

HAS THE PASSOVER BEEN PASSED OVER?

Scripture verses are NKJV; words in brackets [] were added by Bible translators; words in parenthesis () and any underlining is my emphasis.

The Passover is an important event in God's Calendar, and not to be taken lightly. Because there is a deep desire to follow the example set for us by Christ, we would want to structure our lives to bring the Father's and Christ's approval. This strong desire is what moves a true Christian to search out that way of life.

In this process it is perceived that what the churches of this world have been trumpeting has little or no relevance to what Christ taught. The One who wrote both the New and Old Testaments is Christ—the Word—and it is there we should be looking for correct understanding of the times and elements of this most important event, the Passover. It seems that in recent times, among some who sincerely want to seek a true understanding of God's word, there has been a cry that we need to get back to our Hebrew Roots, which in some cases may be an admirable goal.

Unfortunately, some have accepted rabbinic teachings in place of God's Word, the Bible. By ignoring the clear teachings of the Bible and accepting Jewish teaching some of God's people are misled.

The Old Testament Passover prefigured the New Testament Passover instituted by Christ. A rabbinical tradition being taught is the combining of the Passover (a separate solemn occasion, in which the excruciating torture and death of Christ, the sacrificial lamb, an innocent victim), is combined with the Night to be Much Observed—a celebration of deliverance of God's people.

Some make the mistake of combining the Passover with the celebration of the Night to be Much Observed, which is a joyous occasion. It originally pictured Israel coming out of slavery in Egypt. Today it pictures God's people being released from the deceptions of this world's beliefs to understand the true future God has in store for man. As will be shown, the Bible, the Word of Christ, never combines these two events.

CHRIST'S WARNINGS

It is clear that the Messiah gave us many warnings about the Sadducees—those who were controlling the temple worship; and the Pharisees—who usurped the seat of Moses, and taught their man-made restrictions in place of God's Word. Also included were a large number of Jewish adherents to their teachings, including a variety of smaller Jewish sects. They adhered to combinations and variations of their beliefs. Eventually the Pharisees gained control and dominated what today is called the Jewish religion. Just as Christ taught against their teachings, we need to exercise the same manner of judgment. Therefore, it is understood that the term "Jew" as used here represents those who today practice those same erroneous rabbinic teachings. These rabbinic teachings and practices are not limited to the four gospels. There are many examples in the book of Acts and in Paul's writings warning of their deceptions.

Beginning with the four gospels Christ addresses the Sadducees. **Mark 12:24** *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?’”* The word “know,” #1492 in Strong’s carries not only the idea of recall, but also its intrinsic meaning of what is being said. In **John 11:10** Christ instructs His disciples: *“But if one walks in the night he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”* Later, in **John 5:38** Jesus answered the Jews, *“But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.”*

The question is: “Why would anyone believe those who do not understand God’s word, or those who are not willing to hear God?”

When speaking to a mixed group of Pharisees and Jews He said in **John 8:47**, *“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”* The Pharisees and the Jews who followed them are not of God. If they were of God they would have accepted the Messiah and continued in that belief to this day.

John 10:26 *“But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.”* **John 5:46-47**, *“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”* This is a plain statement that they did not adhere to what Moses wrote. It is clear that they would not only corrupt the law, but also corrupt the truth of the first Passover and the Night to be Much Observed as found in **Exodus 12**.

How would they do this? They do it by combining them into one celebration that neither honors Christ’s sacrifice (with a separate commemoration—the Passover), or the separate celebration of freedom from the slavery of this world.

The book of Matthew echo’s the twisting of the scriptures. **Matthew 15:3, 7-9** *“He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?’ Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophecy about you, saying: ‘THESE PEOPLE DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONOR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.’”* Their traditions were more important to them than God’s word. **Matthew 16:12** *“Then they understood that He did not tell [them] to beware of the leaven of bread, but the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”* This problem continued in the book of **Acts 13:45, 50**. *“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.”*

THE APOSTLES ALSO WARNED

Acts 14:2 & 19 *“But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul [and] dragged [him] out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”*

Acts 15:1, 5 *“And certain [men] came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command [them] to keep the Law of Moses.’”* This includes the sacrificial laws and all of the traditions the Jews observed.

The book of Galatians was written by Paul to counter what the Jews were teaching. **Galatians 1:6-7**, *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”* **Galatians 2:12-13** *“for before certain men came from James he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.”* **Verse 16** *“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”* The sacrifices were the works of the law, and it is seen here that Paul fights against the Jewish traditions and teachings.

He wrote this to counter the teaching of rituals that some were saying must be done or no salvation would be granted. Yet, in spite of all the above warnings there are some who today are teaching that the way of the Jews must be taught and practiced. It should not be understood that this is a wholesale acceptance of Jewish practices and beliefs, but rather a picking out of what they think might be appropriate for believers today. The primary goal here is to deal with one of these beliefs, namely the teaching regarding the Passover.

By following the scriptures of Exodus and understanding what they teach, two events are clearly shown. To grasp the true meaning one must understand how God keeps time. In today’s society there is the distorted idea that the day and its number changes at midnight, requiring a timepiece to tell us when this change happens. God’s way is simple and direct.

THE STARTING POINT OF THE DAY

All calendars need a starting point and the question of where to begin must be addressed. A calendar of days requires a starting point of the day. Man measures a 24-hour period as one day, but God measures one revolution of the earth as one day. This is clearly addressed in Genesis, and the exact moment of the start of Creation week is defined by God in His Word. **Genesis 1:2** tells us that the earth is in darkness and that God’s Spirit is hovering over waters. It is the waters in the atmosphere that are preventing light from reaching the earth. *“The earth was without form and void; ...”* God did two things at this time. He cleared the earth’s atmosphere, allowing light to reach it, and started the rotation of the earth which gives us the day. **Genesis 1:5** says, *“God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”* The first half of this verse calls out the morning first and then the evening. The latter half defines the first day as beginning with the evening. The starting and ending point of the day is almost simultaneous—as one day ends the next begins. This is true because the earth has a constant rotational movement.

In the subsequent verses of the creation account in Genesis God repeats this statement: *“The evening and the morning”* five times! This confirms the day’s intersecting points coming at the end of the day (evening).

To understand how this term “evening” is used as regarding the day’s end, and how it is Biblically determined, look at the following scriptures: **Joshua 8:29**, *“And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take the corpse down from the tree ...”* **Joshua 10:26-27** *“And after Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. So it was at the time of the going down of the sun [that] Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees ...”* **Joshua 8:29** defines **Joshua 10:26-27**, in that the word “evening” (6153) depicts the entering into of the next day by saying, *“the sun was down.”* It can be seen by these scriptures that evening and the going down of the sun is synonymous. It is plain that Joshua considered this to be the end of the day.

In **2 Samuel 3:35** David also considered the going down of the sun as the day’s end. **1 Kings 22:35-36** and **2 Chron. 18:34** both depict sunset as the end of the day. In **Deuteronomy 24:15** God says *“Each day you shall give [him] his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, ...”* This is the legal definition for payment of wages by the days-end, before the new day begins. Finally and most significant is the prophecies of **Daniel 8:13-14, 26** where these prophetic days are pointedly stated as *“evenings and mornings.”*

This is confirmed in the New Testament by the Gospel writers. **Mark 1:32** and **Luke 4:40**. They waited until the sun was down due to their fear of the authorities of the synagogue, who considered healing on the Sabbath to be work (sin). So the people waited for the beginning of the next day before bringing the sick. In **Ephesians 4:26** Paul writes, *“BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,”* As these scriptural references point out the day ends at sunset. Therefore, the next day begins at the same time.

GOD'S CLOCK

When did God start His clock? In **Genesis 1:14-19** *“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. [He made] the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that [it was] good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”* Here God names the instruments that He has created for man to keep track of time. He also delineates their function.

CHOOSING THE PASSOVER LAMB OR KID

In **Exodus 12:3** God instructs the Israelites to choose out a lamb on the 10th day of the first month. Because the 10th was a Sabbath determined by **Exodus 16:1**, which shows that the 15th day of the

second month was a Sabbath, therefore the 10th day of the first month was a Sabbath. The lamb was chosen at the end of the day which would be the beginning of the first day of the week, Sunday. The beginning of Sunday until the beginning of Monday would be day one. The beginning of Monday until the beginning of Tuesday would be day two. The beginning of Tuesday to the beginning of Wednesday brings us to the third day.

This instruction might be puzzling, but once it is understood that this animal was kept without food or water the instructions of **Verse 9** would make sense. **Exodus 12:9** reads, ***“Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails.”***

If one is going to roast the animal whole, including its entrails, they would want it to be empty of all urine and dung. This makes the killing and preparation of the lamb for roasting simple. The throat was cut; the blood was caught to strike on the doorpost and the lintel. The lamb was then put on the roasting rack. No skinning or gutting was needed; the whole operation would not take more than a few minutes.

Now, there is another instruction that God gives to Moses in **Exodus 12:5**. The lamb or goat had to be of the first year and without blemish. Unless one is familiar with raising sheep and goats it is hard to understand what was required to follow God’s instruction.

Sheep and goats are bred in the fall, beginning in late August. The ewes lamb from January through February and March, meaning that to be of the first year a lamb must be taken from the newly born lambs of that year. Those born in January would hardly exceed 30 pounds, being of the oldest lambs that could be used. Why is it needful to understand this? Because some are teaching that the practice of killing, gutting, skinning and roasting would have taken them beyond the time God allotted for this Passover meal to occur before midnight. It is not scriptural to gut or skin the animal before roasting as has been pointed out.

WHEN WERE THE ANIMALS SACRIFICED?

It could be true if you were roasting an animal born the previous year, which could exceed 100 pounds. But this is a little innocent lamb or goat of a few months of age as instructed by God, which would not take much time to be ready to eat. The innocence of these small animals and their death reflects the innocence of our Savior and His crucifixion. The picture of innocence would not be true of a full-grown animal.

The time element for the killing and roasting of the lamb has now been nullified. Next the timeline of when this happens must be addressed. The Israelites were to keep the lamb until the 14th day. The word *“until”* is Strong’s 5704, and the following definition is taken from the Theological Word Book of the Old Testament: *“ad functions as both preposition and conjunction. It indicates the gamut, toward, and the movement up to.”* Surely this places the killing of the lamb at the start of the 14th. In addition we find the translators use the term, “in the evening,” between the two evenings, or at twilight.

UNDERSTANDING "BETWEEN THE EVENINGS"

This is Strong's 6153, and has created a problem for those advocating the Jewish tradition of combining the Passover with the Night to be Much Observed. Their claim is that 6153 is counted from noon, as the sun is going down toward setting. Thus they say that the killing of the lamb can take place at any time in what we call the afternoon. Using this logic the Day of Atonement would be observed from sometime after noon on the 9th to sometime after noon on the 10th. "No", they say. "*Here we would apply it from sunset to sunset.*" Isn't this a bit incongruous? If an undisputed description can be found of how the word 6153 is used in another passage of God's word, its meaning would be clear, and it then should be applied to the Passover definition as well.

A primary rule of good bible study requires that a scripture or key word within that scripture should be searched out in other parts of the bible, where the meaning is made plain. By using this practice the questionable scripture will be correctly understood.

Such a scripture is found in **Exodus 16**, where God sets the record straight for Israel on which day is the Sabbath. **Exodus 16:1** shows that this day, the 15th day of the 2nd month was the day God dealt with the Israelites complaint of having no meat. There is no doubt that this is a Sabbath day because the following 7th day God designates as His Sabbath because there was no manna to gather.

WEDNESDAY – THE DAY OF THE PASSOVER

As an aside, backing up from this day in increments of seven, it is found that the 14th of the 1st month is a Wednesday. This becomes important when considering the last Passover of Christ's life in the New Testament, because this Passover of Exodus foreshadows Christ's crucifixion on the same weekday.

An important truth here is that God is going to send quail. When? Between the two evenings as shown in #6153. God would not have them run down birds, kill and butcher them for the evening meal if it was still noontime of the Sabbath, or afternoon on the Sabbath. God absolutely would not have them running down quail and cooking them on the Sabbath, when He did not give them manna, which required just picking up prior to the Sabbath. Therefore, it is obvious that the giving of the quail takes place after sunset, making it the beginning of the next day, the first day of the week.

The word numbered 6153 describes what was done between the two evenings, i.e. after sunset, the beginning of Sunday, the first day of the week. 6153 is NEVER used to designate an afternoon of a day. It is ALWAYS shown to be an end of a day, or the start of a new one. The time element for the end of a day, and the beginning of a new day technically occurs at the same instant, which is the disappearing of the sun below the horizon.

THE TWO DERIVATIONS OF STRONG'S 6153

Strong's #6153 has two different spellings, both carrying the same number, and they have a similar meaning. However the words used in **Exodus 12** and **Exodus 16** do have the same spelling,

but require a more distinct translation, which has already been pointed out. The difference in the spelling of these words can be seen in the Interlinear Bible by J.P. Green, Sr. For confirmation see page 170 and 184 of volume 1.

THE VERY FIRST PASSOVER IN EGYPT'S TIMELINE

As the bible outlines, not as rabbinical tradition dictates, a correct timeline will now be set. The lamb is chosen on the 10th day of the first month, a Sabbath. The lamb is kept three days, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday without food or water before it is killed. At the beginning of the 14th, just after sunset on Wednesday, the lamb is then killed, which has been proven by the scriptures which describe when a new day begins.

Exodus 16 defines the correct definition of “*between the evenings*”, because the Sabbath day has ended, resulting in the beginning of the next day.

The lamb was killed and the blood struck on the doorposts and lintel at that time. Then, before midnight, the lamb was roasted and eaten. This is shown in **Exodus 12:11-13**, “***And thus you shall eat it: [with] a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. (#2649—meaning respect, awe.) It [is] the LORD’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt. I will execute judgment; I [am] the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you [are]. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [you] when I strike the land of Egypt.***”

The statement in **Verse 13** “***I will pass over you;***” is the defining statement for the naming of the 14th of Nisan as the Passover. God passed over their dwellings, saving their first born from certain death.

WHEN THEY LEFT EGYPT

Numbers 33:3-4 reads: “***They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after (#4283) the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians were burying all [their] first born, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also, on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.***”

These verses put to rest all doubt of the Passover on the 14th being a separate 24 hour day from the 15th, which is the first day of Unleavened Bread. To make sure there is no misunderstanding about the above scripture: The “*day after*” is a combination word, #4480 and #4283 with the following definitions for these words found in The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament, “4480 is used as a preposition attached to its noun, meaning “fourth” used of a time, it usually means time from when, e.g. from antiquity.” “#4283, Mohorat. Tomorrow: taken from the Word Book of the Old Testament. The most interesting feature about this feminine noun is that ‘On the morrow of’ means “after.” **Leviticus 23:11** “***He shall wave the sheaf before the***

LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”

Also see **Leviticus 23:15-16**, **Numbers 33:3**, and **Joshua 5:11**.

There can be no question or ambiguity about the directions in these scriptures, because it is how these very days are kept today. The designation is “the next day,” establishing proof of the day they departed.

This clinches it. The day they departed was the 15th. Of necessity, the day before was the 14th, and here the fourteenth is clearly named The Passover. Continuing in **Numbers 33:4**, it was on the 15th that the Egyptians were burying their first born. Knowing the fetish they had about death and the importance of burial they would have taken some time to grieve, prepare the bodies for burying, which would have taken place during the morning and afternoon of the 14th, preceding the burial at the beginning of the 15th when Israel was leaving.

TWO KINDS OF DAYS

Exodus 12:14 is the start of a new subject, pertaining to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Feast days are designated by the requirement to have a holy convocation—one central point where all Israel is to be gathered together. This is what took place on the 15th, and is different from the Passover and the Sabbath, which were home based or locally observed.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE LAND

Remember, for the Passover the Israelites were in their homes, not in a city, but scattered throughout the land of Goshen, though some may have been in the confines of Rameses. They were principally keepers of sheep and cattle, which would require an extensive amount of land, meaning they would have to travel some distance; perhaps as much as ten miles to reach Rameses, which was the starting point of their exodus. Rameses was centrally located in the land of Goshen, and though Goshen covered a large territory, the distance to Rameses would be mitigated.

WHEN COULD THEY LEAVE THEIR HOMES?

An additional point is found in **Exodus 12:22** **“And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip [it] in the blood that [is] in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two door posts with the blood that [is] in the basin. And none of you shall go out the door of his house until morning.”** The key word used here is “morning,” #1242, boger. Morning, dawn. Linked with the root bagar, boger denotes the breaking through of the daylight, and thus dawn, or more usually morning. From The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament.

MOSES CALL TO LEAVE

Does **Exodus 12:31** counter this instruction? **“Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, ‘Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said.’”** Called is the important word here. He did not have Moses and

Aaron there to direct His message to. The death angel passed through the land at midnight. It would be some time after that before the Pharaoh decided to release Israel. Remember, a messenger would have to be called, who in turn would need to go to the stables, saddle a horse or hitch a chariot, and then take the time to travel to where Moses was located. All this with no light, and the moon would be waning as the dawn approached. And this would all be done with no lighted roads. In addition, a pertinent scripture is found in **Exodus 10:28-29** *“Then Pharaoh said to him, ‘Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!’ So Moses said, ‘You have spoken well. I will never see your face again.’”* And they never saw one another again!

In **Exodus 12:1-14** God laid out to Moses and Aaron the plan for the Passover and its future observance as a memorial of what was about to happen, but often missed is that in **Verses 15-17** God also laid out, in advance, the observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread, which would be acted out in the subsequent days as the Israelites fled from Egypt. In **Verse 16** God imposed the requirement for the people to be called together in a holy convocation. These verses were a direction that was about to be immediately fulfilled.

If they remained in their homes until the break of day they would need to travel to the central location; not only to begin their journey, but to follow the direction to have a holy convocation requiring them to gather. **Exodus 12:16** *“On the first day [there shall be] a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you...”* **Exodus 12:50** *“Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.”* God is telling us that ALL of the previous directions were fulfilled, not just some, but ALL.

NIGHT TO BE MUCH OBSERVED

Traveling to Rameses was done during the day portion of the 14th, and they then started as a group from Rameses in the evening—the beginning of the 15th, a Thursday. As **Numbers 33:3** states, and **Exodus 12:37** agrees: *“Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.”* The travel to Succoth was a short journey, and is realized as simply a campsite; Succoth meaning temporary shelter.

Exodus 12:40-42 *“Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt [was] four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It [is] a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This [is] that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.”*

Backtracking 430 years finds that it is the very day that Abraham left Haran to start his journey to the Promised Land, just as the Israelites did. For the complete explanation of the 430 years read the article: “430 Years of Exodus & 400 Years of Genesis Clarified/Combined.” <https://bit.ly/2FSNmlc>

Exodus 12:42 reads: *"It [is] a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This [is] that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all of the children of Israel throughout their generations."*

KJV—Exodus 12:42 *"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."*

Here God tells the Israelites that this is an important night; so important that they should observe it forever. The term "much observed" used in the **KJV Version** (above) is #8107; and interestingly this term is never used again. Plainly God has placed more than a modicum of importance on this night. Would He leave Israel without any direction as to how they were to observe it? **Exodus 12** has nothing in it about how to observe this night. The directions are found in **Deuteronomy 16:1-8**. The problem arises because the word "Passover" is used in these scriptures, and as will be addressed the directions given here run contrary to those required for the Passover of **Exodus 12**. This mystery is cleared up by another scripture located in **Exodus 34:18** and **25**.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERM "PASSEVER"

Exodus 34:18, 25 *"The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt. You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover left until morning."*

Note that here it is called "the Feast of the Passover," and is obviously referring to the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The term "feast" used here shows that the word Passover can refer to two separate occasions, meaning that it is the content of the verses that determine whether it is speaking about the memorial of the death angel passing over, or the leaving of Egypt the following night.

SOLEMN OBSERVANCE

What is the meaning of "solemn observance"? Looking at another set of scriptures will explain what the Israelites did on this night. Going to **Deuteronomy 16**, in the first eight verses, a detailed description is found of how Israelites celebrated this important night. **Verse 1**, *"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night."*

The topic of this verse is clearly spelled out; speaking of the night they were brought out of Egypt, the 15th of Abib as **Numbers 33:3** points out. **Deuteronomy 16:2**, *"Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name."*

SACRIFICES DEFINED

There are two important directions given here delineating that this instruction pertains to the 15th. The term "the herd" is the first automatic restriction preventing this from being the night

where the death angel passed over. That could only be a sacrifice of the lamb of the first year. Secondly, all of Israel is to come together at the place that the LORD chooses for convocation, not in individual homes as directed for the Passover.

The word “herd is #1241 and is defined in the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament as follows: “Bagar,” Cattle, herd, ox. Bagar (180 times), often used collectively, is doubtfully to be linked with Bagar (see above) to split, more particularly to plow. Though bagar refers to draught animals such as oxen, the term is used for domestic cattle, including bulls, cows, heifers, and calves. Bagar is distinguished from “flock” which denotes small cattle such as sheep and goats.”

DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Deuteronomy 16:3, *“You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, [that is] the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.”* Here the emphasis is placed on the leaving of Egypt, coming out of slavery.

Deuteronomy 16:4, *“And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall [any] of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.”* This is clarified in **Leviticus 22:29-30**, *“And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, (which is what they were doing) to the LORD, offer [it] of your own free will. On the same day it shall be eaten. You shall leave none of it until morning.”*

The instructions give a period of seven days in which leaven is not to be eaten or found in their possession. See **Exodus 12:19**. **Deuteronomy 16:5**, *“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you;”*

KEEPING THESE DAYS IN THE FUTURE

Because the instruction was to *“not sacrifice the Passover within your gates,”* a logistics problem would be presented for future generations once the land was settled. Obviously they were required to come to a central location to observe this special night. One could not keep the Passover of the 14th in his own home if he were required to keep the seven days of unleavened bread in Jerusalem, as was true in the time of Christ; but it did not negate the fact that this was still to be a family affair, and to be kept as such. Christ shows us this by keeping it in a private way with His disciples, whom He called His family. **Matthew 12:49**.

This truth is confirmed in the two great Passovers of the Kings of Judah. In **II Chronicles 30:17**, (Hezekiah’s Passover,) we read, *“For [there were] many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover [lambs] for everyone [who was] not clean, to sanctify [them] to the LORD.”* The change instituted here shows that the initial responsibility for the killing of the Passover lambs was with the individuals, not with the Priesthood or Levites.

Again, in Josiah’s great Passover an important fact is found that substantiates the responsibility for the Passover sacrifice by the individual families. **II Chronicles 35:6-7** tell us: *“So slaughter the*

Passover [offerings], consecrate yourselves, and prepare [them] for your brethren, that [they] may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. Then Josiah gave the [lay] people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover [offerings] for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these [were] from the king's possessions."

Josiah did two things that were important. First he went to the instructions of Moses so that he would correctly observe the Passover. As these instructions of Moses have been explained, it is the reason these smaller animals were given to the people for their Passover, and the larger animals were for the Night to be Much Observed, and the following seven days of Unleavened Bread.

The great number of the kids and lambs sacrificed would demand that this be done on a family basis as Moses had instructed.

The Passover of the 14th was done as a family unit wherever they were residing, but the convocation was on the 15th.

Deuteronomy 16:6, "but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt." The key is "*the time you came out of Egypt,*" the evening of the 15th. ***Deuteronomy 16:7, "And you shall roast (basha) and eat [it] in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents."***

Two points are to be remembered about this scripture. The word "*basha*" means either roast or boil what you are preparing to eat and this would not be allowed for the paschal sacrifice of the 14th. Also, it is "*where God chooses,*" meaning a convocation of the Israelites.

Though the word "Passover" is used consistently throughout these scriptures, the actions and definitions can only be understood as occurring on the night they departed Egypt, the beginning of the 15th.

All the facts presented here come from the bible, the Word of God, and not from any commentary or Jewish tradition. The term used, the 14th of Nisan, or Abib, is always named the Passover. This means that it was the day the death angel passed over the children of Israel, not killing any who had the blood on the doorpost and lintel.

Additionally, the 15th of the first month is always designated as the first day of seven days of Unleavened Bread. These are two separate events and are to be celebrated as such.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Then how should we, in light of the New Testament, view what is presented here? Do we see Christ as disconnected from the Old Testament? In fact He used the Old Testament to show that

it was He who was prophesied to come as the Messiah, and that He would be sacrificed as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

One sterling fact is apparent about Christ that should always direct our beliefs and actions. **John 1:1** tells us who Christ was. ***“In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God ...”*** This scripture explains it all. What is consistently referred to as *“The Word of God?”* in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible?

Then who is the author? Who is responsible for every word written therein? **Hebrews 12:2**, ***“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, ...”*** It is obvious by reading the four gospels that Christ had perfect and instant recall of the entire bible. Why? It had to be because He was the one responsible for its entire content.

Once the spectacular event of the original Passover is thoroughly grasped, then it is realized that its author, Christ, would not deviate from His own instructions on how and when the Passover was to be observed. Also recognized is that He would be the prophetic fulfillment of the original Passover.

ON WHAT DID CHRIST BASE HIS MESSIAHSHIP

The determining scripture, the one on which Christ based His Messiahship, and reflects what actually happened to Him after His death on the cross is **Matthew 12:38-42**; and when examining the biblical account of the Crucifixion it is clearly shown that it takes place on a Wednesday. His crucifixion did not begin on a Friday as generally accepted. Christ explicitly states otherwise in **Matthew 12:39-40**, ***“But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’”*** Buried!

Here Christ places His authentication as the Messiah on being dead and in the grave for three complete days and three complete nights. This time period began on the fourteenth of Nisan or Abib, nearing sunset. By Christ’s own words He had to fulfill this requirement of three days and three nights to be the Messiah. He literally staked all He did in His life on earth to be measured by this declaration.

Remember, unlike our present method of time keeping God marks the beginning and end of the day at sunset.

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS

Christ entered the tomb shortly before the end of the day. **Luke 23:54-55**, ***“That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.*** (coming to the end of the day, with the annual Sabbath beginning at sunset.) ***And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.”*** These women walked from Golgotha back to Jerusalem, bringing the preparation day to a close.

Also, the day was not a Friday before the weekly Sabbath, but the day before an annual Sabbath. **John 19:31** *“Therefore because it was the Preparation [Day], that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away.”*

DO NOT IGNORE THE BOOK OF JOHN

Some would like to disregard the statement by John, reasoning that the other three gospels fail to mention that the day following the preparation day was an annual high day. Their logic, based on the above thinking is that any differences which John revealed that were not confirmed by any of the other three gospels should not be accepted as valid. The truth is that the book of John was written to augment the other three gospels. John wrote his gospel to fill in what the others had left out, and one important point he made was that the day following the preparation was not an ordinary weekly Sabbath but a high day Sabbath. John had the ultimate responsibility for accurately preserving the events of Christ’s life, death and resurrection. Coupling the book of John with the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke gives us a true picture. When thinking past these human ideas it should be realized that Christ Himself, the Word, gave to these men what was needed to be preserved for our knowledge today.

This annual high day Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, could only occur on a Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday of the week. One needs only to consult the Hebrew calendar to find this to be true. In this case it was a Thursday. **Mark 16:1**, *“Now when the Sabbath was past, (the first Day of Unleavened Bread—**Leviticus 23:6-7**), Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.”* These women made their purchases on the day following the annual Sabbath, or the second day of Christ’s interment, a Friday. During this time in history businesses were only open during daylight hours, not as business is presently conducted. In addition, no buying or selling could take place on either a high day Sabbath or a weekly Sabbath. Remember! This high day Sabbath began at sundown on Wednesday and ended Thursday at sundown. Therefore, an intervening day was required to purchase and prepare the spices to anoint Christ’s body.

Luke 23:56 tells us what took place on the day after the spices were purchased and prepared. *“Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.”* The scriptures show that two separate Sabbaths occurred in that week, thus accounting for three days and three nights. The first Sabbath was an annual Sabbath—the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The second was the weekly Sabbath that is now called Saturday. Christ went into the tomb just before sunset on Wednesday, meaning He was resurrected just before sunset on Saturday, the weekly Sabbath, fulfilling precisely His time in the grave of three days and three nights. This also mirrors the Passover of **Exodus 12** as shown to have occurred on a Wednesday.

UNDERSTANDING LUKE 24:20-21

Because of the finality of Christ’s statements in **Matthew 12** all references to His time in the grave must be measured by this absolute. One scripture used to counter Christ’s words is found in **Luke**

24:20-21, “and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.”

If this scripture refers to the time lapse of Christ’s interment it would appear to be a problem. However, if one understands what the topic of discussion was, it is no longer a problem. The discussion centers on what the high priests and rulers did. Their efforts were concluded on Thursday morning. **Matthew 27:62-66, “On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying ‘Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go your way, make [it] as secure as you know how.’ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.”**

Setting the guard and sealing the tomb was their final act, and Sunday would be the third day, with this explanation: From Thursday to Friday morning is day one, Friday morning to Saturday morning is day two, Saturday morning to Sunday morning is day three. The setting of the guard was an important event when considering that it resulted in the fabricated story as **Matthew** relates in **Chapter 28:11-15. “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him [away] while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”**

It is important to keep in mind that all of these accounts were written after the fact, so that the hidden parts of each story were revealed by the writers.

In conclusion, all of the information presented herein from both Old and New Testaments confirms that the Passover is a separate day, to be observed as a memorial of Christ’s crucifixion and death. It is a yearly observation.

The evening of the first Day of Unleavened Bread, (the start of the day,) is a commemoration of our release from the slavery of this world.

Don Roth 3-26-15