament times, Pliny says,<sup>4</sup> “The Babylonians count the period between two sunrises, the Athenians that between two sunsets, the Umbrians [central Italy] from midday to midday, the common people everywhere from dawn to dark, the Roman priests and the authorities who fixed the official day, and also the Egyptians and Hipparchus, the period from midnight to midnight.” In more ancient times it had been the Babylonians who reckoned by sunset and the Egyptians by sunrise.

If Genesis 1 were interpreted in terms of a 24-hour day, it would begin at noon (the “Sun” during “the evening” goes down upon the former conditions and during “the morning” comes up to fullest “noon” sunshine on the new conditions). In contrast, Genesis 19:34 shows daylight to be “the morrow” after the night—a sunrise reckoning. “The next day” after the night in Numbers 11:32 and 33:3 also implies the day was then reckoned as beginning at sunrise.<sup>5</sup> In Lev. 23:27,32, if verse 27 refers to the daylight portion of the day, then the no-work time is from the middle of the ninth day to the middle of the tenth day; if verse 27 were to refer to a full 24-

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4. Pliny, *Natural History II*, lxxix, 188. [Quoted by Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*; Princeton Univ. Press, 1964. ¶11.]

5. It is a sunrise reckoning also in Joshua 5:10,11, Judges 6:38, 1 Samuel 5:3,4, and likely in Leviticus 7:15 and Jonah 4:7 (Lit., “the dawn towards the next day”).

hour day, then these verses would tell us that the reckoning of the day is here being changed to a sunset beginning, several months after the Exodus (see Appendix A, p. 55). The only New Testament text unmistakably defining the beginning of the day is Matthew 28:1, "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week ..." which surprisingly is consistent only with a sunrise reckoning.<sup>6</sup>

If at the time of the exodus the day was still reckoned as beginning at sunrise, which was apparently the Egyptian practice then,<sup>7</sup> it would be unnecessary to propose an extra day's delay in the Israelites' departure. Such reckoning would equally accommodate the slaying of the Passover lamb in the afternoon or the evening, as both would be on the same calendar day. Resolution of this latter issue depends solely upon the meaning of "between the two evenings."

### **Between the Two Evenings**

The Hebrew expression *beyn ha gharbayim* is neither singular nor plural, but dual (for things which come in pairs) and hence means "between the two evenings." The expression is used eleven times: Exodus 12:6; 16:12; 29:39,41; 30:8; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:3,5,11; 28:4,8. In Exodus 29:39-41 and Numbers 28:4-8 the continual offering of two lambs is one in the morning and the other between the two evenings; this distinction contrasts the two times of day, such that 'between the two evenings' cannot simply be between one sunset and the next sun-

6. The Greek word is *opse* (late, as in the day), not *meta* (after). This precise translation is given by the Marshall diaglott, *American Standard Version, NASB* (1971 edn.), and Bullinger, similar to the King James. Wilbur Gingrich defines *opse* ( ) as "late (in the day)", yet confesses to redefining the word just for Matthew 28:1, "As improper prep. w. gen. after." Redefinition just for this text is unwarranted.
7. Richard A. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt; Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* **26**; Univ. Chicago Press, 1950. ¶32-35. Prior to Parker's work, most modern historians were apparently unaware of the ancient Egyptian sunrise reckoning. Now it is generally accepted.

set. Similarly in Exodus 30:7,8, the high priest Aaron was to dress the lamps in the morning and light the lamps between the two evenings (the latter presumably because sunlight was either dimming or gone).<sup>8</sup>

This expression is further refined in Exodus 16:12-13, “Between the two evenings ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God. And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp.” In the Spring the migratory kind of quail would be flying north in great numbers and would be rising up in altitude to reach the wilderness of Sin, where the Israelites were; migratory birds settle towards sunset, or twilight (after which both flying and settling would be less safe). The Israelites could hardly eat the quail before they arrive. Therefore these two verses require ‘between the two evenings’ to mean a period after sunset.<sup>9</sup>

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8. The instructions concerning the lampstand were to bring “pure olive oil ... to cause a lamp to burn continually ... Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD” continually (Exodus 27:20,21, also Leviticus 24:2,3). [That ‘continually’ means ‘repeated perpetually’ and not ‘continuously’ is seen in Scriptures such as, “thou shalt offer upon the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually” (Exodus 29:38), and “thou shalt eat bread at my table continually” (2 Samuel 9:7). Similarly, a continual dripping is different from a continuous stream.] The lamp was to be kept in order “from evening to morning,” rather than “from morning to evening” or “evening to evening,” signifying that the lamps are to be burning throughout every night. (In the morning the lamp evidently could be put out in order to trim it.) Lamplight would again be needed beginning around twilight, or ‘between the two evenings.’

9. This view has an apparent difficulty with 1 Kings 18:29,36, where Elijah’s sacrifice, the slaying of the prophets of Baal, and Elijah’s hour-long run to Jezreel seem subsequent to the time of the evening sacrifice. Here it seems necessary to assume it was near the full moon, anywhere from the 8th to 16th day of the month, and the sky was clear (surely justified by 1 Kings 18:44) until the rain came. The Passover full moon allows “between the two evenings” to mean twilight during Josiah’s Passover (2 Chronicles 35).

In contrast to the Pharisees' thought of 3:00 p.m., Finegan says,<sup>10</sup> "The Sadducees and the Samaritans, however, held that the slaughtering of the lamb itself was to take place between sunset and darkness. The Book of Jubilees seems to agree with this when it says about the Passover lamb: 'It is not permissible to slay it during any period of the light, but during the period bordering on the evening, and let them eat it at the time of the evening until the third part of the night' (49:12). The Targum of Onkelos also rendered 'between the two evenings' in Exodus 12:6 as 'between the two suns,' and this was then explained as meaning the time between sunset and the coming out of the stars." Thus, the appropriate synonym is 'twilight' (from the Anglo-Saxon word 'two+lēoht' for 'two lights'). Jewish Publication Society (1917) and David H. Stern (a Hebrew Christian) both call it "dusk."

The feast in Egypt is delineated in Exodus 12:18, which literally says, "In the first [month] in [the] fourteenth day of the month in the evening you must eat unleavened breads until the twenty-first [day] of the month in the evening." (The wording of Exodus 12:18 is somewhat parallel to that of Leviticus 23:32. See Appendix A, p. 55.) They ate unleavened bread on the 14th. Because the day then was reckoned from sunrise, events of both afternoon and evening were reckoned on the 14th. Change to sunset reckoning would later cause the evening events to be reckoned on the 15th.

### **In Haste**

Israel was to eat the Passover in haste—fully dressed, with staff in hand and shoes on their feet—ready to go at the crack of dawn. But does not the Scripture say, "in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night" (Deuteronomy 16:1)? that Israel left before sunrise? No. It tells what the Lord did, God's part, not man's part. "And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the firstborn in the land of

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10. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*; Princeton Univ. Press, 1964. ¶22.

Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.” (Exodus 12:29). Only Moses and Aaron left their houses at night (Exodus 12:31), and that by Pharaoh’s command. Man’s part began at sunrise—the actual departure—rendered unmiraculous by the miracle that preceded it.

But would it not have taken a day to get all the people together at Rameses (Hatwaret, Avaris) before the departure from Egypt? No. It is not said that they encamped at Rameses, but that they left Rameses for the first encampment at Sukkoth (Exodus 12:37). The Egyptians were deathly afraid to let any Israelites stay behind, or even delay: “And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste ... they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.” (Exodus 12:33-36). So any delay is unlikely. Moreover, the departure occurred on the day the Egyptians were burying their dead—just six to eighteen hours after their firstborn died—a public-health expedient (Numbers 33:4, *NASB*).

If the Israelites had borrowed, using their houses as collateral, the Egyptians need have taken no time to forgive the mortgages and send them away.<sup>11</sup>

Israel left from the city of Hatwaret (Greek, Avaris; later called Rameses, near modern Faqus) in the land of Goshen on Nisan 15 “on the morrow<sup>12</sup> after the Passover” (Numbers 33:3). Thus, it would appear that the

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11. Alternatively, with a sudden glut of houses in the real estate market of Goshen, it would be expected that housing prices would have plunged. However, because the Egyptians just could not wait, prices most probably would have risen instead.

12. The Hebrew word, *mochorath*, means ‘the next day’ (Gesenius), ‘tomorrow’ or ‘the day after’ (*Hebrew Students Manual*). It is not ‘the morning of;’ and ‘morrow’ is not simply a synonym for ‘morning.’ This word is used consistently to mean the next calendar day.

Passover meal must have been eaten on Nisan 14 (according to the reckoning of the day at the time of the exodus), for the morrow afterwards to be Nisan 15. Then “thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste” (Deuteronomy 16:3).

They first made camp at Sukkoth, after the first day of the seven-day Feast of Passover. The second encampment at Etham, near modern Ismailia (at the Suez Canal), was a mere thirty miles east-southeast of Hat-waret, the capital of Goshen; the caravan likely began by mid-morning and moved at least two miles per hour, requiring perhaps seventeen hours travel time split between the two days. The third day apparently went eighteen miles to the north, to another Red Sea residue, nearly to the Philistine road that they had earlier been commanded not to use, which would represent about another ten hours of travel. The Red Sea crossing might have consumed up to five hours, followed by a thanksgiving song of deliverance, comprising the fourth day. The remaining three days of the Feast of Passover constitute the three days’ journey into the wilderness, to which they had been called from the beginning (Exodus 3:18).

For the Christian, the period of the plagues typifies the present evil world (the world during which evil predominates), while the death of Egyptian firstborn symbolizes Armageddon, during which the world self-destructs (Mutual Assured Destruction, or MAD). The sacrifice of the Passover lamb just before the last plague reminds us that Christ’s sacrifice is prerequisite to deliverance of the whole world from sin, sickness, sorrow and death. The first three days of the feast, when Israel is out from under the influence of Pharaoh, depicts the thousand-year kingdom of Christ, when Satan is to be bound, and people will learn righteousness. The Lord’s people crossing the sea and seeing Pharaoh and his hosts drown shows the little season in which Satan will be loosed and then destroyed. Feast days five-to-seven then foreshadow the perfect ages of eternity, for which the masses of mankind will have been perfected. The

holy convocation of the first day doubtless signifies rejoicing at the resurrection of the world's dead, and that of the last day the perfected world when "everlasting joy shall be upon their heads" (Isaiah 35:10; see also *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 6, pp. 457-459).

### **Changes After the Exodus**

For Passover observances after the Exodus two notable changes were instituted, one by commandment and the other for practical reasons. In the fortieth year after the Exodus Moses commanded: "Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 16:5,6). When once they entered into the Promised Land all Israel was to journey to the tabernacle, or later to the Temple in Jerusalem, for the Passover observance; household celebrations were no longer to be allowed.<sup>13</sup>

The Passover influx of travelers to the tabernacle created a logistics problem: How do people come to the tabernacle "between the two evenings" and afterwards get to lodging for the night? especially those families with small children? Apparently it was resolved by advancing the slaying of the lambs by a few hours. (With a sunrise day, the sacrifice would still be reckoned on Nisan 14.) In that way it was later to synchronize the sacrifice of the typical lamb with the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, of which the former was a type: "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

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13. Forty years after the first Passover of Jesus' ministry the temple was destroyed, after which the household observances of the Feast were necessarily resumed.

## Schematic of the Exodus

To see the consequences of the days of the Exodus beginning at sunrise, the following representation is suggested:

Nisan 14	<b>Day</b>	Moses instructs the elders. Remove leaven by sundown.
	<b>Night</b>	Lamb slain ~6:00 to 7:00. p.m. Supper prepared and eaten in haste. Last plague; but Israel's firstborn passed over. Remain in houses until sunrise.
Nisan 15	<b>Day</b>	Get paid and despoil the Egyptians at sunrise. Leave Egypt soon after sunrise. First daytime of the Passover feast.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at Sukkoth. Second night of the Passover feast.
Nisan 16	<b>Day</b>	Journey to edge of desert.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at Etham.
Nisan 17	<b>Day</b>	Turn and go (northward?).
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at Pi-hahiroth between the Towers and Baal of the North.
Nisan 18	<b>Day</b>	Cross Red Sea. See Pharaoh and his hosts drown. Song of Thanksgiving.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp on east side of Red Sea. Fifth night of the Passover feast.
Nisan 19	<b>Day</b>	Journey day #1 into desert. Fifth day of the Passover feast.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at unknown location.



Nisan 20	<b>Day</b>	Journey day #2 in desert.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at unknown location.
Nisan 21	<b>Day</b>	Journey day #3 in desert. Seventh day of the Passover feast: Holy convocation.
	<b>Night</b>	Encamp at unknown location (a dry place). Leaven now permissible.

If in later times the beginning of the day were changed to a sunset reckoning, the calendar would be reckoned according to the daytimes, and the night of Nisan 14 would become the night of Nisan 15. Such change would have then opened up the question as to whether slaying of the lamb on Nisan 14 should still be done just after sunset—about a full day before the Passover meal, or just before sunset—a few hours before the Passover meal. Expedience evidently opened the way later for lambs to have been slain when Jesus Christ was crucified.

[If a change in reckoning of the beginning of the day seems a difficult concept, consider that the calendar was changed by the Lord to make the seventh month become the first month (Exodus 12:1,2), so that even today the Jewish New Year begins with the seventh month. Likewise, Christ’s return to raise the sleeping saints begins the new “day” in the heavenly phase of the kingdom long before the “day” of the reign of Christ begins in the earthly phase of the kingdom.

Uncertainties of the calendar even today cause the Jews in Dispersion to observe two Passover sedars, on each of the first two days of the Feast of Passover. (That timing is most appropriate at Babylon and other lands east of Israel ever since the Hillel II calendar began in the fourth century.)]

## Changing to a Sunset Day

To see the effect of a change of reckoning the day according to sunset, the following is suggested for the year of Christ's sacrifice (A.D. 33 April 3)

Exodus			Passover (A.D. 33)		
Nisan 13	Day		13 [Th.]	Day	Disciples asked to prepare the Passover.
	Night		14 [Fri.]	Night	Last Supper. Memorial instituted. Gethsemane; mock trial before Sanhedrin. (Day of Passover but not the Feast.)
Nisan 14	Day	Moses instructs the elders.  Remove leaven by sundown.		Day	Christ crucified ~11:30 a.m.; died at ~2:30 p.m. Passover lambs slain 2:30-3:00 p.m. Remove all leaven by sundown.
	Night	Lamb slain ~ 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Supper prepared and eaten in haste; first night of Feast. Last plague; Israel's firstborn passed over. Remain in houses until sunrise.	15 [Sat.]	Night	Israel eats typical Passover meal. First night of Passover Feast. Begin Holy Convocation.
Nisan 15	Day	Get paid and despoil the Egyptians at sunrise. Leave Egypt soon after sunrise. First daytime of Passover Feast.		Day	First daytime of Passover Feast.
	Night	Encamp at Sukkoth. Second night of Passover feast.	16 [Sun.]	Night	Second night of Passover Feast.
Nisan 16	Day	Journey to edge of desert.		Day	Christ resurrected (perhaps minutes after sunrise). Israel offers firstfruits (barley and flax).
	Night	Encamp at Etham. Third night of Passover Feast.	17	Night	Third night of Passover Feast.

The evening Passover meal, which in Egypt had been associated with the night of Nisan 14, was now associated with Nisan 15. To maintain the sacrificing of the

Passover lamb on Nisan 14, it was delayed until mid-afternoon, near the closing of the 14th, just a few hours before the main Passover meal. In this way, Christ could institute his Memorial at the same time of the 14th that the Passover lambs in Egypt had been slain and eaten. And in this way, Christ could sacrificially die at the same time Israel was sacrificing the typical Passover lambs.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Last Supper a Passover Meal?**

Did Jesus institute the Memorial of his sacrificial death at a Passover supper, or at a meal of no spiritual significance?

Jesus was on the cross from morning to the ninth hour (2:00 to 3:00 p.m.), when he gave up the breath. On a Friday the priests advanced by one hour the sacrifice of the evening continual burnt offering to 1:30 p.m. and offered it at 2:30 p.m. so they could sacrifice the Passover lambs between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.. Therefore Jesus would not have needed to eat a Passover meal for himself.

What about Jesus' disciples? Judas violently hanged himself, probably before Jesus breathed his last, so no Passover meal was needed for him either.

The eleven other disciples were necessarily fugitives from Jerusalem that afternoon and all the next day. If they were to partake of a Passover meal, it would have to have been at the Last Supper, even though the official Passover lambs had not yet been slain. They ate it at the time of night when the Israelites had eaten the Passover meal in Egypt. But once the true Passover lamb had been slain, were the disciples required to observe the

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14. It may be noted by Roman reckoning of the day (beginning at midnight), Jesus was in the grave for part of the day of Nisan 14 and all of the second half-night, all of both day and night of Nisan 15, the first half-night of Nisan 16, and perhaps even a few minutes of that day after sunrise. If so, Matthew 12:40 is explained: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Passover meal? No, probably not, as suggested by 1 Corinthians 5:7,8. But neither does the New Testament specifically discourage observing the Passover (which was necessarily terminated anyway early in A.D. 70 by the destruction of the Temple). For the Christian, the Memorial of Christ's sacrifice is to be observed shortly after sunset on Nisan 14, which in the modern Jewish reckoning is at the beginning of that 24-hour day.<sup>15</sup>

An account of the last supper is given in Luke 22:7-20, portions of which are used to support one view (vss. 8, 11, 13) or the other (vss. 15, 16 interpreted). To this writer, verse 11 seems most direct when it says, "Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?" It is this writer's tentative viewpoint that the Last Supper may be viewed as a Passover meal for Jesus and his disciples. However, he feels no great concern when someone else thinks otherwise.



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15. When almanacs report the first day of Passover, they give the Roman day (midnight-to-midnight) of the daytime of Nisan 15. Hence, the Christian observance is to be reckoned two days earlier (as though Nisan 13). This observance occurs only on a Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, or occasionally on a Friday. [The other three days of the week would cause a high holy Sabbath to fall adjacent to a weekly sabbath, or would cause a holiday requiring activity to fall on a Sabbath. If the Christian Memorial (calendar Nisan 13, though after sunset) were to come on a Saturday or Monday evening, then the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10, 174 days later, or 24 weeks plus six days later) would come on a Friday or a Sunday, yielding two consecutive sabbath days on which no meals could be prepared. If the Memorial were to come on a Wednesday, then the physical ritual of the 7th day of the Feast of Booths (Hoshana Rabba, Tishri 21) would come on a Saturday sabbath, which conflict is not allowed. The Jewish calendar is delayed by one day in each case to avoid these difficulties. However, the two holy convocations of the Feast of Passover only require that no servile work be done but permit meals to be prepared; thus no calendar adjustment is needed for them.]

## Appendix A: Sabbath from Even unto Even (Leviticus 23:32)

Instructions for the Atonement Day sabbath are, “On the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonements [sic!] ... in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your Sabbath” (Leviticus 23:27,32). This expression appears to be unique in the Hebrew Old Testament, though there are some similarities in Genesis 7:11, Leviticus 24:3, and 1 Samuel 30:17. Hebrew transliterations and English equivalents may be presented as follows:

Genesis 7:11

bi[yn] shnath ... b[eyn] h]a chodesh ha shiniy b[eyn] shibghah-ghasar yom  
in a year            in the month    the second    in            seven-teenth    day

Leviticus 23:32

b[eyn] tishghah [e]l [h]a chodesh b[eyn] h]a ghereb mē[n] ghereb ghad ghereb  
in a ninth [day]    into the month    in the evening    from evening    unto evening

Leviticus 24:3

mē[n] ghereb ghad bi boqer  
from evening    unto in morning

1 Samuel 30:17

mē[n] ha nesheph v'ghad ha ghereb [e]l mochōrath am  
from the dusk    even unto    the evening    into next day of theirs

The usage of the preposition **beyn** is seen first similarly in Genesis 7:11, where its meaning is necessarily **with-in**, and not associated with the beginning or end of the year nor of the month (nor of the day). The preposition for “in [the] ninth [day]” is also **beyn** (contracted here, as often, to **b**), meaning **in** or **within** (without implication of motion). Thus, there may be an intended meaning that “in the evening” is a time within the ninth day, and neither at the beginning nor at the end. Had the preposition **mi[n]**, meaning **from** or **out of**, been used, it would have made a stronger case for an evening which begins as the ninth day ends. As it stands, with the preposition **beyn**, it does not suggest whether the day is reckoned as beginning at midnight, sunrise, or noon, but it does weigh against beginning the day somewhere near the start or end of evening twilight. (That the reck-

oning of the day was later changed to sunset is not in question.)

If the Lord is telling us that a full 24-hour Sabbath begins in the middle of the ninth day (at sunset) and ends in the middle of the tenth day (at sunset), could the reader say it any more clearly in so few words as does Leviticus 23:32?

# In the Dusk of a Sorrowful Evening

*This do in remembrance of me.—Luke 22:19.*

*Tim Alexander*

**H**aving left the tender consolation of the upper room, having spoken of that precious bond between the vine and the branches, having promised the disciples the unifying and comforting influence of the holy spirit and the supreme importance of fervent loyalty one for another, Jesus found himself in the moonlight of the garden—alone—only a stone's throw away but a world apart from his nearest earthly friends.

Jesus' lonely heart was spilling over with grief. His greatest desire in life was being severely tested, that desire to faithfully serve his Father in every particular. His loyalty to God was exposed to the weathering effects of fear, anguish, anxiety and heartache. And no earthly friendship was there to comfort or to share.

When oppressed by weariness, Jesus' heart had often taken refuge in the home of his dearest friends or in the caress of tender hands tearfully washing his feet or in the thankful eyes of one whose life had been miraculously redirected; but this night all those faithful friends were far away.

Jesus knew that his hour had finally come. He knew that his testing would be endured effectively alone, and that every ounce of his strength and courage would be required to live up to the promise he had made to his Father to joyfully accept whatever cup the Father saw fit to allow, to joyfully accept the breaking of his human body for the life of the world.

Jesus knew what it was to suffer alone; but he also knew that, as he was being smitten, his disciples, whom he loved, were being scattered.

Gethsemane had often been an especially familiar and comforting retreat; but, this night, the Apostle's hearts cowered in that garden as though the Death Angel were perceptibly afoot. Fear and foreboding hung in the night air like a damp dew, rising from the earth; and pure sorrow and bewilderment pushed each of the disciple's hearts to the point of complete exhaustion.

Jesus was disappointed but not surprised to find them asleep.

Not long before, James, John, and Peter had seen the vision of Jesus in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Atop that mountain they had been overshadowed by the glory of God's obvious presence. But tonight in this garden, they were overcome by the fear of God's seeming absence. On that mount, they had seen Jesus in a vision of glory; but, in the garden, Jesus now appeared to their vision more like a victim.

This was the time of the Passover, the time when Israel was constrained to remember God's marvelous deliverance from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. On that fateful night in Egypt, as the Death Angel moved silently throughout the land, the firstborn of faithful Hebrew families were safe as they remained inside their homes with the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels. Inside of each household a lamb had been killed, had been roasted with fire, and was now being eaten by a family who was dressed to travel, their hands grasping the staffs which, by morning, would help them walk to freedom. Under this blood and dressed to travel, the firstborn of God's people were safe in a hostile land.

But the firstborn of the Gospel age live in an equally hostile environment. The apostle Peter, who was with Jesus in the garden, addresses the present-age firstborn as "strangers and pilgrims" in an environment which wars against their souls (1 Peter 2:11,12). Peter instructs us to carefully avoid absorbing the evil characteristics of that world in which we live. The apostle Paul echoes this concept when he says, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). Paul con-



tinues and says, therefore, continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God with your lips. Paul is saying, if you appreciate God's protection in this hostile land, then thank him with every breath you take.

Paul also encourages the firstborn of this age to remain dressed and ready to travel and to stay prepared to protect themselves from their hostile environment. He says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13). He admonishes us to gird our loins with truth, to protect our hearts with righteousness, to guide our steps with the gospel of peace, to shield our entire beings with faith, to cover our heads with salvation and to learn to use the holy spirit as a sword. If we do these things, Paul says, we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Paul was here admonishing us to remain dressed, ready to travel, because he knew that the Death Angel is like a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Just as the blood of the lamb was applied to the entrance of the faithful Hebrew homes, the blood of Jesus' sacrifice should be applied to the doorposts and lintels of the faithful Christian hearts. Paul asks each of us, "How much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). Paul is saying that faith in Jesus' blood can give us a heartfelt confidence that we are accepted by God and therefore able to serve him. He speaks of that heartfelt confidence again when he says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

Paul understood that, despite its best efforts, a true Christian heart would sometimes be overcome by the guilt associated with natural human failings. So Paul is saying that once you gain an intellectual appreciation for the covering of Jesus' blood, then go on to learn how to let your heart rest in the confidence of that covering.

Develop a sincere conviction and trust that you are acceptable in God's eyes because the blood of your Savior covers your unintentional human faults.

Immediately after telling Peter that he would deny Jesus three times before the next morning, Jesus tells him, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Jesus was saying, "You have complete and tangible confidence in the fact that God is righteous and just; have that same complete and tangible confidence in the fact that my sacrifice now covers your sins and makes you acceptable to your God."

But how does the Christian heart develop this tangible confidence? In the Passover picture, the lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, and the bitterness of those herbs produced on the palate a strong desire for another taste of the lamb. This is a beautiful picture of how the Christian heart responds to the piercing experiences of life. Pain, trauma, guilt, and failure, when experienced by a sincere human heart, throw into vivid relief the sufficiency, the strength, the wisdom of Jesus' all-providing sacrifice for us.

Paul gives us the benefit of his own personal experience in Romans 5:2-5. He says that we rejoice in the peace we now have with God, we rejoice in the hope of future glory, but we also rejoice in suffering, we also rejoice in those bitter herbs, because that suffering leads to endurance, which then leads to evidence of approval, which produces a steady hope, the kind of hope that deepens and widens and strengthens our heart reliance on the blood of our Savior through every event of life.

### **The Memorial**

These were some of the lessons from the Passover picture; but in the warmth and comfort of the upper room Jesus then introduced the apostles to a new practice, the Memorial.

At the moment of Jesus' death, the typical Passover was fulfilled and the antitypical Passover began. After

that point, it was no longer vital for those with faith in Jesus to celebrate the typical Passover. It is now our privilege to remember and celebrate the beginning of the antitype, the death of our Lord and Master. That is what the Memorial does.

After dinner, Jesus took bread and “when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body which is for you” (1 Corinthians 11:24, ASV). The unleavened bread fittingly represented Jesus’ perfect human body. As each disciple takes that bread and eats it, he is acknowledging receipt of his own individual portion of that great redemptive sacrifice made on behalf of the whole world. By eating this bread, we accept and take possession of the gift of eternal life, given to us by God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

And “after the same manner also he took the cup ... saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25). This cup of wine represents Jesus’ blood, his life poured out on our behalf. By drinking of this cup, we similarly acknowledge receipt of our portion of the merit of his life given for us.

It is a great privilege to receive the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice in this age, ahead of the world of mankind. But this great privilege is given for a purpose, so that our lives may be offered in sacrifice alongside that of our Master. Paul writes, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16). Jesus has called us to become a part of the Body of Christ, and filling up the afflictions of that Body is a privilege only for those who accept that call (Colossians 1:24).

On the mount of transfiguration an invisible bond formed between Peter, James, and John. That bond was formed because of the experiences they had together. Together, they shared fear (“they were sore afraid”). Together they saw a marvelous demonstration of God’s power. Together they shared a wonderful prophetic in-

sight. And together they heard God's own voice. The bond between these three disciples was a lifetime blessing and is a beautiful picture of that same bond which forms between brethren at this end of the age as a result of the same experiences. We together have had all of those experiences.

But Jesus knew that, in the days following the upper room, that special bond would be stretched and torn. Jesus knew that that indispensable, familial bond among his disciples would be severely tested, not only in the days surrounding his crucifixion, but also all down through the centuries of the Gospel age. So in true Christ-like fashion, Jesus provided a lesson, a means by which true Christian fellowship and brotherhood could be demonstrated, celebrated, and maintained.

### **Joint Participation**

Paul suggests that those who partake of the bread and the cup also signify thereby a joint participation with each other (1 Corinthians 10:16-18). How so? It is like a student who accepts an invitation to enroll for an elective course and its teacher. He cannot choose his fellow students who similarly enroll; he must get along with—and work with—all of them. Likewise in the school of Christ, we might not have chosen most of our Christian brethren, nor would they have chosen us. But if we want Christ for our Redeemer and Teacher, we must learn to appreciate the others whom Christ has called—and learn to work harmoniously with them for the honor of God and his son Jesus Christ.

Similarly, Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren ... to present your bodies [plural] a living sacrifice [singular]." That is, Christian brethren are to learn to work in unison.

This unity of brethren is carefully articulated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16. He says that the cup and the bread are the "communion" of the blood and the body of Christ. The word "communion" is the Greek word *koinonia*, which means the fellowship, community or joint

participation of the Body. But the word *koinonia* also includes the thought of “a gift jointly contributed.” Paul is telling us that whatever we have to offer the Lord is most valuable when it is offered in concert with our brethren.

The word *koinonia*, spoken by the apostle Paul, reflects the sound of Jesus’ own voice after he left the upper room and, through the Judean night, as he spoke of the precious bond between the vine and the branches, the unifying influence of the holy spirit, and of the supreme importance of fervent loyalty one for another.

“Who that understands the situation, who that appreciates the invitation of God to membership in this *Ecclesia*, and the consequent participation in the sacrifice unto death now, and in the glorious work of the future, does not rejoice to be accounted worthy to suffer reproaches for the name of Christ, and to lay down his life in the service of the Truth”<sup>1</sup> because we are members of his body (see Ephesians 5:30 from the *Emphatic Diaglott*).

From him, in the night of his trial,  
Both heaven and earth fled away;  
His boldest had only denial,  
His dearest had only dismay.  
With a cloud o’er the face of the Father,  
He entered the anguish unknown;  
But we, though our sorrows may gather,  
Shall never endure them alone.

—*Hymns of Dawn* (1999 ed.) #336, vs. 4



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1. *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 6, p. 467.

# Memorial Dates

(based on Nisan 13 of the Jewish calendar\*)

**2007 April 1 Sunday**

**2008 April 18 Friday**

**2009 April 7 Tuesday**

**2010 March 28 Sunday**

**2011 April 17 Sunday**

**2012 April 5 Thursday**

**2013 March 24 Sunday**

**2014 April 13 Sunday**

**2015 April 2 Thursday**

**2016 April 21 Thursday**

**2017 April 9 Sunday**

**2018 March 29 Thursday**

**2019 April 18 Thursday**

**2020 April 7 Tuesday**

**2021 March 26 Friday**

**2022 April 14 Thursday**

**2023 April 4 Tuesday**

**2024 April 21 Sunday**

**2025 April 11 Friday**

**2026 March 31 Tuesday**

**2027 April 20 Tuesday**

**2028 April 9 Sunday**

**2029 March 29 Thursday**

**2030 April 16 Tuesday**

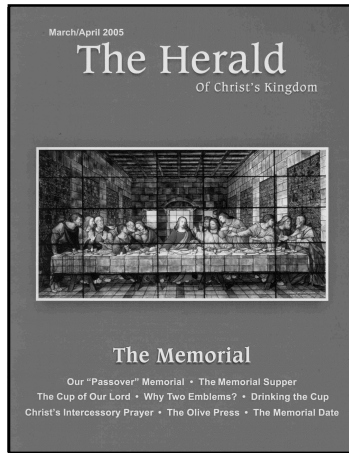
**2031 April 6 Sunday**

**2032 March 25 Thursday**

**2033 April 12 Tuesday**

**2034 April 2 Sunday**

\* Nisan 13 is shown because it is the conventional calendar day on which the Memorial is held. At sunset (about 6:00 p.m. standard time) on this calendar day Nisan 14 begins, and shortly afterward our Memorial services take place.



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