

**TRIUMPH  
PROPHETIC  
MINISTRIES**

# **BIBLE**

## **CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**



**The Passover – One of the Greatest Mysteries of All Time**

**A New Look at the  
Original Passover**

**Lesson 13**

## **An Open Letter from the Staff**

What is the real meaning behind the PASSOVER? How did it originate, and what does it have to do with the awesome Plan that God is working out on this planet we call earth?

About 3,500 years ago, God performed an awesome series of incredible miracles to deliver His people, Israel, from slavery and bondage to the Egyptians. Their lives were a rigorous, never-ending routine of pain, suffering, and deprivation.

The last of these 10 miracles was a supernatural deliverance characterized by the slaying of a "Passover lamb" for each family in Israel, which was "protection" for the children of Israel from the death-dealing final plague that befell the Egyptians – the death of all their firstborn!

When God saw the blood of the Passover lamb on the door-posts of the dwellings of the Israelites, He "passed over" their habitations. Thus the Passover became the **FIRST** annual festival of Israel, celebrated every year in the spring.

But what does this ancient festival have to do with us, today? What meaning and significance does it have for true Christians, followers of the Messiah, Jesus Christ? What does the Passover have to do with His life, death, and resurrection? When, and how, should it be observed? Why is there so much controversy and misunderstanding about this Holy Day of Almighty God?

It's high time we explore the incredible meaning of the Passover for all generations, including our own!

## **TRIUMPH PROPHETIC MINISTRIES**

### **BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 13**

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**About Our Cover. . .** The Passover is a unique festival of God. In ancient Israel, every family or group killed a lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, roasted it, and ate it, in an act of tremendous symbolism.

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## A NEW LOOK AT THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER

Why is the Passover so little understood by most Churches today? Why is its observance utterly neglected by the vast majority of professing "Christians"?

Should true Christians – believers in the Messiah – keep this ancient Festival? Why? What does it represent? How important is it?

Why also is there so much confusion and disagreement as to WHEN the Passover should be observed, and HOW?

It's time these questions were faced, and fully answered, honestly, thoroughly, and completely proven from the Bible!

Consider for a moment! The Word of God says we are to first REPENT of sin (that is, put sin out of our lives), and then "believe on Christ" 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 Jesus Christ 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 Christ! First we must repent and put away our sins; and then God covers our sins with the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ!

But some churches 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! God does not really cover our sins with the blood of Christ, our Passover lamb, until AFTER WE REPENT OF SIN, 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*

**1.** What instructions did God give Israel concerning the Passover? Exodus 12:3-6. What month was this? Verses 1-2.

**COMMENT:** The first month of the year in the Hebrew calendar was Abib. It comes in the springtime.

**2.** What were the children of Israel to do with this lamb? Exo.12:6. Was it to be without blemish? Verse 5. When was it to be killed? Verse 6.

**COMMENT:** 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.29:39-41; 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?

**3.** Who were the "Samaritans," who held to the sunset to dark theory? II Kings 17:24-41.

**COMMENT:** Since the Samaritans 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 GODS 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 the LORD, but they also appointed from their own ranks priests of the shrines, who officiated for them in the cult places. They worshiped the LORD, WHILE SERVING THEIR OWN GODS 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 the LORD [properly]. They do NOT follow the laws and practices, the Teaching and Instruction that the LORD 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 the LORD, *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 God into error. They tried to mix the worship of God with their ancient PAGAN superstitions and practices. They compromised the truth of God and amalgamated, merged, blended truth with pagan superstition and error!

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ had an encounter with these pagan Samaritans. Jesus 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 God, clearly shows us we should NOT look to the SAMARITANS for religious teaching, or practice! To do so would be a very SERIOUS error -- A TERRIBLE MIS-

TAKE of the first magnitude!

*The Teaching of the Pharisees*

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! God 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).

What could be plainer than that?

The Pharisees were the religious teachers during the time of Christ. 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.

*"Moses' Seat"*

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 Jesus Himself say on this issue?

1. Who did Jesus say "sits" in Moses' seat? Matt.23:2-3. Did this give them any kind of "authority"? Same verses.

**COMMENT:** Jesus 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 God to be observed. NEVER DURING HIS MINISTRY DID HE EVER CRITICIZE THE PHARISEES FOR OBSERVING THE WRONG DAY FOR PASSOVER!

2. Are we to OBEY the teachings of the scribes and Pharsees derived from God's Law? Matt.23:2-3.

**COMMENT:** *THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!* 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). Obviously, He was referring to what they said regarding the Law of God -- not their own man-made "traditions" which they added to the Law!

3. What did Jesus say about their "traditions"? Should we follow those as well? Matt.15:1-9. Does He call them "commandments of MEN"? Verse 9. Does Mark corroborate this? Mark 7: 1-13. Does Jesus call such worship "VAIN"? Verse 7.

**COMMENT:** As Josephus shows,

and modern Rabbinic Judaism acknowledges, who -- follow the teachings of the Pharisees, and descend from them -- Passover was observed by the Jews AT THE END OF Nisan 14 -- NOT AT IT'S BEGINNING!

How crystal clear -- how plain! Since the Pharisees sat in MOSES' SEAT, their authority in teaching the laws and statutes and holy days of God was BINDING UPON ALL THE CHURCH! They taught that Passover should be observed at the 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 JESUS CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER LAMB, WAS SLAIN AND SHED HIS BLOOD FOR OUR SINS! Therefore, Jesus was a PERFECT ANTI-TYPE of the original Passover lamb!

Imagine the scene, if you can. Just as Jesus Christ was pouring out His holy blood for our sins, hanging on the tree, paying the penalty for our sins, as our Passover Lamb of God, multiple thousands of Jews throughout Jerusalem were also slaying their Passover lambs! What a perfect fulfillment! What a perfect anti-type! What a marvelous picture! Jesus 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 Jesus. All those Passover lambs pointed to HIM -- the true Passover Lamb of God!

*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 P.M. and offered at 2:30 P.M., an hour

earlier . . ." (article, "Festivals," p.354). Right after this, the Passover lambs were killed, between 3 pm and 5 pm, in the afternoon.

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 THE LORD, 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 Jesus Christ, the true Passover Lamb of God, 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!

**1.** When were the Israelites commanded to slay the Passover – at what time of day? Deut.16:6. Where was the SUN during this time? What was it doing?

**COMMENT:** God told Moses, "But at the place which the LORD thy God 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!

**2.** Is this same expression used elsewhere in the Old Testament? Genesis 15:12.

**COMMENT:** "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!

**3.** Where else is this same expression used? Joshua 10:26-27. Was this the time of the "going DOWN" of the sun? Therefore, it had not yet "gone down," right? In other words, sunset had not yet occurred – right?

**COMMENT:** Notice carefully -- "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).

**4.** Were the Israelites allowed by God to let bodies hang on a tree after sunset? Deut.21:22-23; Joshua 8:29.

**COMMENT:** 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 God, not to allow the dead bodies of criminals to hang on a tree at night. God 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 on a stake *UNTIL EVENING*. *AT SUNSET*, Joshua had the corpse taken down from the stake" (Joshua 8:29).

**5.** When was king Ahab killed in battle? At the "going down of the sun"? Was this before or after sunset? I Kings 22:35-36.

**COMMENT:** 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*

The word translated "evening" in Exodus 12:6, for the time when the Passover must be killed, is *ben ha arbayim* in the Hebrew language. Much controversy has arisen over this word. Some claim it means after sunset, during "twilight," and by that they insist it cannot refer to the evening hours BEFORE sunset. But is this true? What do the Scriptures say is the meaning of this crucial, key word?

In the book of Numbers God gives instructions concerning the daily sacrifices which were to be offered before Him. These were to be offered every morning and every evening. Jewish history reveals the morning sacrifice was offered about 9:00 am, our time, and the evening sacrifice was offered about 3:00 pm, our time.

1. What were God's actual instructions concerning the "DAILY sacrifices"? Numbers 28:3-4.

**COMMENT:** Notice the wording very carefully. God commanded, "And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire unto the LORD; 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! The Hebrew word used here is the SAME WORD USED in Exodus 12:6, regarding the PASSOVER. It is *ben ha arbayim*.

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. Since the Hebrew days begins and ends at SUNET, 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" in Exodus 12:6 has to refer to the period of time BEFORE SUNSET, that is, LATE AFTERNOON – the time BEFORE SUNDOWN!

### *The Passover Saga*

1. After slaying the Passover lamb, what were the children of Israel told to do? Were they to take the blood of the lamb and strike it over the two side posts and on the upper door post of their houses? Were they to eat it fully clothed, their staff in hand, IN "HASTE," prepared and ready to leave at any moment? Exodus 12:7-14.

**COMMENT:** God 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 the Lord'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 the

LORD.”

2. What would God do if they obeyed Him? Would He “pass over” them, and protect them from the plague? Verse 13.

3. Were they then to celebrate that day as a “MEMORIAL,” as a FEAST to the Lord “FOREVER”? Verse 14.

**COMMENT:** At this time, God instituted the Passover as an ETERNAL HOLY DAY! He declared, "AND THIS DAY SHALL BE UNTO YOU FOR A MEMORIAL; and ye shall KEEP IT A FEAST to the Lord *throughout your generations*; ye shall keep it a FEAST by an ordinance *FOR EVER*" (Exo.12:7-14).

4. What day was this? Was it the Passover? Exo.12:13-14. Was it the day He “passed over” them? Verse 13.

**COMMENT:** Now notice carefully. This day which is to be kept a "Feast" to the Lord "forever" – is clearly the PASSOVER! Read it again! The context here is very clear; it can be nothing else; God is plainly talking about the PASSOVER! The Passover is a MEMORIAL; it is a FEAST -- ordained FOREVER!

Why, then, do some churches which claim to observe the Passover assert that it is NOT a "Feast" day of God? The Word of God is explicitly clear. All through this passage of Scripture, the context is the Passover celebration, the eating of the lamb, the celebrating of God'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, God says, "THIS DAY shall be unto you . . . a FEAST" -- not some other day, or some other celebration (Exo.12:14).

5. Was this the introduction to a 7 day festival period? Exo.12:14-17.

**COMMENT:** Since the Passover was killed in the afternoon of Nisan 14, and then roasted and eaten the following evening, after sunset, and the blood was put on the lintels of the doors that evening, the

actual DAY when the Passover was eaten had to be Nisan 15 – after sunset. And the actual DAY when the Israelites were PASSED OVER was Nisan 15 – which was the First Day of Unleavened Bread – the first day of a seven day Feast!

6. What did God do that very night, about midnight? Exo.12:29. Who died? Same verse. Did even the firstborn of the cattle perish? Same verse. What time did this event occur? Same verse. Was this great devastating plague at MIDNIGHT? Same verse!

7. Was this to become a “night of solemn observance” for the children of Israel “throughout their generations”? Exo.12:42.

**COMMENT:** This great “night of solemn observance was obviously and clearly the PASSOVER NIGHT! It was the night of awesome deliverance for God's people!

It is all so very clear. Yet some churches have completely missed the point. They say it does not refer to the PASSOVER! What is their problem? Simple: They put the Passover at the beginning of Nisan 14, 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!

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, Nisan 15, which is a HOLY DAY of God!

Notice! God commanded, "And this day [the Passover] shall be unto you . . . a FEAST to the Lord . . . 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).

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, which it would be if Passover was at the beginning of Nisan 14. But the 14<sup>th</sup> itself was NOT a Feast Day! Rather, it was the PREPARATION DAY! Notice!

### ***“The Preparation Day”***

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."

1. What do we read in Matthew's gospel -- did Joseph of Arimathaea come and take the body of Jesus, "when the even was come"? Matt.27:57. Did he lay it in his own new tomb, and depart? Verse 60. This would have had to be the evening of the 14th, beginning of the 15th. Then what happened? Matt.27:62.

**COMMENT:** 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"! Therefore the final 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!

2. Does Mark corroborate this fact? Mark 15:42. Mark also points out, "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).

3. Does Luke also confirm this fact? Luke 23:54. Notice, Luke states, "And THAT DAY [the 14th] was the PREPARATION, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54).

4. Is even more emphatic proof found in the gospel of John.? John 19:31.

**COMMENT:** Here we find in the latter part of chapter 19 the details of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. After Jesus 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 that very evening*, was an ANNUAL HOLY DAY – Nisan 15 -- an "High Day," the day the Passover was to be eaten, the First Day of Unleavened Bread!

### ***What Do You Mean, “At Even”***

1. Exactly what does God command us concerning the beginning and ending of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Exodus 12:18-19.

**COMMENT:** Now notice once again God's *EXACT* 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!

Also, please note that the 21<sup>st</sup> day at "even" means the END of the 21<sup>st</sup> day – that is, the Festival lasts through the 21<sup>st</sup> day, and includes it, up until sunset. Therefore, since the same word is used for the "evening" of the 14<sup>th</sup>, that must also refer to the ENDING part of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. From the END of the 14<sup>th</sup> through the END of the 21<sup>st</sup> would add up to SEVEN days – precisely what God commanded. Therefore the EVENING of the 14<sup>th</sup> means its ENDING! So when the Passover is sacrificed in the EVENING of the 14<sup>th</sup>, that means toward the conclusion of the 14<sup>th</sup> – *not its beginning!*

2. Do we have other proof that "even" means the END of the day? Lev.23:27, 32.

**COMMENT:** Again, notice! The Day of Atonement is celebrated on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Tishri, the seventh month. But it is celebrated "on the ninth day of the month *at evening* , *from evening to evening*, you shall

celebrate your Sabbath" (verse 32).

Clearly, this has to mean from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> till the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, since the Day of Atonement IS the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Tishri!

What could be clearer than that? So when the Passover is killed in the EVENING of the day, it means toward the END of the day – not at its beginning!

### *The Saga Continues – Fleeing in Haste!*

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 God. Later that night, "And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD 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" (Exo.12:29-30).

1. Then what happened? Exodus 12:31. Did Pharaoh have a change of heart? Did he tell the Israelites to LEAVE Egypt? Was he nervous – urgent – that they should GET OUT? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** Notice! Pharaoh was very insistent that they leave right away! "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 the Lord, as ye have said, and BE GONE [GET OUT!]; and bless me also."

2. Were the Egyptians people also fearful and worried? Did they urgently want their former slaves to depart, and get out? Exodus 12:33. Because of all the rush, what happened to the dough of the Israelites?

**COMMENT:** The passage speaks for itself: "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 let's **REVIEW** what happened! That very 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!

**3.** As an enticement for them to leave, what did the Egyptians give to the children of Israel? Exo.12:35-36.

**COMMENT:** they gave them all their jewels and silver and gold, and beautiful things. 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!

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!

**4.** Was Israel therefore 'THRUST' **OUT OF EGYPT?** Exodus 12:37-39.

**COMMENT:** The account goes on, "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses 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 Rameses 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 **THE WHOLE NEXT DAY**, sauntering about, wandering around, dilly dallying, taking their time 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!*

**5.** On what day did Israel **DEPART** from Egypt? Num.33:3.

**COMMENT:** 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, **AFTER** Passover night, was spent by the Israelites just 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 Rameses 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, to "beat it!" They were afraid they might all be killed (Exo.12:33). The last plague terrified them!

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? This scenario would contradict the whole URGENCY of the situation, as well as Pharaoh's direct command for them to LEAVE immediately! Who knows? If they had NOT left immediately, as Pharaoh commanded, would he not have sicked his soldiers on them, to hasten their departure? Pharaoh had already proved to be a very changeable, double-minded person. Would the Israelites have waited a WHOLE DAY just "getting ready," when they had been told to SCRAM? Would they have taken such a chance, risking the wrath and anger of Pharaoh, after such a devastating plague?

6. What happened to the dough of the Israelites on that day? Exodus 12:34.

**COMMENT:** 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! It only requires flour to be in contact with water and exposed to the air *eighteen minutes* for it to begin to be "leavened"!

But these two million or more Israelites had NO LEAVEN AT ALL! If they had waited around all day, they would have had VAST amounts of leavened dough! But God says they went out so fast, that their dough had *no chance to become leavened!*

Imagine the pressure they must have been under to get moving and to get out! They did not have even *eighteen minutes*, much less an hour, to spare!

Does that sound like they stayed around a WHOLE DAY – 12 hours – wasting time, after Pharaoh had given them his final command to GET OUT of Egypt?

### *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. But this scenario overlooks something. Let's find out what really happened.

1. Did the Israelites know from the beginning, from before the first plague, that they would be delivered from Egypt? Exo.6:1, 5-6. So they had much time to prepare for the final flight, did they not? When did God announce that they were to prepare for the final plague, which would lead to their release? Exo.12:1-3.

**COMMENT:** The Israelites had been planning this exodus for many weeks. This was not a sudden, impromptu departure. God 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, even months, to prepare. Moses surely PLANNED AHEAD since he KNEW the time was soon coming when they would leave Egypt.

The Jewish historian Josephus tells

us much about their intricate and detailed planning. 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: 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 begone; 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 slaughtered 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 preposterous nonsense of the worst kind. Israel left Egypt "by their armies" (Exo.12:51), "troop by troop," as the Hebrew Scriptures declare. They were obviously already organized and prepared to go.

### *Where Was Rameses?*

1. Where did the Israelites depart from? Exo.12:37.

**COMMENT:** The Israelites were in their houses or dwellings, gathered together in "Rameses." Some claim they were still scattered throughout the land of Goshen, and therefore an extra day was needed between the Passover and the Exodus. What about this claim?

2. Where was the land of Goshen, and Rameses, where Israel dwelt? Exodus 1:11. Was this in the best of the land, in the land of Goshen? Gen.47:6,11-12,27.

**COMMENT:** The land of Goshen was in the eastern part of the fertile delta region of the Nile River. Rameses was also located within this same region (Exo.1:12), where the Israelites built the treasure cities of Rameses and Pithom for the Pharaoh. We read the proof of this in Genesis 47:11 -- "And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the BEST OF THE LAND, IN THE LAND OF RAMESES, as Pharaoh had commanded." This was "in the land of Goshen" (Gen.47:6).

The expression some translations use, stating the Israelites "broke camp," simply means that they moved out from where they were. The King James version states simply, "And the children of Israel JOURNEYED from Rameses" (Exo.12:37). The Hebrew word "journeyed" is *naca* and means, "to start on a journey," "to make a

journey," "remove," "march," "go away," "go their way," literally, "to pull up" (as tent pegs). The word simply means to leave or take a journey, not literally "break camp" as some more modern translations loosely translate, trying to be more colorful. The same word is used in Gen.11:2, 12:9, 13:11, 20:1, 33:17, etc.

Since Rameses was the starting point of the Exodus, and lay within the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, it would not have taken any time to assemble them to begin the trek to Canaan. Because of the plagues, Josephus tells us that the people were already assembled and prepared to start out, and that is why they ate the Passover fully clothed and prepared, "in haste" (Exo. 12:11-12).

This one location where Moses had assembled them was at Rameses, in the land of Goshen, which was their own district given to Joseph and his family by Pharaoh several generations previously. This clearly shows that the Israelites were all together by the time of the Passover night. They were prepared to leave. That is why they ate the Passover "in haste" that first year, fully clothed, and every man with his staff in his hand (Exodus 12:11). They were *ready to depart!*

### ***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?

1. Is the Passover a stern, austere occasion only for adults? Or is it to be a

FAMILY affair? Exo.13:3-11. Are children to participate in this memorial observance? Exo.13:8-10.

**COMMENT:** Remember, first of all, that the Jews have always celebrated the Passover as a distinctly FAMILY affair! 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 pagan mass!

But what do many churches do? They focus on observing a ritual that is much like a pagan mass, with a tiny wafer (unleavened) and a thimble sized vial of wine!

2. Was Passover to be a special MEAL? Exodus 12:8. What was to be eaten? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** Passover was *never* intended by God to be a solemn, austere "church service" as it is practiced in some churches today! Not at all. It was intended to be a joyous, happy, celebration of deliverance, an intimate family 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! It is to be a recitation of the meaning of the Passover symbols – the matzah (unleavened bread), lamb, bitter herbs (symbolizing their bondage in Egypt). The wine was to symbolize many things as well – all this is explained in our free "Christian-Messianic Passover Hagaddah." Write for your free copy!

3. Did Jesus Christ set us an example of how to celebrate the Passover.? How did He observe it? Luke 2:41-42.

**COMMENT:** Jesus Christ observed the Passover all His life with His family, "as the custom was" among the Jewish people. It was a FAMILY AFFAIR.

4. And after He began His ministry, who did He observe it with? John 2:13-17.

**COMMENT:** He observed it with His disciples. Were they converted at this time? Matt.18:1-5; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4.

**COMMENT:** To partake of the Passover is a commandment of God. One must be a believer in the Messiah, and the God of Israel, to participate – but one need not be a fully converted Christian. Learners and believers who are sincere, and seeking the truth, may participate, even though not yet baptized. Even children should participate – this is God's instruction! Passover is a time for LEARNING, teaching, and rehearsing God's great Plan of salvation and deliverance!

5. As true, genuine Christians, are we to "follow His steps"? Are we to "walk as He walked"? I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6.

**COMMENT:** We are commanded to "FOLLOW HIS STEPS" (I Pet.2:21) -- that is, LIVE as HE lived, and celebrate the Passover THE SAME WAY HE DID, SETTING US AN *EXAMPLE!* He never observed the Passover as a funereal dirge or evening of sorrow, like a solemn pagan mass!

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

The true Passover is meant by God 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!

### *Passover -- a Memorial*

Stop and think a moment. Passover typified the slain Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

He was slain at the end of the 14th of Nisan, about 3:00 PM in the afternoon (Matt.27:45-50; 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 Jesus Christ 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 Jesus always observed it throughout His life.* We keep it as a memorial, observed after the death of the Lamb of God, 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 God "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, Jesus Christ the "Lamb of God" (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.

All of God'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.

God thunders, "My people are DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE" (Hos.4:6). The true knowledge of the Passover is a vital KEY to understanding

God's plan on this earth!

Isn't it about time we get back to the faith once delivered to the saints? (Jude 3).