

A New Look at the Passover Question

When Should the PASSOVER Be Observed?

Never since the days of the Early New Testament Church has the Passover been correctly observed or understood! Some make it into a Church service; some observe it at the beginning of Nisan 14; others at the end of the 14th. What what does the Bible say? When did Israel leave Egypt? When did Yeshua (Jesus) Himself observe Passover? What did the scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses' seat, command? For **ALMOST TWO THOUSAND YEARS** the truth has been buried under pagan superstition! What is the **PLAIN TRUTH** about the Passover? When should it be observed? Here is **VITAL TRUTH** *you need to know!*

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The Passover is one of the most important of all Yahweh's festivals -- yet surprisingly there is more controversy and confusion over this holy festival of Yahweh than any other! Why all the confusion?

Some observe the Passover at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, some at the end of the 14th of Nisan; some make it into a cold, austere religious Church service, with ministers officiating, and lock the doors to keep out any who are late. To some it is even more solemn an occasion than the Day of Atonement!

Why such confusion and misunderstanding over the Passover? In this article, you will learn the truth about the Passover -- truth which has been buried and totally lost for almost 2,000 years, but now revealed during these **LAST DAYS** for the very first time! Surely Yah Almighty is beginning to **RESTORE** His true knowledge during this end time! The true understanding of the Passover is one of the **KEY ESSENTIAL TRUTHS** which has been lost to the world and to the Assemblies of Yahweh for **CENTURIES**, since the very time of the apostles themselves!

Consider for a moment! The Word of Yahweh says we are to first **REPENT** of sin (that is,

put sin out of our lives), and then “believe on Messiah” and be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit. Peter was inspired to write, “REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yeshua Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). He later told thousands, “Repent ye therefore, and BE CONVERTED, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Notice! Repentance comes first! Then comes the blotting out of our sins by the blood of Messiah! First we must repent and put away our sins; and then Yahweh covers our sins with the shed blood of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah!

But the Worldwide Church of God and others claim Passover pictures “repentance” and the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures putting “sin” out of our lives. Yet, once they partake of the Passover, the next day they go out and eat leavened products -- doughnuts, toast, pancakes, hamburgers, etc. -- AFTER they have partaken of “Passover” picturing “repentance” of sin! Does this make any sense? This is backwards! Yahweh does not really cover our sins with the blood of The Messiah, our Passover lamb, until AFTER WE REPENT OF SIN, and and put “sin” -- typified by “leaven” -- OUT of our lives, and depart from sin!

What, then, is the truth about the Passover? When should it be observed? Let us study the original instructions concerning the Passover, and see if we can sort out this problem once and for all.

The Old Testament Passover

In the book of Exodus we read, “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house . . . 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” (Exo.12:3-6).

The original Hebrew in this passage is *ben ha arbayim* and means, literally, “between the two evenings.” Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* tells us about this expression. It relates, “between the two evenings, Ex. 16:12; 30:8; used as MARKING THE SPACE OF TIME DURING WHICH THE PASCHAL LAMB WAS SLAIN, Ex.12:6; Lev.23:5; Num.9:3; and the EVENING SACRIFICE WAS OFFERED, Ex.29:30, 41; Num.28:4.”

The big question is, then, what does this expression really refer to? There has been controversy over this point for thousands of years. According to the opinion of the Karaites and Samaritans, the expression refers to the time between sunset and deep twilight, or dusk. ‘The Pharisees, however, and the Rabbinists considered the TIME WHEN THE SUN BEGAN TO DESCEND to be called the FIRST EVENING (Arabic ‘little evening’; ‘when it begins to draw towards evening’; and the SECOND EVENING to be the REAL SUNSET” (Gesenius).

The question, then, is -- who is right?

Before going further into this question, I would like to point out two very important facts which we must keep uppermost in mind. First, who were the “Samaritans”? Since they are the foremost ancient "authority" for the "dusk theory" as the interpretation of this Hebrew expression, we ought to know who they were. The Samaritans were a NON-HEBREW, GENTILE people who were transported into the northern portion of Israel after the captivity of the northern Ten

Tribes in 718-721 B.C.

They were PAGANS! They built their own temple at Mount Gerazim in Israel, as competition to the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. We read, “And the king of Assyria brought men from BABYLON, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them IN THE CITIES OF SAMARIA instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. . . . Howbeit every nation made ELOHIM OF THEIR OWN, and put them in the houses of the high places which the SAMARITANS had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt . . .” (II Kings 17:24-29).

The Jewish Holy Scriptures continues the account: “They worshiped YAHWEH, but they also appointed from their own ranks priests of the shrines, who officiated for them in the cult places. They worshiped YAHWEH, WHILE SERVING THEIR OWN ELOHIM according to the practices of the nations from which they had been deported. TO THIS DAY THEY FOLLOW THEIR FORMER PRACTICES. They do not worship YAHWEH [properly]. They do NOT follow the laws and practices, the Teaching and Instruction that YAHWEH enjoined upon the descendants of Jacob -- who was given the name Israel But they did NOT obey; they continued their *FORMER* practices. Those nations worshiped YAHWEH, *but they also served their idols*. TO THIS DAY their children and their children's children do as their ancestors did” (II Kings 17:33-41).

Notice! These Samaritans were *MIXED UP PAGANS!* They perverted, twisted, and distorted the truth of Yahweh into error. They tried to mix the worship of Yahweh with their ancient PAGAN superstitions and practices. They compromised the truth of Yahweh and amalgamated, merged, blended truth with pagan superstition and error!

In the New Testament, Yeshua Messiah had an encounter with these pagan Samaritans. Yeshua said to a woman of Samaria, descended from these pagan people, “*Ye worship ye know not what: we [Jews] know what we worship: FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS*” (John 4:22). Thus the Holy Word of Yahweh, clearly shows us we should NOT look to the SAMARITANS for religious teaching, or practice! To do so would be a grave error of the first magnitude!

The Teaching of the Pharisees

Now, point number two: As Gesenius pointed out, the Pharisees and Rabbis of the Jews taught that the phrase “between the two evenings” meant from the time the sun begins to descend till final sunset. Josephus, a leading Pharisee and Jewish general of the first century, and the greatest Jewish historian of ancient times, wrote concerning this subject. In his book *Wars of the Jews*, he declared: “So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the PASSOVER, WHEN THEY SLAY THEIR SACRIFICES FROM THE NINTH HOUR TO THE ELEVENTH . . .” (*Wars*, Bk.VI, ix, 3).

Notice carefully! In terms of Roman time, or today's Roman calendar, this means that the JEWS in ancient times sacrificed the Passover from 3:00 PM in the afternoon until 5:00 PM -- obviously *BEFORE* SUNSET! In the months of March-April, when Passover occurs, sunset is about 6:00 PM or later!

Now consider carefully! Since the Passover was sacrificed between 3-5 PM, BEFORE SUNSET, on Nisan 14, IT HAD TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE END OF NISAN 14, AS THE DAY WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE! If it had been sacrificed between 3-5 PM just before the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, it would have been sacrificed on NISAN 13! That, of course, is preposterous! Yahweh did not command the Passover to be killed on the 13th of Nisan -- He said very plainly, “ye shall KEEP IT UP *UNTIL THE FOURTEENTH DAY*” -- and then “KILL IT IN THE EVENING” (Exodus 12:6). To kill it before the 14th of Nisan would have been contrary to the LAW!

What could be plainer than that? But some say it was to be killed right after sunset, when the 14th of Nisan began. This interpretation has many problems. Number one is, how do you kill so many lambs within a short space of 45 minutes, between sunset and nightfall? Number two is, how do you roast the lamb, beginning at that time, and sit down to eat it before very, very late, since lambs would require several HOURS to properly roast? If sunset were 6:30 PM, and you roasted the lamb for 3-4 hours, you wouldn't be ready to eat it until 9:30 to 10:30! Is that the time these various churches hold their so-called “Passover” services? Of course not!

The Pharisees were the religious teachers during the time of the Messiah. They were the ones followed by the whole nation of Judea in terms of religious practice. On this point of the proper time for observing the Passover, there is no argument or disagreement between the Pharisees and high priests. They were in complete unity, so far as history relates.

Should we today follow the example set by the Pharisees, as to the proper time for observing the Passover? That is, the original Passover was slain in the latter part of the 14th, but not eaten until the twilight or darkness of Nisan 15th. What did Yeshua Himself say on this issue?

Yeshua did not take issue with the teaching of the Pharisees concerning the Torah, or Law, or the proper times for the holy days and festivals of Yahweh to be observed. Rather, He Himself, with all the authority of Heaven, declared: “The scribes and the PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES' SEAT: *ALL THEREFORE WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, THAT OBSERVE AND DO . . .*” (Matt.23:2-3).

How crystal clear -- how plain! Since the Pharisees sat in MOSES' SEAT, their authority in teaching the laws and statutes and holy days of Yahweh was BINDING UPON ALL THE CHURCH! They taught that Passover should be observed at the closing or ending of the 14th of Nisan, not at the beginning of the day! The Passover was killed in the LATE AFTERNOON, AT THE VERY TIME YESHUA MESSIAH, OUR PASSOVER LAMB, WAS SLAIN AND SHED HIS BLOOD FOR OUR SINS! Therefore, Yeshua was a PERFECT ANTI-TYPE of the original Passover lamb!

Imagine the scene, if you can. Just as Yeshua Messiah was pouring out His holy blood for our sins, hanging on the tree, paying the penalty for our sins, as our Passover Lamb of Yahweh, multiple thousands of Jews throughout Judea were also slaying their Passover lambs! What a perfect fulfillment! What a perfect anti-type! What a marvelous picture! Yeshua fulfilled the anti-type of the Passover PERFECTLY! Josephus tells us that during that time about 256,000 Passover lambs were being slain, one for every ten people who were undefiled. Thus the population in Judea was about 2,500,000 during the time of Yeshua. All those Passover lambs pointed to HIM -- the true Passover Lamb of Yahweh!

Unger's Bible Dictionary points out concerning the Passover, "The daily evening sacrifice (Exod.29:38,39), usually killed at the eighth hour and a half (i.e., 2:30 P.M.), and offered up at the ninth and a half hour (i.e., 3:30 P.M.), was on this day killed at 1:30 and offered at 2:30 P.M., an hour earlier . . ." (article, "Festivals," p.354).

The *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* declares concerning the Passover, "[Heb.*pesah* from *pasah* (to pass over, in sense of sparing) . . .] The 1st of the 3 annual festivals at which all the men were required to appear at the sanctuary . . . known also as the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex.23:15; Deut.16:16). It was instituted in Egypt to commemorate the culminating event in the redemption of the Israelites (Ex.12:1,14,42; 23:15; Deut.16:1,3). THAT NIGHT WAS TO BE MUCH OBSERVED UNTO YAHWEH, WHEN HE SMOTE ALL THE FIRSTBORN in the land of Egypt, but passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood had been sprinkled. . . .The festival began on the 14th of Abib AT EVENING, THAT IS, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 15TH DAY, with the sacrificial meal (Lev.23:5-6). A lamb or kid was SLAIN BETWEEN THE EVENINGS, THAT IS, TOWARD SUNSET (Ex.12:6; Deut.16:6; cf. between the 9th and 11th hours" (article "Passover," p.705).

Other Biblical Evidence

After studying into this subject, I must confess I find it incredibly difficult to believe anybody could claim, today, that the Passover was slain and offered AFTER SUNSET, that is, at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan or Abib. Certainly, everyone admits that Yeshua Messiah, the true Passover Lamb of Yahweh, of whom the Passover lamb was a forerunner or type, was slain at the END of the 14th of Nisan! There is no argument there. Then why do whole Churches believe that the Passover itself was offered at the BEGINNING of the 14th of Nisan? The very idea boggles my mind. However, they have swallowed the teaching of the Samaritans, those pagan idolaters who had their own competing temple at Mount Gerazim in Samaria -- the Samaritans, whose Babylonian roots is clearly revealed in the Bible!

Notice further evidence concerning the proper time for the slaying of the Passover!

Yahweh told Moses, "But at the place which Yahweh thy Elohim shall choose to place his name 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" (Deut.16:6). Notice! It was to be slain "at the going down of the sun" -- that is, at the DESCENDING of the sun, or, to put it another way, "as the sun goes down," or "as the sun DESCENDS." This tense is equivalent to the present progressive tense in English! It is not past tense, that is, "after the sun goes down," or "after sunset." It is, rather, AS THE SUN IS GOING DOWN, or descending in the western sky, toward the horizon -- not AFTER it has GONE down!

This same expression is used elsewhere in the Old Testament. "And when the sun was going down . . ." (Gen.15:12). The Hebrew Scriptures state: "AS THE SUN WAS ABOUT TO SET . . ." Clearly, this expression refers to the time *BEFORE* SUNSET, not afterward!

"And afterward Joshua smote them (the Canaanite kings), and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees UNTIL THE EVENING. And it came to pass at the TIME OF THE *GOING DOWN* OF THE SUN, that Joshua commanded, and they took

them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain unto this very day" (Josh.10:26-27).

This event shows that the expression "going down of the sun" refers to the time right up until sunset or sundown, but not after. The Israelites were commanded, in the law of Yahweh, not to allow the dead bodies of criminals to hang on a tree at night. Yahweh told Moses, "If a man is guilty of a capital offense and is put to death, and you impale him on a stake, you must not let his corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must BURY HIM *THE SAME DAY*" (Deut.21:22-23). Since each day begins and ends at SUNSET, to bury such a criminal "*THE SAME DAY*" means he had to be buried *PRIOR TO SUNSET!* Thus, we read again of Joshua who slew the king of Ai. "And the king of Ai was impaled for a stake UNTIL EVENING. AT SUNSET, Joshua had the corpse taken down from the stake . . ." (Joshua 8:29)

This same expression is used in the Bible of the death of king Ahab. As Ahab was fighting the Syrians, he was struck by an arrow from a bowman and was sorely wounded. "And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and DIED AT EVEN: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went out a proclamation throughout the host ABOUT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country" (I Kings 22:35-36). The Hebrew Tanakh, or Holy Scriptures, has this verse, "AS THE SUN WAS GOING DOWN." Again, the reference is to the time just prior to sunset or sundown, as the sun's light begins to fade in the west.

The Evening Sacrifice

In the book of Numbers Yahweh gives instructions concerning the daily sacrifices which were to be offered before Him. Yahweh commanded, "And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire unto YAHWEH; two lambs of the first year without spot DAY BY DAY [Heb. 'IN A DAY'], for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer IN THE MORNING, and the other lamb shalt thou offer AT EVEN [Heb. 'BETWEEN THE EVENINGS'] . . ." (Num.28:3-4).

Notice carefully! Both these offerings were to be offered DAILY, "day by day," "IN A DAY" -- that is, WITHIN THE SAME DAY! The first one is the morning sacrifice, and the second one is the EVENING sacrifice. In order for the evening sacrifice to be offered the SAME DAY as the morning sacrifice, it had to be offered BEFORE SUNSET! Otherwise it would have been the NEXT day! What could be clearer? Thus, the daily sacrifices is another additional proof that "evening" or "between the evenings" has to refer to the period of time BEFORE SUNSET, or LATE AFTERNOON BEFORE SUNDOWN!

Now that we have thoroughly proved this vital point, let's continue the story of the Passover in Egypt, and understand the time sequence of events which occurred during that fateful and awesome night. As we go, the story will become more and more plain, even to those who have been confused in the past.

The Passover Saga

After slaying the Passover lamb, the children of Israel were told to take the blood of the lamb and strike it over the two side posts and on the upper door post of their houses. Yahweh

said, “And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it . . . And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning . . . 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 Yahweh’s passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am YAHWEH.

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye 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 smite the land of Egypt.

“AND THIS DAY SHALL BE UNTO YOU FOR A MEMORIAL; and ye shall KEEP IT A FEAST to Yahweh throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a FEAST by an ordinance FOR EVER” (Exo.12:7-14).

Now notice carefully. This day which is to be kept a Feast to Yahweh forever -- what day or event is Elohim talking about in this passage of Scripture? Why, read it again! The context here is very clear; it can be nothing else; Yahweh is plainly talking about the PASSOVER! The Passover is a MEMORIAL; it is a FEAST -- ordained FOREVER!

Why, then, do the Worldwide Church of God and others claim the Passover is NOT a “Feast” day of Yahweh? How can they say such a thing? Where did they go astray? The Word of Yahweh is explicitly clear. All through this passage of Scripture, the context is the Passover celebration, the eating of the lamb, the celebrating of Elohim’s **passing over** the children of Israel when He smites the Egyptians and their pagan gods! After discussing nothing else but this magnificent “Passover” day, Yahweh says, “THIS DAY shall be unto you . . . a FEAST” -- not some other day, or some other celebration (Exo.12:14). The Passover meal is eaten on a literal FEAST day – the first Day of Unleavened Bread! How plain! So it is both a Holy Day and a Feast Day! The slaying of the Passover, on Nisan 14, is merely preparatory to the great FEAST that begins with the Passover meal that very night, as the 15th of Nisan – the first Day of Unleavened Bread – begins!

For years I had trouble with this verse, as I read it, wondering how in the world the Worldwide Church of God could say it does not refer to the PASSOVER! What was their problem? Simple: They put the Passover a night early, and therefore they had to invent another separate feast, which they called “The Night To Be Much Observed,” not realizing that the “night to be much observed” was actually the PASSOVER itself! Of course! It makes perfect sense! It was the Passover – that is *why* it was the night to be much observed! It celebrates their being SET FREE from bondage to the Egyptians!

The Passover was to be slain on the 14th, before sunset. It was then to be eaten on the 15th, during the night (Exo.12:8), “in haste.” It was commanded to be a FEAST -- a memorial forever! Although the 14th of Nisan itself was not a “holy day,” the Passover feast was actually eaten on the “First Day of Unleavened Bread,” at night, which is a HOLYDAY of Yahweh!

Notice! Yahweh commanded, “And this day [the Passover] shall be unto you . . . a FEAST to YAHWEH . . . ye shall keep it a FEAST by an ordinance forever. SEVEN DAYS SHALL YE EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD . . . for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until

the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you” (Exo.12:14-16). This seven-day observance began with the FEAST of the Passover meal itself!

The Passover itself, then, introduces the seven day festival of the Passover, or unleavened bread. It was actually a *seven-day festival*, not an eight day festival. The first part of the 14th of Nisan, prior to the slaying of the lamb, was actually referred to by the Jews as the “preparation of the Passover.” In Matthew’s gospel we read that Joseph of Arimathaea came and took the body of Yeshua, “when the even was come” (Matt.27:57), laid it in his own new tomb, and departed (v.60). This would have had to be the evening of the 14th, beginning of the 15th. Then we read, “Now the NEXT DAY [the morning of the 15th], THAT FOLLOWED THE DAY OF THE PREPARATION, the chief priests and Pharisees came . . .” (Matt.27:62). Now since the “next day” had to be the daylight portion of the 15th of Nisan, and since it “followed the day of the preparation,” this proves that the 14th of Nisan was also known as the “day of the preparation,” or “the preparation of the Passover”! The day of the preparation was not the 13th; this verse proves it! Here, then, is further proof that the Passover occurred at the END of the 14th, and not at its beginning!

Mark corroborates this fact. We read in Mark, “And now when the even was come, BECAUSE IT WAS THE PREPARATION, that is, the DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH [the annual Sabbath, or First Day of Unleavened Bread] . . .” (Mark 15:42).

Luke further states, “And THAT DAY [the 14th] was the PREPARATION, and the sabbath drew on” (Luke 23:54). Even more emphatic proof is found in the gospel of John. Here we find in chapter 19 the details of Yeshua’s appearance before Pilate on the daylight portion of the 14th, in the morning. Pilate brought Yeshua to the place called the Pavement (John 19:13). “And it was THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER . . .” (verse 14)! This day, all admit, was the 14th of Nisan. Yet Scripture itself plainly calls it “THE PREPARATION of the Passover”! Why? Because the Passover was *not yet to be eaten*, until that same evening! And remember – this was some time AFTER Yeshua had finished His last meal with the disciples, proving once again that His final meal with them was not the Passover!

What could be plainer?

In this same chapter, after Yeshua was crucified, and died, about 3:00 PM in the afternoon, we find, “The Jews therefore, BECAUSE IT WAS THE *PREPARATION*, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (FOR THAT SABBATH WAS AN HIGH DAY,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (John 19:31). Here again the 14th of Nisan is called the “preparation,” because the following day, beginning at evening, was an ANNUAL HOLY DAY -- an “High Day,” the day the Passover was to be eaten, the First Day of Unleavened Bread!

Mark explains further, “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). The actual “first day of unleavened bread” is Nisan 15. So what does this verse mean? The Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35). Actually, the term “first day” here is *protos hemera*, and can be translated “beginning time” or “prior period.” It is a

reference to the time before the Passover celebration itself – that is, the preparation period! “First” here is number #4413 in Strong’s Concordance and means, “foremost, in time, place, or importance – before, beginning, best, chief, first, former.” The word *hemera* translated “day” can refer to a “period of time,” such as “the day of YAHWEH,” “the day of vengeance,” etc. Therefore this verse is simply referring to the PERIOD OF TIME PRIOR TO THE PASSOVER, WHEN IT WAS BEING PREPARED FOR – the time period during which it was prepared and finally killed. This entire period was from the 10th of Nisan, when the Passover lambs were selected, until the 14th, when they were killed (Exodus 12:3-6).

Now notice once again Yahweh's commandment! In Exodus we read, “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT EVEN, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month, at even. SEVEN DAYS shall there be no leaven found in your houses . . .” (Exo.12:18-19).

Here it should be as plain as day. The feast of unleavened bread was to last exactly SEVEN DAYS, not eight days. It was to continue through the evening of the 21st day of Nisan. Therefore, it was to begin the evening of the 14th of Nisan, or beginning of the 15th -- that is, at sunset at the end of the 14th! This verse plainly says unleavened bread was to be eaten beginning the 14th of Nisan at evening till the 21st of Nisan at evening -- and it says this period of time is “seven days.” If the evening of the 14th meant the beginning of the 14th, as some suppose, then the correct number of days would have to have been EIGHT, not seven! So here again is proof the Passover occurred at the END of the 14th, and not its beginning! It is a SEVEN DAY FESTIVAL, not an eight day festival!

This “evening of the 14th” of Nisan in Exodus 12:18 has to be the same “evening” of the 14th of Nisan when the lamb was to be slain (Exo.12:6). Counting from that evening, there were to be SEVEN DAYS of unleavened bread -- not eight!

The Saga Continues

After the Israelites struck the blood of the lamb over their doorposts, they were commanded, “none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning” (Exo.12:22). They obeyed Yahweh. Later that night, “And it came to pass, that at midnight YAHWEH smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt . . . 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 an house where there was not one dead.

“And he called for Moses and Aaron BY NIGHT, and said, RISE UP, AND GET YOU FORTH FROM AMONG MY PEOPLE, both ye and the children of Israel; and GO, serve YAHWEH, as ye have said, and BE GONE [GET OUT!]; and bless me also.

“And the Egyptians were URGENT upon the people, that they might send them out of the land IN HASTE; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough BEFORE IT WAS LEAVENED, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders” (Exo.12:29-34).

Now notice what happened! That same Passover night the plague struck the Egyptians. At midnight they all arose, and found dead people everywhere! Pharaoh and his councilors were

beside themselves with anger, trembling with fear, and they were horror-struck. They immediately sent for Moses and Aaron, and commanded them, begged them, beseeched them, to take the children of Israel and GET OUT -- SCRAM! All the people were urgent upon them, urging them to DEPART immediately! As an enticement for them to leave, they gave them all their jewels and silver and gold, and beautiful things (Exo.12:35-36). Actually, they had begun doing this *before* the final plague (see Exodus 11:2-3). But as an added inducement for the Israelites to be cooperative, and to *get out*, before more calamities occurred, the Egyptians gave them even more jewelry as they were leaving!

Isn't it perfectly clear that all this happened the very night of the Passover, and the very next morning, early? The Egyptians didn't want the Israelites hanging around any longer. They URGED them to be ON THEIR WAY! They virtually kicked them out the door!

The account goes on, "And the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth . . . And they baked UNLEAVENED cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were THRUST OUT OF EGYPT, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual" (Exodus 12:37-39).

They were literally THROWN OUT of Egypt! They could not dilly dally, or drag their heels. They were ON THEIR WAY, and marched all the way from Ramses to Succoth that very day!

Two things you should notice here. First, the day they left Egypt was the very next morning, early, after the horrendous PASSOVER NIGHT when the Egyptians were destroyed! They did not spend a whole day wandering around, packing, and getting "ready" to go -- they were *ALREADY READY!* Remember, they ate of the Passover fully clothed, and with their staffs in their hands, ready to depart (Exodus 12:11). The next morning they did not wait around, or tarry; they were on their way out of Egypt!

Now those who observe Passover at the beginning of the 14th have a major problem here, because they have to conclude that the following day was spent by the Israelites just moping around, and gathering jewels, and getting organized and ready to go -- because that day would have been the daylight portion of the 14th of Nisan -- yet Scripture plainly says, "And they departed from Ramses in the first month, on the *FIFTEENTH DAY* of the first month; ON THE MORROW AFTER THE PASSOVER the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians" (Numbers 33:3).

Notice! They didn't depart on the 14th, but on the 15th! This was called the "morrow" after the Passover night! Remember, the Egyptians were URGENT upon the people to get out, leave, vamoose, scram, high-tail it, to "beat it!" They were afraid they might all get killed (Exo.12:33). Yet, those who observe Passover at the beginning of the 14th would have us believe that the Israelites waited around another WHOLE DAY, just getting organized, and visiting their Egyptian neighbors, saying their good-byes! Does that make any sense to you? Some claim that they spent this time collecting the valuables of their Egyptian neighbors. But they had days and days to do this, as the plagues of Yahweh descended! Yahweh had told them to do this back before the last plague struck Egypt (Exo.11:2-3), telling them to ask for jewelry from the Egyptians -- and they did so, PRIOR to the last plague, YAHWEH giving them grace and favor in the eyes of the Egyptians (verse 3). So they had NO EXCUSE to just "hang around" a whole day, after they

were given their marching orders! Do you see? Besides, they did not want to wait around, in case this unstable Pharaoh once again changed his mind, as he had done so often!

Secondly, notice that when the Israelites left they were in such a hurry that their dough did not even have time enough to become leavened, from sitting out in the air. The yeast did not even have time to work. If they had sat around on their hands and knees for a whole day, there would have been plenty of leaven in their dough by the following evening! As any modern cookbook will show, it only requires bread dough with leaven from one to two hours to rise, and double in bulk! But these two million or more Israelites had NO LEAVEN AT ALL! Imagine the pressure they must have been under to get moving and to get out! They did not have even an hour to spare!

When Did Israel Organize for Departure?

Some, in their haste to make apologies and excuses for their erroneous beliefs, have said that the Israelites could not have begun moving out of Egypt the following morning after the Passover (despite the plain verse in Numbers 33:3 which plainly says they departed “on the MORROW after the Passover”), because it would require all day for them to get ready, to marshal together in one place, and to be put in ranks. One writer said he discussed the logistics problems with a local army official, who said it would of course require much time to organize such a large, unwieldy group. Nonsense! These people simply don’t know what they are talking about.

Let’s examine the facts! The Israelites had been *planning* this exodus for *many weeks*. This was not a sudden, impromptu departure. Yahweh had announced to them at the beginning of Nisan that they were to select their Passover lambs on the tenth day of the month (Exodus 12:1-3). They had weeks to prepare. It is not as if they were a bunch of ill-equipped stumble-bums who didn’t know what was going to occur. They were well prepared. Besides, Moses was a great leader.

The Jewish historian Josephus tells us much about the intricate and detailed planning for the journey out of Egypt. He wrote in *Antiquities of the Jews*, “But when God had signified, that with one more plague he would compel the Egyptians to let the Hebrews go, he commanded Moses to tell the people that they should have a sacrifice ready, AND THAT THEY SHOULD *PREPARE THEMSELVES* on the tenth day of the month Xanthicus, against the fourteenth . . . and that he should carry away the Hebrews with all they had. Accordingly, HE *HAVING GOT THE HEBREWS READY FOR THEIR DEPARTURE, AND HAVING SORTED THE PEOPLE INTO TRIBES, HE KEPT THEM TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE* [therefore, no gatherings were required -- the people were already assembled together!]: but when the fourteenth day was come, and ALL WERE READY TO DEPART, they offered the sacrifice . . . as just ready to depart” (*Antiquities*, Bk.II, xiv,6).

Josephus continues, describing the scene: “. . . for the destruction of the firstborn came upon the Egyptians that night, so that many of the Egyptians who lived near the king’s palace persuaded pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Accordingly he called for Moses, and bid them be gone; as supposing, that if once the Hebrews were gone out of the country, Egypt should be freed from its miseries. They also honored the Hebrews with gifts; some in order to get them to depart quickly, and others on account of their neighborhood, and the friendship they had with them” (*ibid.*).

Josephus also points out that Moses had formerly been a top general of the Pharaoh, a man well acquainted with the problems of logistics and supplies for an entire army in the field. He fought against the Ethiopians who were rampaging throughout Egypt. In dire distress, Pharaoh turned to Moses and appointed him general of the army of Egypt (Ant., II,x, 1). Moses, with sagacity and brilliance, routed the Ethiopians, striking them by surprise, and slaughtering a multitude. Thus, for anyone to think that Moses and the children of Israel were ignorant shepherds, unable to organize themselves in the time they had available, to march out of Egypt in ranks, is foolishness of the highest order. Israel left Egypt “by their armies” (Exo.12:51), “troop by troop,” as the Hebrew Scriptures declare.

The New Testament Passover

When did the Jews in the New Testament times observe the Passover? And, more importantly, when did Yeshua Himself observe it?

It is very clear that the Jews observed it at the ending of the 14th, when they killed the Passover lamb, and the beginning of the 15th. The time Yeshua appeared before Pilate, on the morning of the 14th, was still known as “the preparation of the Passover” (John 19:14). Early that same morning the high priests took Yeshua from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment, to see Pilate. They themselves, however, would not go into the judgment hall, “lest they should be defiled; but that they might EAT THE PASSOVER” (John 18:28).

It is clear that the year of the crucifixion Yeshua and His disciples ate a special meal *before* all the Jews, including the high priests and Pharisees, ate the Passover. The Jews still had not eaten of the Passover after they had apprehended Yeshua and brought Him to trial!

Many assume that Yeshua referred to the final meal He had with His disciples as the “Passover.” Actually, that is a matter of dispute. How could it have been the “Passover,” since the following day would still be the “preparation” of the Passover? So in what sense was this final meal a “Passover” since the traditional Passover would not be until some days later? He plainly said to the disciples, “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 Elohim” (Luke 22:15-16). So, what did He really mean?

Why did Yeshua that night, at supper with the disciples, speak of “THIS Passover”? Was He referring to that evening meal? Or was He not referring to the upcoming Passover which He would be *unable* to eat with them since He would be dead at that time? Notice *precisely* what He said! The word translated “desire” in this verse is #1939 in *Strong’s Concordance*, the word *epithumia*, and means “a *longing* (especially for what is forbidden).” How natural! Yeshua really wanted to eat the regular Passover with them that year -- but it was “*forbidden*”! He would be *unable* to do so because it was required that He die, and *become* our “Passover” lamb (I Cor.5:7).

Notice, therefore, exactly what Yeshua said! This particular “Passover” He could not eat with them, because He would be sacrificed as our “Passover Lamb” at the very same time the Jews would be killing their physical Passover lambs! That year, on Nisan 14, when the Jews would be sacrificing their Passover lambs, He Himself would be sacrificed as our Passover. As Paul wrote, “For even Messiah OUR PASSOVER is sacrificed for us” (I Cor.5:7). The following

evening, when everybody else would be partaking of the Passover lamb, at the beginning of Nisan 15, Yeshua would be in His tomb, dead. Obviously, He would not be able to partake of the normal Passover with His disciples at that time! Therefore, He deliberately arranged to eat this final *meal* with them “before” He suffered -- that is, before the regular Passover!!

This was an arrangement done to give them special parting instructions. It was not the Passover. Since He could not keep the regular Passover with them, as commanded, at the END of the 14th and beginning of the 15th of Nisan, He made special arrangements to have a final, “going-away,” dinner -- a “Passover-like” dinner, in some respects -- with them that final night before His arrest, incarceration, judgment, and His crucifixion! What could be more natural? *It was not “the” Passover, always held on Nisan 15. The date and time for that can never be changed. It is ETERNAL!* Rather, it was a “pre-Passover” *going away meal*, which, because it was linked with His crucifixion, seemed LIKE a Passover in some respects! This final meal itself, however, was NOT “the Passover.” If it had been, then the apostle John would have described it as such, when he spoke of it in John 13. But he did not. Rather, he plainly said it was simply a “supper” or “dinner” (John 13:2, 4). He plainly said this dinner was eaten “*BEFORE* the feast of the Passover” (John 13:1).

Let’s understand the timing, here. This final meal occurred on the evening, beginning portion, of Nisan 13. He was arrested that very night and taken into captivity. The next morning, still Nisan 13, he appeared before Pilate, then Herod, and finally again before Pilate, when He was judged and condemned “about the sixth hour” (John 19:14). The “sixth hour” in Jewish terminology meant “twelve o’clock noon.” See our article, “Just What Do You Mean, ‘The Sixth Hour’?”

After being condemned, Yeshua was flogged, scourged, and beaten, and thrown into the dungeon where He was left until the following morning, Nisan 14, bright and early, when He was led up to the spot of the crucifixion, on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Temple, where the Red Heifer sacrifices were wont to be made. There He was nailed to the stake at “the third hour” of the day -- nine AM in the morning (Mark 15:25). This means the final supper Yeshua had with His disciples occurred TWO nights before the regular Passover seder, which would be observed throughout Jerusalem on the night of Nisan 15, after all the lambs had been sacrificed and roasted. What could be clearer?

Therefore, this final meal -- similar to the traditional Passover in certain respects -- was a special, unique, final “going away” meal -- which many have referred to as “the Lord’s Supper.” It was *like* a normal Passover in some respects, but it was different in other respects -- it was actually two nights BEFORE the actual Passover, there was no “lamb” eaten with it, as the Passover lambs would not be killed at the Temple till the afternoon of Nisan 14, as the Law prescribed (Exo.12:6). The bread eaten at it was regular leavened bread -- *artos* in the Greek language, which simply means a “loaf” of bread, or “raised bread.” The word used for “unleavened bread” everywhere in the New Testament is *azumos*. But here the word is just the common word for “bread” which has leavening (see Matt.4:4; John 6:48; and esp. Matt.16:6-7, 12)!

However, since Yeshua knew He would be dead at the time of the traditional Passover meal, this particular year, He chose to hold a special, unique “going away” dinner with His disciples the last available night He had with them before the regular Passover that year. At this meal, or

supper, He introduced the new symbols of bread representing His body and wine representing His blood. What was this all about, and how did it relate to the Passover?

What Is the Real Meaning of the "Bread and Wine" Ceremony?

Yeshua used this final meal, held at the beginning of Nisan 14, as an "introduction" to the Passover Feast. The whole Feast was called "the Passover" (Luke 22:1). Therefore, this meal, as being part of the "Passover preparation" this one year, was very special. It was unique. And Yeshua used it to impart to His disciples instructions regarding a ceremony which very few have really understood -- the ceremony about the "bread and wine." Let's notice!

The apostle Paul declared to the Corinthian church, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is NOT to eat the Master's supper" (I Cor.11:20). The margin has the original Greek as saying, "Ye cannot eat the Lord's supper." In other words, Paul is telling them that when they gather for a special service, IT IS NOT TO CELEBRATE some new ritual called "the Master's supper"! That is not the way it is to be done! He admonishes them, "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another drunken. WHAT? HAVE YE NOT HOUSES TO EAT AND TO DRINK IT? Or despise ye the assembly of Elohim, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you NOT" (I Cor.11:21-22). Clearly, Paul is telling them here that they should be eating their dinners *IN THEIR OWN HOUSES*, and not coming together in a Church service to observe a "Lord's supper"!

Paul then goes on to explain the basic, overall instructions Yeshua gave to His disciples for observing the "bread and wine" ceremony that Yeshua revealed to His disciples on the very night He was betrayed. Paul writes, "For I have received of the Master that which I also delivered unto you, That the Master Yeshua 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 [in the Greek, "for a remembrance"]. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the NEW TESTAMENT in my blood [a testament, remember, is only in effect after the DEATH of the testator -- see Hebrews 9:15-17]: this do ye, *as oft as ye drink it*, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. For *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do SHEW THE MASTER'S DEATH till he come*" (I Cor.11:23-26).

As we have seen earlier, this "bread" was *artos*, raised or leavened bread, the kind you can dip as a "sop" (John 13:26-27). The Jews of Messiah's time did not begin eating "unleavened bread," called *azumos* in the Greek language, until the beginning of the Feast, on Nisan 15. To eat unleavened bread *before* the Feast of Unleavened Bread would have *detracted* from the rich meaning and symbolism of the Feast.

This special ceremony of the bread and wine was commonly observed by the Jews. It was a tradition that went back as far as the time of Abraham and Melchisedek (Gen.14:18). They, of course, never connected it with the body and blood of Yeshua Messiah, the Lamb of Elohim! The night before His crucifixion, Yeshua *gave NEW MEANING to these familiar items and this customary observance!* It was commonly called the *Kiddush!*

Paul says this ceremony was to be done "as often as" -- in other words, *OFTEN*, throughout the year! This was *not instituted as an ANNUAL observance, which would be added to the*

Passover, but as a SPECIAL OBSERVANCE to be celebrated OFTEN throughout the year! The “Kiddush” itself has nothing to do with the Passover -- no direct connection -- it is a ceremony which ought to be performed by Yahweh’s people “OFTEN” through the year! Write for our special article, “Are We Neglecting the Sacred Fellowship Meal?” It will explain the truth of this observance thoroughly for you.

A New Look at the Passover

Why, then, do certain churches today claim they celebrate the “Lord’s supper” on the evening of Nisan 14 -- and even admit it is not the Passover? They call it a “memorial” of the death of Messiah. But consider this:

Is it fitting each year to hold a “*memorial*” service of an event which is to occur the next day -- the death of Messiah -- *21 hours BEFORE* the actual death of the one being remembered? Yeshua died at 3 P.M. in the afternoon of Nisan 14 -- not the previous evening! If we are going to commemorate the sacrifice of Messiah *as a memorial service*, in memory of Messiah’s sacrifice, then we should do it the NEXT night -- after He has “died” on the stake! It is only logical that such a “memorial” should be done AT THE REGULAR PASSOVER DINNER on the night of Nisan 15 -- at the very time the roasted Passover lambs were eaten! Doesn't that make sense? Why, then, try to keep such a “memorial” the night BEFORE the event takes place, on the yearly calendar? Why keep it 21 hours *before* the event being commemorated took place?

Even so, it would be ludicrous to observe the Passover at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, *24 hours before the actual events of the original Passover*, and *twenty one hours before* the actual crucifixion of our own true Passover, Yeshua Messiah! During the evening of the 14th of Nisan, Yeshua was not even having a meal with His disciples – He was in the dungeon, after having been beaten and scourged, awaiting His crucifixion the next day!

Paul pointed out, the cup of wine is “the NEW TESTAMENT” in Yeshua’ blood. Paul wrote in Hebrews, “For where a testament is, there must also OF NECESSITY BE THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR” (Heb.9:16). He went on, “For a testament is of force AFTER men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” (verse 17).

All these Scriptures show us, then, that the Passover should be celebrated at its proper time, AFTER THE DEATH of Messiah -- not a day early in anticipation of the death of Messiah -- but right after it occurred on the annual calendar, as a true MEMORIAL and REMEMBRANCE of our deliverance from sin through the shed blood of Messiah! The cup of wine should be taken each year, “after the death of the testator,” “otherwise it is of no strength at all.”

The Old Testament Passover was a perfect type of the death of the Passover Lamb, Yeshua Messiah! Therefore, the true New Testament Passover is IDENTICAL WITH the Old Testament Passover -- they are both the SAME EVENT! Therefore both should be observed at the precise same time! There are not two different “Passovers”! There is only ONE Passover -- and it was ordained a Feast “for ever”!

In observing the original, true Passover, as believers in the Messiah, therefore, we merely *add* the new elements and new understanding given to us by Messiah. Some of the instructions He gave the final night before His crucifixion give us insight not only into the meaning of the

“Kiddush,” celebrated often throughout the year, but also give us insight into the meaning of the “unleavened bread” and “wine” which we partake of at the Passover itself, on the night of Nisan 15.

But, at the regular Passover, we go much more into depth, reviewing the whole story of Passover -- the coming out of Egypt, the plagues upon Egypt, Yahweh’s supernatural deliverance of the Israelites -- and then bring in the wonderful way in which Messiah Yeshua BECAME the “antitype” of the original Passover lambs slain in Egypt -- and we partake of the matzos, the unleavened bread, symbolizing His broken body, and we drink of the wine, symbolizing His shed blood.

Oh what a joyous night! It is a “family” affair, which we do with friends and relatives, around the dinner table, according to the customs preserved for us by the Jewish people! It is called a “seder” -- which means a “setting forth.” We follow a “Haggadah” – “a telling of the story.” As Christians, we at Triumph Prophetic Ministries have published our own “Christian – Messianic Passover Hagaddah,” to help people to observe this Biblical holy feast of the Passover with fullness of joy, completeness of meaning, and true understanding. If you have never done it, you simply don't know what you have missed! How sorry I feel for those poor souls who have been blinded to this awesome truth, and have neglected the true Passover, as well as the celebration of the “Kiddush” throughout the year! How sad.

Partaking “Worthily”

Paul continues, in I Corinthians, “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Master. But let a man EXAMINE HIMSELF, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [judgment] to himself, not discerning the Master's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [are dead]” (I Cor.11:27-30). Paul is talking directly about the *kiddush* or wine and bread ceremony which we are to partake of “often” throughout the year (I Cor.11:26). However, his words certainly also apply to the symbols we partake of during the Passover itself.

When we partake of the wine and unleavened bread, symbolizing Messiah's shed blood, and the beatings and bruises and sacrifice of His body for us, we should do so *at the correct time*, or else we would be partaking of the Passover without proper understanding, and therefore “unworthily.” Consider! Think about this: If we partake of the wine and bread ceremony connected with the Passover *ahead of time*, every year, 21 hours *before* Messiah suffered and died for our sins (during the afternoon of Nisan 14), then are we not out of sync with the truth and the Word of Yahweh? Would such a practice not be actually doing it *wrongly, erroneously*, in error, and therefore “*unworthily*”? To do something “in memory of” means to do it *after* the event took place, not the evening *before*!

Why, then, do some want to observe the night *before* the Passover? It is almost as if there is a “lust” to do this -- and yet Yeshua never once commanded it, or recommended it, or “approved” it! But, as Solomon wrote: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the *ways of death*” (Prov.14:12). Even though entire churches do this, they do so out of sheer ignorance of the truth!

To sin in ignorance is one thing; but to continue in error and sin, transgressing the law of Yahweh, knowingly, after the truth has been pointed out, is another matter altogether! In Yahweh's sight, sins of ignorance can be forgiven, when repented of; but sins of presumptuousness, deliberate sins, are another matter, and Yahweh will punish them very severely .

Yahweh declares, “But the person, be he citizen or stranger, who acts DEFIANTLY reviles YAHWEH; that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has SPURNED THE WORD OF YAHWEH and VIOLATED HIS COMMANDMENT, that person shall be cut off -- he bears his guilt” (Numbers 15:30-31).

Because of observing the wine and bread ceremony wrongly, Paul says, many in the Assembly of Elohim are "weak and sickly among you," and many have died. ***They have no spiritual POWER with Yahweh because they have been disobeying Him, even though it may have been in ignorance, due to wrong teaching.*** This fact is certainly also true of the observance of the annual PASSOVER! *If we participate in a pagan “mass” type of Passover, and observe it 24 hours BEFORE Yahweh’s commanded observance, then we do it UNWORTHILY! Or if we observe some ADDED ceremony on that evening as an annual memorial, then we are “ADDING TO” the word of Yahweh and doing this Elohim condemns vehemently – doing this brings one under divine condemnation (Deut.4:4)!*

MAKE NO MISTAKE! *This is serious business with Yahweh!*

Did Yeshua CHANGE the Passover?

The meal Yeshua and His disciples ate that final night could be called a Passover-type meal, even though it was an evening early (Matt.26:17, 19), since it was part of the Passover preparations. However, let’s be plain about it: ***Yeshua was not instituting some NEW observance to be celebrated annually on that evening, forever! He was not instituting a new “holy day” to replace the annual PASSOVER celebration! That would be ridiculous! If Yeshua intended to institute a new ANNUAL observance, don’t you think He would have plainly said so? But there is no commandment anywhere that we should observe THAT NIGHT as a perpetual memorial or “Lord's Suppe” or hold a celebration of any kind on it!***

Nor was Yeshua *changing* the Passover from its normal time to a new time, a night before. This was a one-time special event, forced by very unusual circumstances. It was not a new policy to be perpetuated by the Assembly of Elohim. *Yeshua nowhere said any such thing.* It was simply a special, unique, auxiliary meal, similar to the “Passover” meal in some respects, and different in other respects, held in lieu of the regular Passover, that year only, giving Yeshua a final formal opportunity to impart some needed final teachings to His disciples, since Yeshua would be dead and in the grave at the customary time of the eating of the Passover at the beginning of Nisan 15!

Let’s really get this right!

Yeshua Messiah, as the Word of Elohim, the Logos (John 1:1-3), was the One who ordained the Passover in the first place (1 Cor.10:4). He was the Yahweh, the YHWH, the member of the Elohim *family* who revealed Himself to Israel (compare John 1:18; Exo.24:10-11; Acts 7:30, 35).

He ordained that Passover should be celebrated FOREVER *at the appointed time, and not some other time!* (Exo.12:14-24; Lev.23:1-5). Being the One who ordained the Passover in the first place, He certainly would not CHANGE IT and violate His own commandment! He says, “I change NOT” (Mal.3:6). Yeshua Messiah is “the SAME, yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb.13:8). His word endures FOREVER (I Pet.1:23), and never changes. It is unchangeable and unbreakable (John 10:35; John 17:17). Yeshua would never break His own word, that was ordained FOREVER, and then CHANGE it, when He Himself said He did not come to change *even one iota of Yahweh’s Law!* (Matt.5:17-19).

Throughout His life on earth, from the time He was a child, Yeshua always observed the Passover at the same time as all the Jews. We read in Luke’s gospel, “Now his parents went to Jerusalem EVERY YEAR at the FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem AFTER THE CUSTOM OF THE FEAST. And when they had FULFILLED THE DAYS, as they returned, the child Yeshua tarried behind in Jerusalem . . .” (Luke 2:41-43).

Notice! They observed the Passover festival EVERY YEAR, and they did it “after the CUSTOM of the feast.” This means they observed it just like every body else! They did not observe it a day early, but according to the custom; and Yeshua observed it with them! Every year, then, as Yeshua grew to manhood, He observed the Passover with all the other Jews in Judea. In so doing, He set us an example (I Pet.2:21; I John 2:6).

After Yeshua began His ministry, He still did as He had always done, with His earthly parents. “And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem” (John 2:13). On this occasion He threw the money-changers out of the Temple (verses 14-16). At this Passover He foretold the Passover when He would be slain and be raised up in three days (John 2:18-21).

The gospel of John continues, “Now when he was in Jerusalem AT THE PASSOVER, IN THE FEAST DAY, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did” (verse 23).

No Controversy Over the Passover Celebration

Now, *think!* If the Jews had been celebrating the WRONG DAY, Yeshua would certainly have taken issue with them on such a major error. But He did not. He rebuked them for such relatively “minor” things as their preoccupation with pots and pans, and outward cleanliness as opposed to inward purity (Mark 7:1-13; Matt.15:1-20). If they had gone so far astray as to change the day of an annual holy day of Yahweh, do you think Yeshua would have ignored such an abomination?

On the other hand, if Yeshua Himself had been observing Passover a day earlier than all the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees, don’t you think that would have been one of the issues they would have confronted Him with? Don’t you think they would have accused Him of violating the Passover commandment? But they didn’t! Why not? *Because He observed Passover on the same day as all the Jews did!*

There simply was no conflict or controversy over this point -- that is, not until modern times,

and the 20th century, when various Christian-professing Churches, in their attempt to get back to the faith once delivered, repudiated the teachings and traditions of the Jews, and tried to figure out for themselves when Passover should be observed! And in so doing, they noted that Yeshua, the year of His crucifixion, mentioned the “Passover” at the beginning of Nisan 14, so they ASSUMED that the beginning of Nisan 14 was the right day and time for the annual Passover. Since this was different from the Jewish date, they were forced to conclude that the Jews had *lost the true date somewhere in their history -- even though there is NO EVIDENCE IN HISTORY THAT THEY EVER CHANGED THE PASSOVER!* But, since the Jews' date was a day later, they *assumed* that the Jews *must* have changed it! Furthermore, they claimed that the Old Testament Passover *had to be* at the beginning of Nisan 14, since they had already assumed Yeshua observed the regular Passover the night before His death! One assumption led to another; one error led to another! Error compounded and multiplied, and they dug their hole deeper and deeper, till there was no way out!

This mistake -- this error -- caused great confusion and distortion of the Old Testament Passover record and has caused multiple thousands of Yah's people to observe Passover at the wrong time and in the wrong manner for the *past sixty years!*

But now, as the end of this age approaches, Yahweh has revealed the PLAIN TRUTH about the Passover, and its correct time and sequence of events!

The following year, as Messiah continued His ministry, John records, “And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” (John 6:4). Sometimes in his gospel John calls the Passover a feast of the “Jews,” as he does here. That does not mean he is saying it was not Yahweh's Passover. He calls it the feast of the Jews, on occasion, because the Jews were the only ones in all the earth still celebrating it! On other occasions, however, he simply refers to this same feast as “the Passover” (John 12:1; 18:28; 19:14). This particular Passover season, Yeshua fed the multitude miraculously, and then taught them about the true bread which comes down from heaven (John 6:5-58).

All these Passovers, Yeshua celebrated according to the usual custom, at the same time as all the Jews, scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses' seat. He did not rail or debate or argue with them over any discrepancy in time or date of observance. He did not point out any alleged error in their calculations. Therefore, by His quiet acceptance of their teaching on this point, He personally endorsed the day of Passover which they were observing! Also, by doing this, Yeshua set us an example that we also should follow the traditional custom of the Jews in observing Passover at the ending of Nisan 14, and during the early evening of Nisan 15, and not a day earlier as some Churches do!

Passover -- a Memorial

Stop and think a moment. Passover typified the slain Lamb of Yahweh, Yeshua Messiah. He was slain -- no argument from anybody -- at the end of the 14th of Nisan, about 3:00 PM in the afternoon (Luke 23:44; Mark 15:33). Thus He was slain at the precise time the Jews throughout Jerusalem were slaying their sacrificial lambs, which unknown to them pointed to the supreme sacrifice of Yeshua Messiah Himself.

As we, today, observe the Passover, at the close of the 14th, and beginning of the 15th of

Nisan, just as the Jews have always done, we are observing it *at the very time Yeshua always observed it throughout His life*. We keep it as a memorial, observed after the death of the Lamb of Yahweh, after He was killed, and buried, and entombed. We observe it the night of the Feast, at the beginning of Nisan 15. We observe it at the very time the Jews observe it, celebrating the night of deliverance from Egyptian slavery. We celebrate it the night Yahweh “passed over” Israel’s firstborn, when He slew the Egyptian firstborn.

As we observe it, going through the story of the Haggadah, and telling the story, connecting it with Messiah Yeshua, the “Lamb of Yah” (John 1:29), it is as if we re-live these events of yesteryear. At the very time these awesome things were happening, it is as if *WE ARE THERE IN PERSON, re-living the experience of our forefathers!* As we go through the story, it is as if each one of us were actually there, participating in these historic events.

But if we do like some do, and observe the Passover a day or evening early, we miss the point of actually sharing in the experience with Messiah and the disciples and the children of Israel. Rather than Messiah having just been sacrificed for our sins, time-wise, we would be celebrating 24 hours in advance of His actual crucifixion, death and burial. The observance would be out of sync -- out of phase. It would be like being in a “time warp.” It would not truly be a “MEMORIAL,” but rather a like a “fore-shadow” of something to come. Yet Yahweh Almighty, the One who became Messiah, specifically said, “And this day shall be unto you FOR A MEMORIAL,” a remembrance of a past event -- not a shadow of future events. It was ordained as a MEMORIAL DAY, not a foretaste day.

Yeshua Himself, when He added the symbols of bread and wine, as types of His shed blood and broken body, said, “this do in REMEMBRANCE OF ME” (Luke 22:19). Again, it was to be a MEMORIAL of His sacrifice for our sins, something we look back on, not something we look forward to in future anticipation! Those who observe Passover at the beginning of Nisan 14 actually miss out on this vital point. By observing it ahead of time, they are anticipating the sacrifice of Messiah, instead of memorializing it.

Passover -- the Festival of Freedom and Joy

How should we observe the Passover, today? Should it be observed in our homes, in a family setting, with the leading family member taking charge and guiding the observance, as is done in Jewish families around the world? Or should we all go to Church, and there partake of the symbols of unleavened bread and wine, under the direction of Church ministers, in a rather formal, solemn, quiet ceremony?

Remember, first of all, that from time immemorial the Jews have celebrated the Passover as a distinctly FAMILY affair! In fact, they were COMMANDED to partake of it in their own homes (Exodus 12:3-11). Children were to be present, and were to be taught the history and reasons for celebrating this Holy Festival (Exo.13:8-10). The Passover was never intended to be an awesome, austere, solemn Church service resembling a Catholic mass!

But what do many churches do? They focus on observing a ritual that is much like a Catholic mass, with a tiny wafer (unleavened) and a thimble sized vial of wine! They turn a happy, festive, family occasion into a comatose, moribund, funereal dirge with overwhelming silence, austerity, solemnity, and sorrow, as they meditate on their sins and death!

Passover was *never* intended to be a solemn, austere “church service” as it is practiced in the Worldwide Church of God and most all of its off-shoots! Not at all. It was intended to be a joyous, happy, celebration of deliverance, an intimate family type celebration, with a few families and close friends gathered together, led by the elder member or patriarch, even as the Jews still celebrate it today!

Yeshua Messiah set us an example of how to celebrate the Passover. He observed it all His life with His family -- and after He began His ministry, with His disciples. We are commanded to “FOLLOW HIS STEPS” (I Pet.2:21) -- that is, celebrate it **THE SAME WAY HE DID, SETTING US AN EXAMPLE!** He never observed the Passover as a funereal dirge or evening of sorrow, like a Roman Catholic mass!

Are you willing to follow YESHUA? Or are you going to follow men, in their own practices which deviate from the pattern and truth set down in the Word of Yahweh?

The true Passover is meant by Yahweh to be a time of great rejoicing and joy. It symbolizes our deliverance from sin and evil, the clutches of spiritual slavery. It is to be a time of great rejoicing and gladness, not mourning and sorrow. In ancient Israel Passover was a time of **JOY AND REJOICING!** (II Kings 23:22; II Chron.35:18; Ezra 6:19-22). Even so, our Passover today ought to be a time of tremendous rejoicing and overwhelming **JOY!**

All of Yahweh’s annual Holy Days have tremendous meaning and awesome significance. Unfortunately, millions are missing out on the real spiritual treasures that these days afford -- because they don’t observe them at all, or they observe them on the wrong day, in the wrong manner, and without proper knowledge or instruction. Yahweh thunders, “My people are **DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE:** because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also **REJECT THEE,** that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast **FORGOTTEN THE LAW** of thy Elohim, I will also forget thy children” (Hos.4:6).

Isn’t it about time we get back to the faith once delivered to the saints? (Jude 3). May Yahweh help you to understand -- and take action!