Facing the Passover Controversy

By Larry and June Acheson

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Introduction

When June and I became persuaded that Yahweh's children are still commanded to observe the holy days that He ordained in His Word, we were immediately embroiled in the controversy pertaining to the timing of the Passover. We patiently read one group's article, then, just so we could demonstrate that we are willing to listen to both sides of any issue, we requested literature from another group promoting the opposite view. One thing we quickly concluded was that both sides make some excellent points, yet, as it always seems to turn out, we concluded that one view was backed by the most solid evidence.

This is one of those topics that, once an individual reaches a particular conclusion, he typically prefers to not delve into it again. At least that has been our observation. With this in mind, I know that many will not take the time to examine our research because they feel they've already given the topic its "due diligence," so to speak. They may flip to the conclusion to see whether or not our conclusion matches theirs; if it does, then fine. If it doesn't, then it will likely be prematurely rejected. I am reminded of a couple of studies that we wrote several years ago. One pertains to the topic of the American holiday known as "Thanksgiving." The other is about food preparation on the weekly Sabbath. In both cases, two individuals requested our study and expressed an interest in checking out our research. However, both individuals later expressed disagreement with certain "points" that weren't even covered in the studies! Upon being cornered, both individuals were at least honest enough to admit that they hadn't actually read the study in question. They, like so many others, preferred to base their answers on what they *thought* our arguments were instead of an outright impartial examination. The truth is, the current society in which we live is characterized by what some term an "information overload." Many believers, taken aback by this swirling glut of information made so readily available, decide that the only way they will read anything is to have it presented to them in condensed form. People tend to want the "whole enchilada" in condensed form, but unless we fully address the individual pieces that make up the whole, we will have an incomplete picture. In this study, we hope to cover as much ground as we can without bogging things down with unnecessary information.

Although June and I have been studying this particular issue off and on for over 20 years now, we do not expect anyone to consider our experience when weighing their decision. In fact, when we first began studying this issue, a man who had already been studying the Passover controversy for 20 years fervently presented his own findings:

> I guess what I am really trying to say, Larry, is that the Passover question is one I have been studying for some 20 years or more. I do not mean to say that I have all the answers. But, I do feel that many of the questions that people raise are the same ones I had to answer for myself years ago. I almost think I know the Passover verses by heart.[1]

[1] This is an excerpt from a letter dated April 4, 1987, which I received from Donald R. Mansager, who was at that time affiliated with Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, Rocheport, Missouri.

While some people do allow an author's experience to influence their decisions, this factor certainly had no effect on June and me, as we reached a different conclusion than the one promoted by the above author. You, on the other hand, may disagree with *our* findings. Each of us must reach our own conclusions based upon our understanding of truth. Our aim in this study is not so much to persuade you to believe as we do as it is to explain our own position in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Our decision to put together this study is primarily based upon our desire to not have to dwell heavily on the Passover controversy in another unrelated study. While updating our study *Something Different: Lunar Sabbaths*, we found that the timing of the Passover plays a significant role in demonstrating that first-century Jewish believers could not have been lunar sabbatarians. However, since there is so much controversy surrounding the timing of the Passover, including the events surrounding the sacrifice of the true Passover lamb, Yeshua the Messiah, we became concerned that our study on lunar Sabbaths would include a ridiculously-long subdivision pertaining to the Passover. Rather than combine two separate studies into one, we decided to proceed with presenting our findings pertaining to the Passover in a separate study.

Part I. When is "Between the Evenings"?

There should be no debate over the date on which Passover must fall. Scripture makes it plain that Passover falls on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Scriptural calendar:

> In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is Yahweh's passover. (Leviticus 23:5)

The primary source of contention when it comes to determining when Passover is, then, has nothing to do with the date assigned to the Passover; rather, the crux of the controversy centers around *when* the lambs were killed that day. More specifically, at the heart of this controversy is the meaning of the Hebrew term *beyn ha'arbayim*, which, when translated literally, means "between the evenings." This Hebrew expression is found in the above verse, but the translators didn't make it very obvious to the English reader. The words "at even" in Leviticus 23:5 are more accurately translated "between the evenings," as can be readily noted while reviewing the actual Hebrew text[2]:

3068	6453	6153	996	2320	6240	702	7223	2320	
בחדשׁ	הראשׁון	בארבעה	עשׂר	לחדשׁ	בין	הערבים	פסח	ליהוה׃	
month (the In)	first	(day) fourteenth the on		month the of	between	evenings the	Passover	Yahweh to.	←

If we can agree that Passover must fall on Abib 14, why does the timing of "between the evenings" matter? Quite simply, it matters because it is "between the evenings" when the Passover lambs were slain, and certainly we understand that the Passover meal could not be eaten until the lambs were offered. Notice what it says in Exodus 12:5-8:

> [5]Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:
> [6]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 (*beyn ha'arbayim*).
> [7]And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.
> [8]And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

If we are to arrive at the correct understanding of when the Passover meal was eaten, it is critical that we first understand when the Passover lambs were killed. We know it was "between the evenings" (*beyn ha'arbayim*), but exactly "when" is "between the evenings"? On the one hand, it is argued that "between the evenings" comprises the time between sunset and dark. On the other hand, others insist that it is a period of time ranging from afternoon until sunset (usually considered to be from around 3:00 PM until sunset, though some have written that it begins at noon). This makes such a big difference because if the one group is correct, the Passover meal is to be eaten before going to bed on Abib 14. Furthermore, even though unleavened bread is only commanded to be eaten from Abib 15-21, this view requires believing that the first meal of Abib 14 must consist of unleavened bread, too.

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[2] This Hebrew text was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 108.

If the other group is correct, the Passover lamb isn’t offered until the daylight portion of Abib 14 arrives. In fact, it is offered so late in the day that the actual Passover meal isn’t eaten until Abib 14 has ended. Thus, if the first group is correct, the Passover meal is eaten on Abib 14; if the other group has the proper understanding, it isn’t eaten until the following night. Thus, what June and I have endured for over 20 years are persistent charges from each group that those from the opposing camp eat the Passover meal on the wrong day. Since we already know that Passover must fall on the fourteenth day of the month, our next task is to determine the precise meaning of “*beyn ha'arbayim*.” If all of us end up agreeing on the meaning of this term, we will be far more likely to share a Passover meal, and wouldn’t that be awesome?

1. Evidence From the Timing of the Daily Sacrifices

Two separate verses in the Torah give instructions for when to offer the daily sacrifices. As it turns out, one of those daily sacrifices was to be offered at the same time of day as the Passover sacrifice -- "*beyn ha'arbayim*." Presuming that a new Scriptural day begins at sunset, these verses, in and of themselves, plainly tell us that "between the evenings" cannot be after sunset. Let's take a look at one of those verses, found in Exodus chapter 29:

> [38]Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.
> [39]The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer <u>at even</u> (*beyn ha'arbayim*):

Let's make certain we grasp the significance of these two verses. We are told that "day by day continually" Israel was to offer two lambs of the first year. In other words, within the space of what Yahweh calls a day, two lambs were to be killed. The one lamb (i.e., "lamb #1") was to be offered in the morning. The other lamb (i.e., "lamb #2") was to be offered "at even" (*beyn ha'arbayim*). We need to understand that if two lambs are to be slain on the same day, one in the morning and one "at even," then "at even" must occur on the same day as "in the morning." Otherwise, if "at even" is after sunset, when the Scriptural day ends[3], only one lamb was slain on the first day this command was carried out. Thereafter, the first lamb slain each day would of necessity have had to have been slain after sunset, distorting the sequence given in Exodus 29:38-39. Providing a second witness to the sequence of the daily sacrifices is Numbers 28:3-4:

> [3]And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto Yahweh; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering.
> [4]The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer <u>at even</u> (*beyn ha'arbayim*);

Once again the sequence of the daily offering is specified: The first is offered in the morning, the second is offered "between the evenings." This sequence only works if "between the evenings" occurs within the same day as "morning."

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[3] Some folks contend that the Scriptural day actually began at dawn instead of sunset. While we have not, as of this writing, written a study on this subject, we believe the preponderance of evidence supports the understanding that the Biblical day always began at sunset. This is why, after sunset, those who had been unclean and had performed the ritual cleansing rites were declared "clean" (Leviticus 22:6-7, Deut. 23:10-11). This seems to have been the understanding of Judaism during the days of Yeshua's earthly ministry. For example, in Mark 1:32 we read, "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils." Even though Yeshua healed on the Sabbath (and there was certainly nothing wrong with doing such a thing), the general understanding exhibited by Judaism was that they should wait until the Sabbath was over before bringing the diseased for healing. This they did when the sun had set. Moreover, the author of the book of Acts also demonstrated the understanding that a new day began at sunset. In Acts 27:27, during the Apostle Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner, we read that the "fourteenth night came." In verse 33, we read, "And until day was about to come, Paul begged all to partake of food, saying, 'Today is the fourteenth day you continued waiting without food, not having eaten anything." The fourteenth day, which had already begun at sunset the evening before, was still being referred to as the "fourteenth day" the next morning. The historian Josephus, too, expressed the understanding that a new day begins at sunset. In *Wars of the Jews*, Book IV, ch. ix., sec. 12, he wrote of how the priests gave a signal with a trumpet at the beginning of every seventh day "in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when the day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to go to work again."

Those who believe that "between the evenings" occurs between sunset and dark come up with what we consider to be unreasonable reasoning. Notice what the author of one study wrote:

> In Exodus 29:39-41 Yahweh gives instructions for the day-by-day offering of the lambs. One is offered in the morning and another at twilight, along with the fine flour and drink offering. There are those who contend that this "proves" that the morning [*boker*] and the evening [*ben ha arbayim*] are all in the same day.
>
> However, this is not what the verses say. It simply is showing the offerings that will be made as soon as the priests arise and before they retire at night. It nowhere says this will be done "the same day." An offering is made every morning when the sun is up, and in the evening when the sun has set.[4]

We do not accept the interpretation offered above. The author suggests that those who believe the two offerings are commanded to be offered on the same day are missing out on what the verses say. However, we believe he is the one who is missing out. Yahweh did not instruct the priests to offer one offering when they arise in the morning and then again just before retiring for the night. As mentioned earlier, Yahweh Himself provides the sequential order of the daily offerings: Two lambs are offered <u>each</u> day. One is offered in the morning, one "between the evenings." This can be none other than a reference to actions performed on the same day. To better assist you in grasping this concept, please try to look at it this way: If you were instructed to call your boss twice a day … once in the morning and once in the evening (specifically, *beyn ha'arbayim*) … and you understood that a new day began at sunset, would you place that second call *before* or *after* sunset to comply with the instruction you were given? If your answer is, "After sunset," we can only reply that we hope your boss is very understanding and compassionate.

Again, to summarize our point, let's go back in time to the first day on which the priests carried out the command pertaining to the daily offerings. If, on that first day, they offered the first lamb "as soon as they arose," and then they offered the second one "before they retired at night," then the priests disobeyed the command because only one lamb was offered on that first day instead of the two as directed by Yahweh. Thus, we are persuaded that this one understanding of the Hebrew term *beyn ha'arbayim* demonstrates that the daily sacrifices were offered *before* sunset, not afterwards. Since this same time frame is assigned to the slaughter of the Passover lambs (Ex. 12:6), this is persuasive evidence that this is when they, too, were killed.

The Septuagint version of Scripture, which was translated in the third century B.C.E., reflects this same understanding. The Hebrew scholars who translated the Torah into Greek rendered *beyn ha'arbayim* in such a way as to reflect a time frame *prior to sunset*, not afterwards. Notice how Exodus 12:6 is translated in the Septuagint:

> [6]And it shall be kept by you till the fourteenth of this month, and all the multitude of the congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it <u>toward</u> <u>evening</u>.

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[4] From an undated study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by a member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, p. 5. The author apparently chose to remain modestly anonymous. This study was mailed to us in April 1987 by Donald Mansager, who was at that time an elder with the assembly.

As demonstrated by the Septuagint translation, the ancient Hebrew scholars who translated this version understood *beyn ha'arbayim* as being a reference to "toward evening," not after sunset. Our experience with those who do not agree with or appreciate this translation has been that they attempt to discredit the Septuagint and the scholars who translated it, even though it can be shown to have been the "version of choice" among the New Testament authors. We address in detail the attempts to discredit the Septuagint in our study entitled *Facing the Pentecost Controversy*.[5]

The opposing camp has produced other objections that merit our attention, so we will now focus our attention on what we consider their strongest argument.

[5] *Cf.*, *Facing the Pentecost Controversy*, chapter 14 "The Reliability of the Septuagint," pp. 43 – 47. This study may be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Facing%20Pentecost2.pdf.

2. The Quails of Exodus 16

We have found that whenever there is a Scriptural controversy, both sides always seem to have at least one seemingly solid argument that, if there was nothing else in Scripture to invalidate it, would lend credence to their position. The quail story of Exodus chapter 16 is one such example. Let's read the pertinent portion of this chapter. Although the matter of the quails doesn't begin until verse six, we will include the first five verses as well so as to provide a clear context:

Exodus 16

[1]And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.
[2]And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:
[3]And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to the Almighty we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.
[4]Then said Yahweh unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no.
[5]And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.
[6]And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even (*ereb*), then ye shall know that Yahweh hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:
[7]And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Yahweh; for that He heareth your murmurings against Yahweh: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?
[8]And Moses said, This shall be, when Yahweh shall give you in the evening (*ereb*) flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Yahweh heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh.
[9]And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before Yahweh: for He hath heard your murmurings.
[10]And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud.
[11]And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying,
[12]I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even (***beyn ha'arbayim***) ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Yahweh your Almighty.
[13]And it came to pass, that at even (*ereb*) the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

If we follow the details provided in this chapter without allowing any outside factors to influence our decision, we can understand that on the evening of the day on which the Israelites murmured, they were provided "flesh to eat" in the form of quails. The following morning, they were given "bread to the full" in the form of manna. You may be wondering, "What does this story have to do with determining

the meaning of 'between the evenings'?" In a nutshell, here is the answer: It can be successfully demonstrated that the day on which the children of Israel were promised "bread to the full" was none other than the day of the weekly Sabbath. The children of Israel were given quails "between the evenings" of this same day, and according to verse 12, their quails would have had to have been prepared (roasted) and eaten "between the evenings"; if "between the evenings" is inclusive of a time frame that ranges between noon and sunset, then this can only mean that the Israelites roasted their quails on the day of the weekly Sabbath … a day on which no food preparation is allowed (Ex. 16:23). Those who believe "between the evenings" represents a time frame falling between sunset and dark argue that this story validates their position because, quite frankly, this would have the Israelites roasting their quails *after* the weekly Sabbath had ended. They make an excellent point that merits our attention.

To illustrate their position, here is a chart depicting the understanding of those who believe "between the evenings" denotes the time frame between sunset and dark. The shaded areas indicate the beginning portion of each day (which commences at sundown):

First Day		Second Day		Third Day		Fourth Day		Fifth Day		Sixth Day		Weekly Sabbath	
													Israelites murmur
Quails sent	Manna given												

As indicated by the above chart, supported by those who believe "between the evenings" consists of the period between sunset and dark, it wasn't until the Sabbath had *ended* (right at sunset) that the quails were sent, thus allowing the Israelites to not have to both kill and prepare the quails until the Sabbath was past. Some may wonder how we know that the day on which the Israelites were promised "bread to the full" was the day of the weekly Sabbath. We can make this determination by simple deduction. Since the following morning was "day one" of the manna, which was to be gathered for six days followed by a day of rest, then the day *preceding* "day one" must have been "day seven," which is the day of the weekly Sabbath. Indeed, we know from the narrative of Exodus 16 that "day one" of the manna was the morning after the "quail miracle."

This is important to understand because if the quails were given to the Israelites and prepared *prior* to sundown of the day they complained (i.e., before sundown had ended the Sabbath), this can only mean that they were prepared on the day of the weekly Sabbath, an act that is forbidden on that day (Exodus 16:23)[6], and it is not likely that Yahweh would expect His chosen people to prepare food on one Sabbath day, then forbid it the next Sabbath day. The understanding of what things would have been like if "between the evenings" represents a time frame between noon and sunset is vividly illustrated by the following chart:

[6] For a detailed examination of the extent to which food preparation is allowed on the day of the weekly Sabbath, we invite you to read our study entitled *Food Preparation: On the Sabbath?*, which can be read by accessing the following URL: http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Food%20Preparation%20on%20Shabbat.pdf

First Day	Second Day	Third Day	Fourth Day	Fifth Day	Sixth Day	Weekly Sabbath
						Children of Israel promised "bread to the full" and flesh to eat; quails sent/prepared "between the evenings" (late afternoon) → X
Day 1 of manna	Day 2 of manna	Day 3 of manna	Day 4 of manna	Day 5 of manna	Day 6 of manna Double portion of manna given	First weekly Sabbath observance by the children of Israel. Food preparation is prohibited (Ex. 16:23).

What we must understand at this point is the fact that food preparation is not allowed on the day of the weekly Sabbath, and the above scenario certainly does depict the Israelites preparing/roasting quails on the Sabbath day. If we can agree that food preparation is forbidden on the Sabbath, then we can also see that the above scenario appears to pose a conundrum for those of us who believe that "between the evenings" represents the time frame occurring between noon and sunset, as it requires believing that the Israelites prepared/roasted quails on the Sabbath. Regrettably, we have found that many do not share the understanding that Yahweh prohibits food preparation on the Sabbath, and for those who disagree with our position, the remainder of this chapter will likely have little or no bearing on their understanding of this aspect of our study. Nevertheless, I would like to briefly explain how Exodus 16:23 demonstrates that food preparation, at least in the form of cooking, is not allowed on the day of the weekly Sabbath. Shown below is Exodus 16:23:

> [23]And he said unto them, This is that which Yahweh hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto Yahweh: bake (Heb. *awfaw*) that which ye will bake (Heb. *awfaw*) to day, and seethe (Heb. *bashal*) that ye will seethe (Heb. *bashal*); and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

As indicated from the way in which we presented the above text, there are two key Hebrew words which we believe are critical to understanding the intent as expressed in this command. Those two words are *awfaw* (אפה, word #644 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) and *bashal* (בשל, word #1310 in *Strong's*). When we examine the literal meanings of these two Hebrew words, we find that *awfaw* means "to bake," which in turn means to subject anything to the action of heat, regardless of how long it is applied. The Hebrew word *bashal*, on the other hand, literally means "to be done in cooking." In other words, expressing this in layman's terms, Yahweh instructs us to "warm up that which we will warm up and fully cook that which we will fully cook" on the sixth day of the week, and whatever is left over we are to "lay up" to be kept until the following morning. We cover this in much greater detail in our study entitled *Food Preparation: On the Sabbath?*, where we go on to demonstrate that ancient Judaism recognized this understanding of Exodus 16:23, whereas modern Judaism promotes the use of a "Sabbath stove" designed to only apply moderate heat to food.

Equipped with the understanding that food preparation, especially the roasting of a raw food item, is prohibited on the day of the weekly Sabbath, we are now faced with the following challenge issued by those who believe that "between the evenings" is a reference to the period between sunset and dark: "If you believe 'between the evenings' refers to the afternoon portion of a day, … and if it is wrong to

roast freshly-slaughtered quails on the weekly Sabbath …, then please explain how the Israelites were able to prepare and eat the quails 'between the evenings,' as per Exodus 16:12, especially since you agree this event must have occurred on the day of the weekly Sabbath."

Or, as one "sunset to dark" advocate puts it:

> If "b.t.e." ("between the evenings") is 3pm-4pm, how is it that the Israelites in Ex.16 were able to eat the quail "between the evenings" without breaking the Sabbath? Remember that the quail came "B'Ereb" (at even), and they had to gather them and cook them before eating them.[7]

Ouch! This is a tough question! As we alluded to earlier, if we had no other passages of Scripture to influence our understanding of the Hebrew expression *beyn ha'arbayim*, we would be inclined to agree that this expression must indicate a time frame that begins when a Scriptural day has ended, i.e., at sunset. Since we can reasonably deduce that the day on which Yahweh decreed He would send the quails was a weekly Sabbath day, we can see the difficulty posed by believing that Yahweh sent them quails to prepare and eat before the sun set that day. It would therefore make more sense, based upon the reading of the text in Exodus 16, to believe that *ben ha'arbayim* refers to a time frame that begins *after* sunset, not the afternoon before.

However, as it turns out, indeed there are other passages of Scripture that we believe are very important for us to consider before reaching our conclusion based upon the quails of Exodus 16. As we continue researching this matter, we need to examine yet *another* "quail story." This is the quail narrative found in Numbers chapter 11. In fact, there are only two recorded "quail miracles" in the Bible, and they are found in the accounts of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. In order to best come to grips with the proper understanding of the quail miracle of Exodus 16, we believe we need to be completely familiar with the details of the quail miracle found in Numbers chapter 11. Before turning to chapter 11, though, we need to also familiarize ourselves with the context and setting, which we are given in chapter 10. We know that the events of Exodus 16 took place during the first year of the Israelites' departure from Egypt; in fact, the first verse tells us it was during the second month after departing Egypt. When did the events described in *Numbers 11* occur?

We learn in Numbers chapter 10 that this event transpired during the *second year* after their departure. For example, we read the following in Numbers 10:11-12:

> [11]And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.
> [12]And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

Given the above time frame, we know that the events described in Numbers chapter 11 must have occurred over a year after the account found in Exodus chapter 16, which in turn offers a strong

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[7] From a posting submitted by "chuckbaldwin" in a forum thread entitled "**When does the "even-to-even" day start?**" This posting was submitted on 02-07-2005 at 05:54 PM to the Scripture Discussion forum, which can be accessed at www.eliyah.com.

indication that two separate events are described. With this in mind, let us now review the account of the "quail miracle" in Numbers chapter 11:

Numbers 11

[4]And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

[5]We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

[6]But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

[7]And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

[8]And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.

[9]And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

[10]Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of Yahweh was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

[11]And Moses said unto Yahweh, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

[12]Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?

[13]Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.

[14]I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

[15]And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

[16]And Yahweh said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

[17]And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

[18]And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore Yahweh will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

[19]Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

[20]But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised Yahweh which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

[21]And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

[22]Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

[23]And Yahweh said unto Moses, Is Yahweh's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

[24]And Moses went out, and told the people the words of Yahweh, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

[25]And Yahweh came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.
[26]But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.
[27]And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.
[28]And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My master Moses, forbid them.
[29]And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would that all Yahweh's people were prophets, and that Yahweh would put his spirit upon them!
[30]And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.
[31]And there went forth a wind from Yahweh, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.
[32]And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.
[33]And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of Yahweh was kindled against the people, and Yahweh smote the people with a very great plague.
[34]And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.

The above text requires careful study, so if you haven't reviewed it, we suggest that you do so before reading any further. We don't want anyone to reach premature conclusions! As we review this passage, there are some noteworthy questions that come to mind, all of which are deserving of answers. For example, as we begin reading the chapter, we should wonder, "Are we about to read of a *second instance* in which Yahweh sends quails?" At first glance, this might appear to be the scenario that took place. However, if we carefully analyze this account, we are definitely left with the impression that, as of the second month of the second year after they left Egypt, the Israelites *still* had not eaten any quails! In other words, if the reader has never read the quail account in the book of Exodus, he would not find any clues in the book of Numbers that a "quail miracle" had ever occurred prior to the narrative found in Numbers chapter 11. Notice that in Numbers 11:5, the children of Israel remembered all the food that they had to eat before they left Egypt, but there is no apparent memory of a "quail miracle" that occurred after their departure. They cried:

[5]We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic;
[6]But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

Was the miracle of the quail, presuming it really did occur over a year earlier, such a small miracle that the children of Israel had completely forgotten about it by the time they reached Kibroth-hattavah? If the account in Numbers 11 is truly the <u>second</u> "quail miracle," it is astonishing that they had no apparent recollection of the <u>first</u> one. How could they remember the "non-miracle" involving the cucumbers, melons, etc., but completely forget about the awesome miracle involving the quail (Ex. 16)?

If it is indeed true that they had already experienced a quail miracle, then the mere notion that they would instead draw upon the memories of non-miracles *defies all logic*!

Moreover, even Moses was in great consternation over the Israelites' demand for "flesh to eat." He had no idea how such a thing could be accomplished! Had he, too, forgotten about the previous "quail miracle"? Notice what he told Yahweh in Numbers 11:13:

> [13]Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat!

As shown above, Moses had absolutely no idea how in the world he could come up with "flesh to eat" for the hungry Israelites. If there had been a "quail miracle" a year earlier, he, too, had completely forgotten about it. In fact, the only possibility he could conceive of that would involve feeding the Israelites flesh had nothing to do with birds! Notice his additional expression of consternation in verses 21-22:

> [21]And Moses said, The people, among whom I *am*, *are* six hundred thousand footmen; and Thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.
> [22]Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

Why is it that the only flesh Moses could think of was "flocks, herds and fish"? *Surely* Moses remembered the great "quail miracle" of a year earlier, … *didn't he*? Why didn't he simply ask Yahweh to provide *another* quail miracle like unto the one of the previous year? Could it be that the *first* "quail miracle" had not actually occurred yet? Could it be that the "quail miracle" narrative found in Exodus 16 is out of sequence?

I might also add that it seems strange that Yahweh didn't chastise Moses for forgetting about the previous year's "quail miracle" ... presuming one such miracle had already occurred a year earlier. Nor are we told in the book of Numbers that this was a "second quail miracle." Indeed, it is presented in each narrative as a one-time-only event. The question is, "When and where did that one-time event occur?" Was it in the Wilderness of Sin during the first year of their wilderness journey or was it at Kibroth-hattavah during their *second* year of wandering? While many believe the answer should be "both," I am persuaded that this miracle occurred only once, and that it was during the *second year* of their wilderness journey, based largely upon the reasons I have just listed, but also because if that day had been the weekly Sabbath, I do not believe Yahweh would have broken His own law by having His people prepare a raw food item ... which is what they would have done that day if it truly had been the weekly Sabbath, i.e., the day before the first of six days of manna. Of critical importance to this topic, we need to take note of the fact that in Numbers 11 there is no mention of the weekly Sabbath. In other words, there is no reason for us to presume, based upon the text of Numbers 11, that the quail miracle took place on or near the day of the weekly Sabbath. Any quails sent between noon and sunset on any day but the weekly Sabbath may be caught, killed, plucked, disemboweled and roasted without any negative consequences (not as quick and easy a chore as some folks would like for you to believe). If, as we suspect, the quail miracle of Numbers 11 was infused into the story of Exodus 16, we have a case of an event that didn't take place on the day of the weekly Sabbath being superimposed into an account

that *did* take place on the Sabbath day. This would be akin to reading a story of how, on a certain day, a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter, and that night, at around midnight, a certain jolly fellow delivered toys to all the good little girls and boys. Those of us who are familiar with all the heathen festivals would understand that whoever composed the above scenario intertwined a Christmas tradition into a Groundhog's Day celebration. The two traditions simply do not occur on the same day. In the same way, based upon the concerns we have presented in this chapter, we believe it is possible the "quail miracle" of Numbers 11 was misplaced and mistakenly overlaid into the Exodus 16 "manna miracle."

Many Bible students (and even Bible scholars) refuse to accept the notion that *anything* in Torah could possibly be "out of sequence," and the mere suggestion, to some, borders on sacrilege. Nevertheless, after having posed the above questions to several individuals who firmly adhere to the belief that *beyn ha'arbayim* can only refer to the period between sunset and dark, I have received *nothing* in the way of explanations. We really do try to be reasonable, so if anyone can reasonably explain how and why Moses and the children of Israel, in the second year of their departure from Egypt, collectively forgot about a first-year quail miracle, we will reconsider our position. In the meantime, we regard the above questions as legitimate reasons to consider the "quail miracle" narrative of Exodus 16 as being out of sequence.

I can think of no better way to illustrate how my questions are either ignored or not deemed worthy of consideration than to offer a complete dissertation on why, according to one organization, the "quail miracle" of Exodus 16 proves that *beyn ha'arbayim* can only mean the period of time between sunset and dark. It is clear that the author of the following commentary does not consider the possibility that the quail miracle of Exodus 16 is actually a misplaced description of the quail miracle of Numbers 11. In fact, the author never mentions Numbers 11. What follows, then, is the author's complete "quail commentary," as found in the study entitled "Why Passover Is On the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th":

Quail Eaten Between Evenings

In Deuteronomy[8] 16, Israel is in the Desert of Sin. Notice they had now come to the area between Elim and Sinai on the 15th day of the second month (Ex. 16:1-4) and were grumbling against Moses and Aaron, wishing they were again back in Egypt or had even died there. Yahweh then spoke to Moses, which was then related to the people in verse 6.

"So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening [*ha ereb*] you will know that it was Yahweh who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of Yahweh, because He has heard your grumbling against Him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' Moses also said, 'You will know that it was Yahweh when He gives you meat to eat in the evening [*ha ereb*] and all the bread you want in the morning, because He has heard your grumbling against Him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against Yahweh.'" Exodus 16:7-8

Suddenly Yahweh appears to the Israelites saying (verse 12), "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them at twilight [*ben ha arbayim*] you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that Yahweh is your Elohim." Exodus 16:12, NIV. Israel is promised that they will be eating meat or flesh between the evenings.

The Sabbath ended at sunset, *ha ereb*, and Yahweh ended His rest. Now He went to work, providing food for His people Israel. The new day had begun with the setting of the sun, and the beginning of the new week began. Quail began to fly into the camp as the sun went down and were so thick they covered the place Israel was camped. It was a simple matter to gather up the quail and prepare them for supper. Cleaning and roasting them would be relatively simple for the Israelites, and they could prepare the quail and eat them before dark.

Here is a Bible example of *ben ha arbayim* (between the two evenings) occurring AFTER *ha ereb* (evening). Note that Yahweh had instructed them on the Sabbath about His plans. First, he would send them flesh to eat at evening [*ha ereb*] when the Sabbath ended at sunset. Second, He would send them manna the next morning.

His words were passed on to the grumbling Israelites by Moses and Aaron. They waited for the sun to set, ending the Sabbath at *ha ereb* (evening). At the setting of the sun, the Sabbath ended; Yahweh sent the quails into the camp, covering the campground.

Preparing the quail took some time, but plucking and roasting the small birds was relatively simple and fast. They would be able to catch, prepare and roast them during the twilight hour, and just as Yahweh had promised, eat the flesh between the two evenings. After sunset and before total darkness Israel feasted on the quail, *ben ha arbayim*.

Passover Also Between Evenings

There is no question that this proves that *ben ha arbayim* is AFTER *ereb*, after the sun has set. It is before dark, at the beginning of the new day. Passover is to be held "between the evenings," according to Exodus 12:6 and Leviticus 23:5. Deuteronomy 16:6 clearly says that the lamb was to be slain at the going down (Hebrew *bo*) or "going into the horizon" of the sun.[9]

We only include the above excerpt so as to illustrate the reasoning presented by those who are persuaded that the "Quail Miracle" of Exodus 16 proves the meaning of the Hebrew expression *beyn ha'arbayim*. On the surface, the above reasoning appears very sound, and if it weren't for the other passages of Scripture, combined with the puzzling unanswered questions raised by the account in Numbers 11, we would be persuaded that the author's conclusion is valid. Regrettably, the above author doesn't offer a commentary / comparison of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 so as to address the questions we have raised in this chapter. To that end, we maintain that no commentary on the "quail miracle" found in Exodus 16 can be considered complete unless it *also* addresses the "quail miracle" found in Numbers 11.

Although we believe the account listed in Exodus is a compressed description of the two events (quails and manna) into the same storyline, even though the miracle of the quail didn't occur until over a year later, this does not in any way imply that we reject the inspiration of Scripture, just in case

[8] This was obviously a "Freudian slip" on the part of the author, as he intended *Exodus*, not Deuteronomy.

[9] From an undated study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by a member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, pp. 3-4. The author apparently chose to remain modestly anonymous. This study was mailed to us in April 1987 by Donald Mansager, who was at that time an elder with the assembly.

someone might prematurely arrive at such a conclusion. What we need to consider at this point is the fact that other Scriptural accounts are plainly given out of sequence, but this doesn't mean we should reject the inspiration of the Bible. For example, in Genesis 1:24-26, Yahweh creates the "beasts of the earth," and then creates man. In Genesis 2:7-20, Yahweh creates man first, and *then* creates the "beasts of the field." Hopefully, we all know that the one event preceded the other, but it is impossible to discern which event preceded the other by reading those two accounts. This "out of sequence" account has been debated amongst scholars for ages. The bottom line is, we know that Yahweh did not create Adam **twice**, nor did He create the animals twice. In the same way, based upon the evidence we have presented here, we do not believe Yahweh provided the "quail miracle" twice, either. Upon examining the way in which the quail miracle is presented in Numbers 11, we believe it is very likely that the books of Exodus and Numbers describe the very same account.

We concede that the majority of scholars favor regarding the two "quail accounts" as separate events. However, none of the scholars who present this understanding have offered answers to the questions I have posed. Moreover, as we all know, truth is by no means decided by majority vote. With that having been said, we will here point out that the belief that the two "quail accounts" are separate events is not unanimous. To establish this fact, we will first reinforce the fact that it is universally recognized that the accounts found in Scripture are not necessarily presented in chronological order. Consider, for example, the insight borne out by author Wayne Jackson, in his April 13, 2004 contribution to *The Christian Courier*:

> Competent scholars have long recognized that some accounts in the Scriptures are topically arranged at various points, rather than conforming to a strict chronological sequence. For example, Genesis 1 is a chronological arrangement of the events of the first six days of the creation week. Genesis 2 also deals with the creation events, but the record is topically arranged, with a major emphasis on mankind. There is no conflict; there is merely a different purpose in the narratives.[10]

Not only do we need to accept the fact that Scripture texts are not necessarily arranged in chronological order, but we also need to accept the possibility that two separate accounts may be describing one event. Alfred de Grazia, in his book *God's Fire: Moses and the Management of Exodus* offers the following advice when studying Bible texts:

> Accept the possibility that *two legends may be talking about the same event in a different way*. Did Moses really spend two forty day-night periods on Mount Sinai, or was there so much material coming out of one episode that it was made into two? Nothing vital is at stake in either case. The first prolonged period has to stand, in order to make the Golden Calf Revolt and other matters plausible. The second does not. It may have been a brief return following the suppression of the revolt for prayer, supplication, and redemption of the wicked people, whereupon the halo and the message. It would also let people test themselves in Moses' absence and redeem themselves by passing the "faith and patience

[10] From *The Christian Courier* internet study entitled "The 'Fig Tree' Incident – A Contradiction?" by Wayne Jackson, April 13, 2004. The entire study may be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/the_fig_tree_incident_a_contradiction

> test." Another case, already discussed, is that of the Greek Phaeton and Typhon legends, both evidently dealing with the cometary events of the Exodus.[11]

Is it possible that the "two quail legends" are referring to the same event in a different way? The NETBible, in its commentary pertaining to Exodus 16:30, addresses the difficulties in reconciling the quail account in Exodus 16 with the quail account in Numbers 11:

> One of the major interpretive difficulties is the comparison between Exod 16 and Num 11. In Numbers we find that the giving of the manna was about 24 months after the Exod 16 time (assuming there was a distinct time for this chapter), that it was after the erection of the tabernacle, that *Taberah* (the Burning) preceded it (not in Exod 16), that the people were tired of the manna (not that there was no bread to eat) and so God would send the quail, and that there was a severe tragedy over it. In Exod 16 both the manna and the quail are given on the same day, with no mention of quail on the following days. Contemporary scholarship generally assigns the accounts to two different sources because complete reconciliation seems impossible. Even if we argue that Exodus has a thematic arrangement and "telescopes" some things to make a point, there will still be difficulties in harmonization. Two considerations must be kept in mind: 1) First, they could be separate events entirely. If this is true, then they should be treated separately as valid accounts of things that appeared or occurred during the period of the wanderings. Similar things need not be the same thing. 2) Secondly, strict chronological order is not always maintained in the Bible narratives, especially if it is a didactic section. Perhaps Exod 16 describes the initiation of the giving of manna as God's provision of bread, and therefore placed in the prologue of the covenant, and Num 11 is an account of a mood which developed over a period of time in response to the manna. Num 11 would then be looking back from a different perspective.[12]

Another author expressing concerns about reconciling the two quail accounts is D. Keith Innes. He offers the following insight in his work *The Old Testament Wilderness in Ecological Perspective*:

> Numbers 11:4ff contains echoes but also variations of Exodus 16. In Exodus the manna and quails appear as a twofold provision and are closely connected; in Numbers the manna is an occasion for complaint, while the quails and the subsequent plague follow the murmuring. Numbers, but not Exodus, mentions the wind from the west (an alternative translation would be, from the sea); Psalm 78:26 mentions the east wind and south wind, which Houtman interprets as a south east wind, i.e. from the Gulf of Aqaba. As regards the quantity of the quails, Exodus 16:13 merely states that they covered the camp; Numbers 11:31 could be taken to imply that they were let lie two cubits deep, a day's journey from the camp in each direction; however, the REB translates, 'they were flying all round the camp, three feet above the ground'. Ashley notes that quails have been netted in flight in the Sinai until relatively recent times. The two translations probably reflect two ways of reading the consonantal text. Numbers, but not Exodus, records how long was spent in gathering the quails. The eating of the quails and the plague are not mentioned in Exodus. The similarities serve, as often, to highlight the development of events.

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[11] *God's Fire: Moses and the Management of Exodus*, by Alfred de Grazia, Metron Publications, Princeton, NJ, Appendix, 1983. The full commentary may be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.grazian-archive.com/quantavolution/QuantaHTML/vol_09/gods_fire_app.htm

[12] This commentary (taken from footnote #30) may be read in its entirety at the NeXt Bible ™ Learning Environment by accessing the following link: http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Exo&chapter=16#n1

> Likewise the sharing of Moses' burden in Numbers 11 is comparable with, but also differs from the events of Exodus 18:13 26. In Exodus Jethro counsels Moses to appoint 'officers' over units of a thousand, a hundred, fifty and ten. They are to be men of exemplary character and outstanding ability, who will act as judges. In Numbers Yahweh instructs Moses to appoint seventy of Israel's 'elders'. Apart from the difference in the terminology of their office, the nature of their responsibilities differs: in Exodus the work is judicial; in Numbers the emphasis is more pastoral and spiritual.[13]

Certainly by now we can see and understand that, even within the scholarly community, there are difficulties in harmonizing the quail accounts of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. The NETBible goes so far as to suggest that the two accounts come from two different sources. Again, the problem does not lie with the credibility of the accounts; the problem lies in determining if there were indeed two separate "quail miracles." As I previously mentioned, we have yet to read a persuasive explanation from those who believe there were two separate miracles, nor have they have answered the questions I posed above. In fact, only one person has, to this point, even *addressed* my reasoning, which was shared in an online discussion forum. The following response was posted in February 2005[14]:

> Hi Larry,
>
> My understanding (subject to correction) is that the accounts in Ex.16 and Num.11 are describing 2 completely different events, even as the dates you mentioned would confirm. In Ex.16, they only got quails for one night, with manna starting the next morning. But in Num.11, they had grown tired of eating manna and demanded flesh again, which was provided for a whole month til it was coming out their nostrils. To me at least these were separate events.
>
> UPDATE: I posted the above before i saw that others have already asked you the same question, and you gave your response. Although i still disagree, i found your view to be an interesting perspective.
>
> ----------
> Chuck Baldwin

The gentleman who submitted the above posting appears to cling to the premise that Yahweh would not allow the account of one event to be superimposed into another separate storyline, primarily because this ultimately requires arriving at the conclusion that the description of the account found in Exodus 16 must be distorted. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, reaching the conclusion that such descriptions are misconstrued or distorted might appear to constitute an attack on the inspiration of Scripture. After all, if Yahweh inspired the book of Exodus to be written, we must conclude that its contents are accurate and true. Thus, if we are told that Yahweh sent quails in the second month of the first year of the Israelites' wandering, who are we to say it didn't really happen that way? Nevertheless, as we have already read, there are other storylines that are clearly out of sequence in Scripture, such as the Creation account already mentioned. This does not strike a blow at the foundation of the inspiration of Scripture. However, we do know that the Scriptures we have were composed, redacted and

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[13] From *The Old Testament Wilderness in Ecological Perspective*, by D. Keith Innes, chapter 5, November 2005. The entire commentary may be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.ringmerchurch.org.uk/keith/chap5.html.

[14] This is a screenshot of the posting submitted by Chuck Baldwin on 02-13-2005 at 08:33 PM in the Scripture Discussion Forum thread titled "**When does the 'even-to-even' day start?**" found at EliYah's Forums, www.eliyah.com.

transmitted by men capable of misconstruing timelines and events. It is commonly understood that there are mistakes in both the Hebrew and Greek texts of Scripture handed down to us, but this does not justify believing that the One Who inspired them to be written was confused about timelines!

In spite of our determination to interpret everything from the perspective that Yahweh would not allow a misplaced account to be inserted into another storyline, we cannot escape the reasonable questions as to how and why the Israelites could think to remind Moses and Aaron of all the staples they ate while in Egypt, yet *neglect to mention* the Great Quail Miracle of Exodus 16. What's more, we would have at least expected *Moses* to have reminded them of the Great Quail Miracle … but he didn't. Not only that, but even when he dared question how Yahweh Himself could provide flesh for His people, Yahweh didn't chastise him for not remembering the Great Quail Miracle. We are persuaded that if the quail miracle of Exodus 16 really did happen, it was worthy of being brought into remembrance, if by no one else, then by Yahweh Himself. However, if we can believe the events of Numbers 11, no prior quail miracles were brought into remembrance. The concerns we raise regarding the absence of a remembrance of such a noteworthy prior miracle serves as a legitimate reason to question the placement of the quail miracle into the account of Exodus 16. Yet no one, to our knowledge, who fully supports the account sequence found in Exodus 16 has ever addressed these concerns. Moreover, of all the commentaries we have reviewed to this point, none of the questions I have posed seem to have crossed the minds of the commentators! They simply present the "quail miracle" of Numbers 11 as the second such miracle without question. Nevertheless, in view of the questions I have raised, we believe there is, at the very least, valid reasoning for rejecting the quail narrative of Exodus 16 as the final arbiter in determining the time frame of "between the evenings" (*beyn ha'arbayim*)[15].

As we conclude this chapter, I would like to include the insight of yet another author who recognizes the difficulties involved in separating the quail miracles into two separate events. The following commentary is from Everett Jenkins, Jr., in his book *The Creation: Secular, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim Perspectives Analyzed*:

> There are, in addition to these cases pointing in the direction of compilation, some parallel accounts of the same events, not placed side by side, but found in different parts of the Pentateuch. Under this heading may be mentioned duplicate accounts of the origin of names like Beersheba [see and compare Genesis 21:31 with Genesis 26:32-33]; Bethel [see and compare Genesis 28:18-19 with Genesis 35:15], Israel [see and compare Genesis 32:28 with Genesis 35:10]. Additionally, there are two accounts of the promise of a son to Abraham [see and compare Genesis 17:16-19 with Genesis 18:9-15]; there is the father-in-law of Moses who bears two different names [see and compare Exodus 2:18 with Exodus 3:1]; and

[15] Not only are we persuaded that the two quail accounts of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 are in fact two descriptions of the same account, but we are also persuaded that there is reason to believe the two accounts of Yahweh using Moses to bring water from the rock (Exodus 17 and Numbers 20) are two descriptions, though with differing storylines, of the same account. Consider the following interesting parallels: Both places were given the name Meribah. It is recorded that Miriam died just before the account of Numbers 20; Miriam's name is not mentioned either in Exodus 17 or in the remainder of the book of Exodus. Why was her death not recorded by the author of Exodus? Had she died just prior to the account mentioned in Exodus 17? For a deeper discussion of this question, please see *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, article "Meribah," p. 703.

> there are two accounts of the sending of manna and quails [see and compare Exodus 16 and Numbers 11].[16]

Are the quail narratives of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 parallel accounts describing the same event? We believe the evidence points to this conclusion, and until my questions are answered with reasonable explanations persuading us to believe otherwise, this is the conclusion we have reached. Thus, if we can understand that the quail miracle only happened one time, and that this one time was in Numbers 11, we can simultaneously understand that this one-time event did not occur on a weekly Sabbath day, but was for some as yet undetermined reason overlaid onto the "manna miracle" of Exodus 16. Thus, when the quails were sent during the *beyn ha'arbayim* portion of the day, that day was not the day of the weekly Sabbath, so there would not have been any issues pertaining to whether or not it would have been permissible to catch, kill, pluck, disembowel and roast the quails during any time frame of that day.

[16] From *The Creation: Secular, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim Perspectives Analyzed*, by Everett Jenkins, Jr., McFarland & Company, 2003, p. 218.

3. Elijah and *Beyn ha'arbayim*

Thus far we have addressed two texts of Scripture in which *ben ha'arbayim* is found, one of which supports the understanding that "between the evenings" must occur during the late afternoon portion of the day (prior to sunset), and the other which would seem to support the understanding that this time period occurs between sunset and dark. We know that both views cannot be correct, since the one view contradicts the other, so it behooves us to delve deeply into this matter to determine which of the two contradictory views is the one Yahweh intends for His children to understand. We have just demonstrated that there is just cause to question the placement of the "quail miracle" into the text of Exodus 16, but we also know that this in and of itself will not be sufficient to persuade those who hold the opposing view. Is there a text we can turn to in order to settle the matter? We believe so, and as the title of this chapter suggests, it involves Elijah the Tishbite. This particular account is found in I Kings chapter 18, the chapter in which we read of the famous contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. We know that Elijah alone stood up for Yahweh against 450 prophets of Baal and challenged them to a contest to see whether the deity they worshipped or Yahweh would burn the wood of their sacrificial offerings. In order to best understand the full context of this account, we are displaying the pertinent portion of this chapter (I Kings 18:17-46). The following is taken from the New International Version[17], with Yahweh's name restored in the text:

I Kings 18

[17]When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?"
[18]He said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of Yahweh and you have followed the Baals.
[19]"Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

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[17] We have chosen to restore Yahweh's name in this and other translations. This name, rendered יהוה in the Hebrew text, was replaced with "the LORD" by translators, including those who translated the New International Version. The Executive Secretary for NIV's committee offered the following explanation for why they chose to follow the lead of the King James Version's translators in not restoring the Creator's name: "Here is why we did not: You are right - that Jehovah is a distinctive name for God and ideally we should have used it. But we put 2 1/4 million dollars into this translation and a sure way of throwing that down the drain is to translate, for example, Psalm 23 as, 'Yahweh is my shepherd.' Immediately, we would have translated for nothing. Nobody would have used it (or purchased it). Oh, maybe you and a handful [of] others. But a Christian has to be also wise and practical. We are the victims of 350 years of the King James tradition. It is far better to get two million to read it - that is how many have bought it to date - and to follow the King James, than to have two thousand buy it and have the correct translation of Yahweh . . . It was a hard decision, and many of our translators agree with you." – From "The Reason NIV removed Jehovah's Name," as quoted from Edwin H. Palmer, Th.D., Executive Secretary for the NIV's committee. Source: *The Divine Name Controversy*, Vol. 1, by Firpo Carr, Scholar Technological, September 1991, p. 124. As the representative for the NIV committee plainly admits, the reasoning for allowing the Creator's true name to remain replaced by "the LORD" was, in the final analysis, a compromise based upon financial considerations. We do not agree with the NIV committee's reasoning, nor do we support the other translators who have replaced our Creator's name with substitutes. Moreover, we are persuaded that we dishonor Yahweh by referring to Him as "God," which can be shown to be the name of a heathen idol whose worship is specifically condemned by Yahweh. For this reason, we have elected to restore the Hebrew title *elohim* as well in this NIV translation. For a detailed examination of this topic, we invite you to read our studies entitled *Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Names Will Never Hurt Me* and *Do We Honor Yahweh by Referring to Him as "Our God"?*

[20]So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.
[21]Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If Yahweh is Elohim, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.
[22]Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of Yahweh, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.
[23]"Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it.
[24]"Then you call on the name of your mighty one, and I will call on the name of Yahweh, and the Elohim who answers by fire, He is Elohim." And all the people said, "That is a good idea."
[25]So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your elohim, but put no fire under it."
[26]Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made.
[27]It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is an elohim; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened."
[28]So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.
[29]When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.
[30]Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of Yahweh which had been torn down.
31Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of Yahweh had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."
[32]So with the stones he built an altar in the name of Yahweh, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed.
[33]Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood.
[34]And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.
[35]The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.
[36]At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Yahweh, the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are Elohim in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word.
[37]"Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Yahweh, are Elohim, and that You have turned their heart back again."
[38]Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.
[39]When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "Yahweh, He is Elohim; Yahweh, He is Elohim."
[40]Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.
[41]Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower."

> [42]So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees.
> [43]He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times.
> [44]It came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.'"
> [45]In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.
> [46]Then the hand of Yahweh was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

There are many items to consider from the above text with regard to determining the time frame comprised by *beyn ha'arbayim* ("between the evenings"). To begin with, we need to plainly concede that the Hebrew term *beyn ha'arbayim* does not appear in the above passage. However, it doesn't *need* to appear because we all know from Exodus 29:38-29 and Numbers 28:3-4 that the evening sacrifice (which *is* mentioned in the above account) took place "between the evenings." Can we determine from the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal whether or not "between the evenings" comprises the time between sunset and dark *or* if it consists of the time frame that falls between noon and sunset? Let's take a closer look and see!

As we consider this matter, we need to determine the time frame required for both options. Typically, the time frame required for the hours between 3:00 PM and sunset is four hours. This year in our area (Plano, TX) the sun set at 7:47 PM, which allows for well over four hours. Thus, for those who believe that *beyn ha'arbayim* consists of the hours between 3:00 PM and sunset (some believe it begins closer to the noon hour), an allowance of four hours to complete everything described in this account during those time parameters is very reasonable.

For those who believe that *beyn ha'arbayim* consists of the time frame between sunset and dark, those parameters are greatly narrowed. To give you an idea of this, here in Plano we have observed that from the time the sun sets and the first stars come out is a little over 20 minutes. On September 8, 2007, we waited to see how long it would take for us to see the stars come out after sunset. The sun set at 7:44 PM, and ten minutes later we saw the first star. Nine minutes later we saw the second star, and four minutes later we saw the third one. Within two minutes of sighting the third star, other stars began popping into view. We understand that the above time intervals will vary with location and atmospheric conditions, but we do believe our observation is generally the way things are. Within 45 minutes of sunset, we all agreed that it was officially "dark."

It is very important for us to determine the approximate time frames required for each interpretation of *beyn ha'arbayim* because, as we are about to see, one of the interpretations will simply not work. We know from the above reading (verse 36) that it was at the time of the evening sacrifice that Elijah prayed to Yahweh to let the people know that He is the true Elohim. Let's presume, for the moment, that this sacrifice took place after sunset and see if the storyline makes sense. Here are the events that took place following Elijah's prayer:

1. Yahweh sends down fire from heaven, consuming Elijah's sacrifice, as well as the water in the trench that was dug around the altar (v. 38). This sacrifice took place at the top of Mount Carmel.
2. The people fall on their faces, crying, "Yahweh, He is Elohim! Yahweh, He is Elohim!" (v. 39).
3. The prophets of Baal are taken to the brook Kishon and slain by the order of Elijah (v. 40). The brook Kishon is located at the foot of Mount Carmel, which attains a height of 1,800 feet in this particular location.
4. Elijah instructs Ahab to eat and drink because it was about to rain, and Ahab complies with this directive (vs. 41-42).
5. Elijah again climbs Mount Carmel, where he bows himself upon the earth and puts his face between his knees (v. 42).
6. Elijah instructs his servant to go up higher on the mountain to look toward the sea. Upon the servant's return and delivery of the report that he saw nothing, Elijah directs him to "go again seven times" (v. 43). Note: According to B. W. Johnson, in his book *Young Folks in Bible Lands*, published in 1892 (see excerpt below), this ascent to the summit of Mount Carmel required an additional climb of some 300 feet, and would have been no small effort. In layman's terms, this is the equivalent of climbing the length of a football field, then descending that same length a total of eight times.
7. Upon the servant's return to Elijah after his eighth vigil, he informs Elijah of the cloud arising from the sea that is as small as a man's hand, at which report Elijah directs him to advise Ahab to go down to his chariot and get out of there before the rain hits (v. 44). Presumably, Elijah knew that the wheels of Ahab's chariot would become stuck in the muddied clay if he delayed his departure.
8. In a "little while" the sky grew black with clouds and wind (*not by darkness?*), followed by a great rain.

When we put all of the above events together, it immediately becomes apparent that it takes quite a stretch of imagination to believe that everything described above could have taken places within the space of two hours, let alone 45 minutes. Nevertheless, we anticipate that there will be some who will assert that, yes, everything described above could have taken place within 45 minutes. They may claim that it just took a minute or so for the fire from heaven to consume the burnt offering, wood, stones and water; it only took a few minutes for the people to fall on their faces and acknowledge Yahweh as the true Elohim; it only took about fifteen or so minutes to march the prophets of Baal to the foot of the mountain and execute them; it only took a minute to tell King Ahab to grab a bite to eat; it only took a few minutes for Elijah to climb back up Mount Carmel; it only took a few minutes for his servant to climb to the summit and deliver his first report, and maybe another fifteen minutes to repeat his climb/descent seven times, then another minute for Elijah to instruct his servant to tell Ahab to get out of there before the rain fell. Finally, it only took "a little while," i.e., a few minutes, for the sky to grow black with clouds and wind, which was still before total darkness had fallen. This is essentially what we expect to hear from those who insist that "between the evenings" can only represent a Scriptural time frame that ranges from sunset to darkness.

June and I have never visited the Holy Land, so we cannot describe from experience what it is like to climb and descend Mount Carmel. However, we believe author B. W. Johnson, in his book *Young Folks*

in Bible Lands, sufficiently demonstrates that the events described in I Kings 18 could not have possibly been accomplished within the space of an hour. Let's read his account of climbing Mount Carmel:

Excerpt from chapter four of *Young Folks in Bible Lands* by B. W. Johnson (1892):

From here we rode along the northern base of the mountain on the road which leads east from Haifa until we had reached the eastern extremity of Mount Carmel, on which side we expected to ascend the famous mountain. Our camp was pitched on the river Kishon in the narrow neck-like isthmus, not over half a mile wide, which connects two great plains, that of Acre, over which we had traveled, and that of Esdraelon. Above our camp on one side was Mount Carmel, rising to the height of about 1,800 feet; on the other side were the mountains of Galilee. The river was here only a dry bed and the water for the camp was obtained from a well.

CLIMBING MOUNT CARMEL.

It required the whole afternoon to make the ascent of the mountain and to return to camp. By following a very circuitous route we were able to ride all the way to the top. When we were within about three hundred feet of the summit we came to a level space on the eastern side, a kind of bench on the mountain side, of several acres in extent, now planted in olive trees. It is a large enough space, I suppose, for a hundred thousand people to gather here. Above it are cragged precipices, and around it wooded heights. At one end of this level space was a fountain with an abundant supply of water, though no rains had fallen for several months.

"David," said I, "will you please read from the eighteenth chapter of First Kings, beginning with the nineteenth verse?"

He then read the account of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal, the gathering of the children of Israel at Mount Carmel, of his altar, the wood and the water poured upon the altar; then of the prophet's prayer, and the descent of the fire from heaven. Then I said: "This is, no doubt, the place where these things occurred. There is room here for the people to assemble. There is wood for the sacrifice close at hand; there is water here also, and Joseph says that this fountain has never been known to dry up. The river Kishon, to which the priests of Baal were taken after their failure, runs below at the foot of the mountain. This place in every respect agrees with the conditions required in the account." "Why did Elijah wait until the hour of the evening sacrifice to offer his sacrifice?" asked Will.

"To give the priests all the time they could ask so as to show that they did not fail for want of time. The time of the evening sacrifice was about 3 P.M. What time is it now?"

Will looked at his watch and replied that it was about that time.

"See," said I, "the sun is disappearing behind the great precipice that rises above this level plateau on the west. The shadows of the mountain now extend over this level spot. Do you know that Baal was a sun god, and that the priests prayed to him from morning until noon, and then to the hour of the evening sacrifice? You see that they prayed as long as the face of their sun god could be seen in the sky, but when it had disappeared behind the mountain their failure was too manifest to be denied. Then it was Elijah's turn."

"There is one thing I do not understand," said Bayard. "After the trial was over the Bible says that Elijah prayed seven times, and sent his servant up to see whether there were any rain clouds. At last the servant reported a cloud, not much larger than a man's hand, out over the sea. We can see nothing of the sea here, and it must be ten or fifteen miles away. The peak of the mountain lies between us and the sea."

"We must wait until we too have 'gone up' as the servant is said to have done. Perhaps if we had climbed to the top of this precipice on the west of the terrace it would be different." We mounted again, and by a detour ascended the height that had been above us. We were on the mountain top, which spread out like a level field, covered here and there with trees. We found on the summit several buildings belonging to the monks who make this mountain their home. We dismounted and gathered on the eastern verge of the precipice, overlooking the level terrace where we had been a little while

before, and a splendid vision spread out before us. To the west rolled the blue waters of the Great Sea from which Elijah's servant saw the storm-cloud gathering when it "was not bigger than a man's hand." To the south we could trace the line of coast to the haven where the great city of Cæsarea once stood. To the north the bay of Acre extended, far below us, with the city of Acre, and "the Ladder of Tyre" in the background.

Looking to the northeast we saw the mountains of Galilee, with the towering peaks of Mount Hermon beyond, rising like a giant above them in the distance. To the east Mount Tabor raised its rounded summit as regularly as if it had been a work of art. Stretching away from the base of Mount Carmel was the great plain of Esdraelon, as level as the western prairies, the pools of the Kishon showing here and there, with the mountains of Samaria on the south and those of Galilee on the north, while on the east, from fifteen to twenty miles away, was Mount Gilboa in a dark blue mass, and through the opening where the plain of Jezreel runs down to the Jordan we could see the mountains of Gilead, looking like clouds in the horizon. We could make out Jezreel on its hill at the base of Mount Gilboa, Shunem to the north, Nain still nearer Mount Tabor, and several more places named in the Bible. It was a sight that I never can forget. The sun was sinking into the sea before we left the summit, and night had set in before we reached the base of the mountain as its southeastern extremity. We still had several miles to ride through the darkness before we reached our camp, and we would perhaps have had some difficulty to find it had we not observed a flame, apparently on the side of the Galilean hills. We at first thought it was a fire built by the natives, but Joseph, the dragoman, assured us that it was a beacon raised on high at the camp to guide us. As we came nearer we perceived that the fire was a bright light raised to the top of our flag-staff.[18]

While I believe reading the entire excerpt from Mr. Johnson's book serves to best illustrate how it would not have been possible for the events following Elijah's prayer (I Kings 18:36-37) to have transpired within the space of an hour, all we really need to read are the words, "It required the whole afternoon to make the ascent of the mountain and to return to camp." When we factor in the understanding that a great deal of time must have been spent in marching the prophets of Baal down the mountain, then executing them, it becomes so ridiculous to imagine these events having occurred within an hour that one seemingly has to force-fit time frames in order to accommodate such a firmly-held belief.

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[18] From *Young Folks in Bible Lands*, by B. W. Johnson, Christian Publishing Company, St. Louis, MO, 1892. This chapter may be read in its entirety online by accessing the following URL: http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bjohnson/yfbl/YFBL04.HTM

Thus, even though the Hebrew expression *beyn ha'arbayim* does not appear in the book of I Kings, we know that the evening sacrifice is specified in Torah as occurring at *beyn ha'arbayim*. The time frame for *beyn ha'arbayim*, as suggested by those who support the "sunset to dark" understanding, cannot possibly exceed the space of an hour, and to cram all the events of I Kings 18:36-45 into one hour of time simply requires an enormous stretch of imagination. When we incorporate the evidence found in I Kings 18 with the other evidence previously presented, it becomes clear that *beyn ha'arbayim* can only comprise a period of time ranging from noon until sunset.

4. Lighting the Lamps and *Beyn ha'Arbayim*

Of the objections offered by those who believe *beyn ha'arbayim* consists of the time frame extending from sunset to dark, the easiest one to address is the one pertaining to when the sons of Aaron were commanded to light the lamps on the altar of incense. Before we present the argument, let's take a look at this passage, found in Exodus 30:1-8:

Exodus 30

[1]And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.
[2]A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same.
[3]And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.
[4]And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal.
[5]And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.
[6]And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.
[7]And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.
[8]And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even (*beyn ha'arbayim*), he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

As we address the time frame in which the sons of Aaron lit the lamps, we have to answer the question, "Were the lamps lit *before* or *after* sunset each day?" With this in mind, let's examine the perspective presented in the study "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th":

> Exodus 30:7-8 shows that Aaron is to burn incense every morning on the altar as he attends the lamps. He also burns incense at twilight "between the evenings," so that there will be perpetual incense being burned before Yahweh. Note that Aaron is to burn the incense in the morning while it is light, and then again after sunset at twilight while he is still able to see.
>
> If ben ha arbayim meant anytime after noon, then the morning incense would have burned six hours and the evening incense would have to last 18 hours.
>
> Certainly Aaron would be lighting the lamps at twilight, just before darkness set in.[19]

In reviewing the above commentary, I couldn't help but notice how the author attempts to portray the "worst-case scenario" for those who share our position. We need to understand that *beyn ha' arbayim* does not represent a specific moment in time, but rather a *time range*. Thus, while it is true that *beyn ha' arbayim* begins in the afternoon, it extends until sunset. Just because it begins at a certain time in the afternoon does not mean that it was at this precise moment when the lamps were lit. Of a certainty, the lamps were lit during the waning moments of *beyn ha' arbayim*, not as it began. The

[19] From a study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by an anonymous member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, pp. 5-6.

author of the above commentary suggests that those who believe *beyn ha' arbayim* begins in the afternoon must likewise believe that this is when the lamps were lit. This suggestion is unreasonable. According to the way the author portrays those of our persuasion, we believe the priests would light the lamps at noon, and the lamps would remain lit round the clock, all the way until 6:00 the following morning.

On a side note, since ancient believers did not set the hours of the day with instruments as precise as those of today's world, we can expect some deviance in the starting point of *beyn ha' arbayim*. Philo of Alexandria, a first-century Jew, wrote that the Passover sacrifice took place "beginning at noon-day and continuing till evening."[20] The first-century historian Josephus indicated that the Passover sacrifices were offered between the ninth and eleventh hours of the day.[21] With the understanding that the first hour of the day began at approximately 6:00 AM, the ninth hour of the day began at approximately 3:00 PM. Our purpose in this study is not to make a precise determination as to when *beyn ha' arbayim* begins, although we will state that it is underway by the 3:00 hour.

Other proponents of the "sunset-to-dark" interpretation of *beyn ha'arbayim* are at least a bit more lenient than the above author with regard to their understanding of when, according to the "afternoon-to-sunset" view, the lamps were lit. Voy Wilks, in his study entitled "More About Passover," wrote the following:

> The passover lambs were to be executed "between the evenings" (Ex. 12:6). The **daily** sacrifices were also to be offered morning and **evening** – "between the evenings" (Ex. 29:41). In connection with this and at the same time, it seems, the priests were to offer sweet incense morning and evening (Ex. 30:8). This is to be done "every morning when [Aaron] dresses the lamps, and when Aaron **sets up the lamps in the evening,** he shall burn it" (the sweet incense). Have you ever asked yourself, "At what time in the evening are the lamps set up for the night?" For the first 25 years of my life we used oil lamps. We never set them up for the night until about sunset or dusk. Wouldn't Aaron have done the same: set them up for the night at about sunset or dusk? Why light the night lamps at "evening," if this is the 9th hour – mid-afternoon? It is true that at least one lamp was kept burning during the day for ceremonial purposes, but most of the lamps were used in the night. Why light the night lamps at mid-afternoon?[22] (Emphasis his.)

Please notice in the above commentary that Mr. Wilks mentioned setting up his oil lamps for the night at "about sunset or dusk." "About sunset" is most definitely not "at sunset" or "after sunset." It is a period of time that falls *before* sunset. This, in fact, is key to recognizing that our understanding of *beyn ha'arbayim* is a *time range* – not a specific time slot at which all Biblical acts were to be carried out. In other words, there is no reason why the Passover lambs could not have been sacrificed at around 3:00 PM, and the lamps lit at approximately 5:40 PM[23]. Both acts would have been carried out within what is

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[20] *Cf.*, *The Works of Philo*, translated by C. D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1993, "The Special Laws II," ch. XXVII, sect. 145, p. 582.

[21] *Cf.*, *The Wars of the Jews*, Flavius Josephus, Book VI, chapter ix, sect. 3, where he writes, "So these high-priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh, …."

[22] From "More About Passover," a one-page study authored by Voy Wilks, dated 7/3/87.

[23] We base this time frame on the sunset time for Passover 2007 in Jerusalem, which, according to the calendar at www.sunrisesunset.com (http://www.sunrisesunset.com/calendar.asp) is 5:59 PM (April 3, 2007). Lighting the lamps at 5:40 PM would allow 19 minutes before sunset.

known as *beyn ha'arbayim* – "between the evenings." Mr. Wilks, though far more lenient than the previous author we quoted, still presumes that, for our understanding of *beyn ha'arbayim* to be correct, the priests would have had to have lit the lamps at mid-afternoon. Certainly he is aware that those of our persuasion regard *beyn ha'arbayim* as ending at sunset – so what is wrong with lighting the lamps at "*about* sunset" – just as he did for the first 25 years of his life?

Again, we need to reinforce the fact that, as we understand Yahweh's intended meaning of "between the evenings," this time frame can occur at *any time* between noon and sunset. Both of the above authors we cited attempt to depict a requirement that, for our understanding of *beyn ha'arbayim* to be true, the priests would have had to have lit the lamps for the altar of incense at the earliest possible moment. While we can always expect such extremes from biased opponents, it doesn't make their actions fair. Thus, let's consider the possibility that the priests lit the lamps at the *latest* possible moment … as the sun was setting. Possible? According to first-century historian Josephus, who lived within a generation of the temple sacrifices, this is *precisely* what was done:

> There were also many, and those of various kinds, of sweet spices, that belonged to the tabernacle, and such as were of very great price, and were brought to the golden altar of incense; the nature of which I do not now describe, lest it should be troublesome to my readers; but incense was to be offered twice a-day, both before sun-rising and at sun-setting. They were also to keep oil already purified for the lamps; three of which were to give light all day long, upon the sacred candlestick, before God, and the rest were to be lighted at the evening.[24]

Again, one opponent asserts that, for our view to be correct, the lamps would have had to have been lit at noon, and then again 18 hours later. The other gentleman depicts them being lit at mid-afternoon. Josephus, however, alludes to the understanding that this act took place at "sun-setting." It appears, then, that the evening sacrifices were begun at around 3:00 PM (or earlier) and the lamps were lit at around sunset. Both acts, though occurring at different hours of the day, fell within the time frame that Jews have understood as "between the evenings." What's more, lighting the lamps at those hours would have provided nearly equal intervals between each occasion of lamp-lighting.

Thus, instead of the lamp-lighting ceremony validating the position that *beyn ha'arbayim* represents the time period between sunset and dark, we see that the ancient understanding reflects a different view. It was between noon and sunset, and in the case of the lamp-lighting ceremony, it was at the setting of the sun.

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[24] Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book III, chapter viii, sect. 3.

Part II. When Was the Passover "Kept"?

We have found that coming to the proper understanding of when *beyn ha'arbayim* occurs does not, by any means, bring an end to the Passover arguments. We have been challenged by folks who believe the Scriptural definition of "keeping the Passover" required doing everything from slaying the lambs to eating the Passover meal, and we have been challenged by folks who insist that Yeshua the Messiah ate the Passover meal with His disciples at the proper time on the evening He was betrayed. In this portion of our study, we will examine each argument and present our understanding of Yahweh's will regarding the timing of His Passover. We even address the proper understanding of the word "until"!

5. Lamb to Be Kept "Until" the 14th

In Exodus chapter 12, we read the instructions for "keeping the lamb" that designated as the lamb slaughtered for Passover:

> [3]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:
> [4]And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.
> [5]Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:
> [6]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.

A common argument in favor of sacrificing the Passover lamb as soon as the 14th begins is the notion that "until the fourteenth" must mean "up until the fourteenth day begins." If the lamb is slaughtered at any other time of day on the 14th, according to this line of reasoning, it wasn't *really* "kept" until the 14th. While we understand the logic behind this view, it can nevertheless be shown to be invalid insofar as demonstrating that the lamb should not be killed at any other time of day. To best address the opposing view, we will provide the opposition's explanation, as found in the article "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th":

> Verse 6 (of Exodus 12) gives us a clue to the proper time to keep the Passover unto Yahweh. "And you 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 ("between the evenings"—Hebrew)." "Until" is No. 5704 in *Strong's Concordance*, *ad* in Hebrew. *Ad* has the meaning of "as far as."
>
> The lamb is to be kept up to the point of or until the 14th of Abib. When the 14th of Abib begins, then the whole assembly is to kill it "between the evenings."
>
> Most of us understand what is meant by the little sticker on packages often distributed in December that reads, "Do not open until xmas." (This is *not* an endorsement of xmas!) The package is to remain sealed until December 25 arrives. As soon as that day comes, the package can be opened. It does not mean to wait until the end of December 25 to open the package. Why, then, should we understand that the lamb was to be kept until the 14th was ending and the 15th begins?[25]

On the surface, the above argument makes perfect sense. However, the example of modern Christmas celebrations serves as an example demonstrating that the above reasoning is invalid. Those who are familiar with Christmas celebrations understand that the packages are left under the tree, and on the outside wrapping are often found stickers with a stern message indicating that they are to remain unopened *until* the day of xmas, and THEN they may be opened. Does this mean as soon as December 25th begins, the children rush to open their presents?

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[25] From a study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by an anonymous member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, p. 2.

June and I were both raised by families that observe Christmas, so the point about the sticker on the packages is one we can both relate to very well. However, I can assure you that if I had opened my xmas presents as soon as xmas began (midnight, according to this world's standard), I would have been in a peck of trouble. You see, our family had an xmas tradition whereby our close relatives came to our home for a festive noon meal that day, followed by the gift exchange. It was *then*, and not before, that the packages were opened. Thus, although the packages were often marked with a stickered message stating, "Do not open until xmas," it was understood that there was a proper time designation for "when" on xmas they could be opened.

In the same way, there is a proper time designation for "when" on Abib 14 the Passover lambs were to be killed. That time designation is known in Hebrew as *beyn ha'arbayim*, and in English as "between the evenings." As we covered in Part I of this study, the evidence is overwhelming that "between the evenings" is *not* the beginning portion of a day. Rather, it is inclusive of the general time frame of between noon and sunset.

6. Does "Keeping the Passover" Include "Eating the Passover"?

Over the years we have read various interpretations of when and how to "keep the Passover," and some of these interpretations have been used in an attempt to demonstrate that our position must be in error. Those who believe that "between the evenings" consists of the time between sunset and dark insist that to properly "keep" the Passover, the ancients not only killed the lamb immediately after the sun had set (ending Abib 13th and as the 14thwas beginning), but they also *ate* the Passover on that same day, Abib 14. Of course, since June and I believe the Passover lambs were killed before sunset had ended Abib 14, we also believe the Passover was eaten *after* sunset, i.e., at the beginning of the *next day*, Abib 15. The "sunset-to-dark" folks are adamant that "keeping" the Passover, which is done on Abib 14, must include "eating" the Passover that same day, and since June and I believe the Passover meal was eaten on Abib 15, our reasoning is often treated as deviant, if not heretical. The above reasoning has been used to teach that June and I are in error with regard to when and how the Passover was observed by the ancient believers. As you can see, this is a very volatile topic, with some otherwise very kind and humble believers relegating those of our persuasion to the Lake of Fire unless we see things the way they do! We have received correspondence from several individuals who have written in opposition to our position, and I would like to offer a few of these objections in order to best address them while presenting our own viewpoint.

I would like to begin with the very first exposure we had to the view that "keeping the Passover" must include "eating the Passover." This was in the form of the article we were sent by an elder from Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah in April 1987. The following commentary comes from page 6 of the article "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th":

> Notice that in Numbers 9:1-11 Israel kept the Passover in the wilderness of Sinai. Verses 3, 5, and 11 all read that this was to be done "between the two evenings," *ben ha arbayim*, which is after the sun had set and the 14th of Abib began. Note that Israel was again commanded to perform "all according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof."
>
> Further it reads, "In the 14th day of this month." Nothing is said here about the 15th at all. In fact, only the 14th of Abib is mentioned three times in these verses. All the rites and ceremonies had to be done after sunset, which shows that the Passover is kept at the beginning of the 14th, not the end of the 14th. If all the rites and ceremonies were to be done just before the sun was to set, they would have to kill the Passover lamb, place the blood on the doorpost and lintel, roast the lamb and eat it that same night, which was on the 14th. If they did any of this after sunset, it was then the 15th, as days begin at sunset in the Bible.[26]

As we address the above author's arguments, we need to start with his somewhat authoritative comment that *beyn ha'arbayim* is "after sunset." This, of course, is his opinion, which we do not agree with, and which we believe we have demonstrated as being a mistaken notion in Part I of this study. We believe we have demonstrated that the correct understanding of *beyn ha'arbayim* is that it occurs from

[26] From a study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by an anonymous member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, p. 6.

mid-afternoon until sunset. Thus, we have no problem with the instructions found in Numbers 9:1-3, but we are at variance with the understanding of those instructions as conveyed by the above author. Let's review Numbers 9:1-12 in order to establish a proper reference point for this chapter:

Numbers 9

[1]And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,
[2]Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.
[3]In the fourteenth day of this month, at even (*beyn ha'arbayim*), ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.
[4]And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.
[5]And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even (*beyn ha'arbayim*) in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.
[6]And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:
[7]And those men said unto him, We *are* defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of Yahweh in his appointed season among the children of Israel?
[8]And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what Yahweh will command concerning you.
[9]And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying,
[10]Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto Yahweh.
[11]The fourteenth day of the second month at even (*beyn ha'arbayim*) they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*.
[12]They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

As you can see, there are indeed three places in Numbers 9:1-12 where the Hebrew expression *beyn ha'arbayim* appears, but, contrary to the impression that the above author attempts to create, none of these instances has any effect whatsoever on our stand. Unlike the image presented by the author of "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," this passage is not problematic for those of our persuasion. We believe the author's misperception is due to a very serious misunderstanding of the Hebrew word translated "keep." This is the Hebrew word *asah*, which is a word commonly translated "to prepare," "to make" or "to do," but King James Version translators (and others) loosely translated it "keep" in Numbers 9:2-12.[27] With such a loose translation as "keep," it is easy to understand why someone might get the impression that "keeping the Passover" includes "eating the Passover," but as we will demonstrate shortly, this is simply not the case.

As we investigate the meaning of the Hebrew word *asah* (עָשָׂה), let's do a comparison of Hebrew texts to see that, indeed, this word carries the general meaning of *preparing* (not "eating"). Shown

[27] The NIV translators, as well as the Living Bible, are an exception to this. They translated this Hebrew word as "celebrate," which we believe is another loose translation of the Hebrew word *asah*.

below is a reproduction of the Hebrew text and English translation (including the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* reference numbers) of Genesis 27:17 as it appears in *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English*[28]:

1121	3290	3027	6213	834	3899	853	4303	853	3318	
וּתִתֵּן	אֶת־הַמַּטְעַמִּים	וְאֶת־הַלֶּחֶם	אֲשֶׁר	עָשְׂתָה[29]	בְּיַד	יַעֲקֹב	בְּנָהּ׃			
And she put	the delicacies	and the bread	which	she had made	in hand	Jacob's	her son.			←

And now, let's review this same Hebrew word, as found in Numbers 9:3[30]:

4150	853	6213	6153	996	2088	2320	3117	6240	702	
בְּאַרְבָּעָה	עָשָׂר־יוֹם	בְּחֹדֶשׁ	הַזֶּה	בֵּין	הָעַרְבַּיִם	תַּעֲשׂוּ[31]	אֹתוֹ	בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ		
In the fourteenth	day	month in	this	between	evenings	shall you prepare	it	set its season		←

853	6213	4941	3605	2708	3605	
כְּכָל־חֻקֹּתָיו	וּכְכָל־מִשְׁפָּטָיו	תַּעֲשׂוּ	אֹתוֹ׃			
according to all	its statutes	according to all	its ordinances	shall you prepare	it.	←

As we compare the two above uses of the Hebrew word *asah*, let's take note of the fact that the Hebrew scholar who produced *The Interlinear Bible* chose the word "prepare" as the most accurate translation of this word in Numbers 9:3, not the word "keep." When we understand that the word "prepare" most accurately fits the intended meaning of the author of the book of Numbers, we can then simultaneously discern that "eating the Passover" cannot be inclusive of any instructions found in this entire passage. Certainly we can all agree that "eating" and "preparing" are not the same. For example, if we eat out in a restaurant, we eat a meal that was prepared by someone else. If the person who prepared our meal was somehow persuaded that "preparing" our meal includes "eating" our meal, then we would leave the restaurant hungrier than when we arrived!

It is true that the Hebrew word *asah* has a variety of applications in English, so we are not here to promote that the applications we present are the only possible ones. Nevertheless, in the process of reviewing all the possibilities, we are duty-bound to find the one that most accurately fits the context of the passage where it is used. To give you an idea of the many possible applications of *asah*, here is a reproduction of what is found for this word in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*:

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[28] This Hebrew text (Gen. 27:17) was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 23.

[29] According to *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, p. 618, this is the third person singular & feminine form of *asah* (here pronounced *asatah*), in the preterit tense.

[30] This Hebrew text (Numbers 9:3) was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 125.

[31] According to *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, p. 770, this is the second person plural & masculine form of *asah* (here pronounced *ta'asu*), in the future tense.

6213. עָשָׂה `**âsâh**, *aw-saw'*; a prim. root; to *do* or *make*, in the broadest sense and widest application (as follows):–accomplish, ad-vance, appoint, apt, be at, become, bear, bestow, bring forth, bruise, be busy, x certainly, have the charge of, commit, deal (with), deck + displease, do, (ready) dress (-ed), (put in) execute (-ion), exercise, fashion, + feast, [fight-] ing man, + finish, fit, fly, follow, fulfil, furnish, gather, get, go about, govern, grant, great, + hinder, hold ([a feast]), x indeed, + be industrious, + journey, keep, labour, maintain, make, be meet, observe, be occupied, offer, + officer, pare, bring (come) to pass, perform, practise, prepare, procure, provide, put, requite, x sacrifice, serve, set, shew, x sin, spend, x surely, take, x thoroughly, trim, x very, + vex, be [warr-] ior, work (-man), yield, use.

We have already seen that Jay P. Green, the Hebrew scholar who translated *The Interlinear Bible*, chose to translate the Hebrew word *asah* as "prepare" in such texts as Numbers 9:3 (as well as each instance in which *asah* appears in that passage). While it is true that most versions employ the translation "keep," this decision was not unanimous by any means. Shown below is Numbers 9:3 as it appears in *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*, produced by the Jewish Publication Society:

> [2]Let the Israelite people offer (*asah*) the passover sacrifice at its set time:
> [3]you shall offer (*asah*) it in accordance with all its rules and rites.

This understanding of the Hebrew word *asah*, as with that of the translator of *The Interlinear Bible*, again demonstrates an understanding that "keeping the Passover" cannot include eating it.

Was the "Passing Over" Carried Out on the 14th?

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, we have received correspondence from several believers who are persuaded that in ancient times "keeping the Passover" must have included "eating the Passover." In addition to having been sent the article "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," we also received a packet of mini-studies from Voy Wilks of Cisco, Texas. Mr. Wilks is also the author of these studies, many of which consist of only one page. He sent us the following study in May 1997. As you may notice, one of his major points is the belief that the Passover lambs were eaten on Abib 14:

PASSOVER STUDIES

Lev. 23:5

There are a number of Scriptures which show clearly that Passover should be on (not after) the 14th of Abib. Even so, only one Scripture is needed to establish forever the date for Passover observance. That Scripture is Lev. 23:5.

"IN the 14th day of the first month at even is **Yahweh's passover**."

What is meant by "Yahweh's passover"? It is a reference to the act of Yahweh passing over the houses of Israel, and by that means, saving alive the people of Israel. Neither the lambs, nor the slaughter of the lambs, is under consideration here. Rather, this is the date in which Yahweh passed over the houses of Israel – at midnight – in the 14th. To state it in today's language:

"The 14th of Abib is the anniversary of Yahweh's passing over" the houses of Israel in Egypt.

0 Since the lambs were killed before Yahweh passed over the houses;
0 Since the blood was placed on the door posts before Yahweh passed over the houses;
0 Since the lambs were cooked before before Yahweh passed over the houses;
0 Since the lambs were being eaten at the time Yahweh passed over the houses;
0 And since the 14th is the date on which Yahweh passed over the houses of Israel, then …

00 Abib 14th was the date on which …
- 0 The lambs were killed.
- 0 The blood sprinkled.
- 0 The lambs cooked.
- 0 The lambs eaten.

00 Therefore, the whole service of Passover (killing, cooking, eating) was done on the 14th day of Abib.
00 The 15th of Abib is no part of the Passover. Instead, the 15th of Abib is the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6), a separate and distinct festival celebrating the date on which Israel **began their journey** from Egypt (Num. 33:3,4).

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Mr. Wilks brings up some excellent points in his brief study. Not only does he maintain that the lambs were eaten on Abib 14th, but he also presents the view that the "passing over" of the Israelites' houses occurred on that same day. Is this true?

On the surface, it only makes sense to believe that "Passover" must fall on the same day that Yahweh "passed over" the Israelites' houses, sparing their firstborn children from the last of the ten plagues … the Plague of the Firstborn. Nowhere is this concept brought out more clearly than in Exodus 12:26-27:

> [26]And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?
> [27]That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of Yahweh's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

The conclusion reached by some individuals is that, since "Passover" and "passed over" are essentially the same Hebrew word, and since "Passover" is on Abib 14, then both expressions must refer to events that took place on the same day. We can accept this conclusion as being reasonable, in and of itself. In other words, if we had nothing else to go on when it comes to determining the timing of Passover events, we would be persuaded that the Passover sacrifice and the "passing over" took place on the same day.

However, since we have presented strong evidence that the Passover lambs were killed on the afternoon of Abib 14, then they were eaten later that night (after Abib 15 had begun), the question is raised, "Must the 'passing over' have occurred on the same day as the Passover sacrifice?" The answer to that question is simply no. Scripture only tells us when the Passover sacrifice was to occur. That sacrifice, as we have plainly established, took place on Abib 14. We are only told that "this night" Yahweh would pass through the land of Egypt and smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Was "this night" the beginning portion of Abib 14 or was it the beginning portion of Abib 15 after the Passover sacrifice of the previous afternoon of Abib 14? To best illustrate the fact that either position, without anything else to go on, could be correct, let's review Exodus 12:11-12:

> [11]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.
> [12]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 mighty ones of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* Yahweh.

We already know that the Passover lambs were slaughtered on Abib 14, so the question we need to have answered is, "Did Yahweh 'pass over' the Israelites' houses on Abib 14?" As we can see from the above text, that question is not answered. The only thing we are told is that the "passing over" occurred "this night." If Scripture clarified the specific date represented by "this night," the argument would be resolved and there would be no need for us to explain our position. If only it were that easy! Since we are left to debate the date on which "this night" occurred, we must determine whether it coincides with Abib 14 or Abib 15. As it turns out, we believe that if we follow through this passage in Exodus, we can determine that the only date that can possibly fit is Abib 15. Let's continue reading this passage:

> [13]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.

> [14]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.
> [15]Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

We underlined some key phrases in the above passage to underscore the clues they give us as to the date on which Yahweh "passed over" the Israelites' houses. First of all, we see that verse 13 continues with Yahweh's explanation of what He would do "this night": He would smite all the firstborn in Egypt, while sparing the firstborn of those whose houses had the blood applied to the side posts and upper door post. Then, in verse 14, He adds, "*This day* shall be unto you for a memorial." Which day is "*this day*"? It is the day of the "passing over"! Next, we read in this same verse that "this day" is to be kept as *a feast to Yahweh*. This raises the important question as to whether or not Abib 14 is to be considered a "feast day." The answer is no. This fact is brought out clearly in Leviticus 23:4-7:

> [4]These *are* the feasts of Yahweh, *even* holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.
> [5]In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even (*beyn ha'arbayim*) *is* Yahweh's passover.
> [6]And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto Yahweh: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.
> [7]In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Some may regard the introduction to "the feasts of Yahweh" in verse four as evidence that Abib 14 is in itself a feast day. However, this day is never singled out in Scripture as a feast day; instead, the following day, the fifteenth, is given that designation. In fact, according to verse six, the fifteenth day of that month marks "day one" of seven days during which unleavened bread must be eaten.

This brings us back to the passage we were reading in Exodus 12:13-15. Yahweh told Moses that the day on which He smote the firstborn of Egypt was to be a memorial to the children of Israel and "kept as a feast." On the first day of that feast, they were to put away leaven from their houses, and for the remaining days of this seven-day feast, they were to eat no leavened bread. That "first day" of the feast fell on the same day as the day on which Yahweh "passed over" the Israelites' houses. That day was none other than Abib 15.

As we tie everything together here, we see the following sequence that occurred on Abib 14 and 15: During the late afternoon hours of Abib 14, the Passover lambs were prepared, which includes both slaughtering them and roasting them, as well as applying their blood to the side posts and upper door posts of the Israelites' houses. That evening, after the sun had set, which marked the beginning of Abib 15, the Israelites began the feast of unleavened bread by eating the Passover meal, which of course included unleavened bread. Later that night, Yahweh smote the firstborn of Egypt. Not only does the Passover meal commemorate their deliverance from the plague of the firstborn, but it also ushers in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus, when Yahweh specified that "this night" He would pass over the houses with the blood applied … and when He went on to stipulate that "this day" was to be kept both as a memorial *and* a feast … and when He further specified that "this day" was the first day of seven days during which unleavened bread is to be eaten, we then understand that Yahweh did not need to

clarify the precise date indicated by "this day." "This day" can be none other than Abib 15, which is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

With all this in mind, we can answer Mr. Wilks' study with confidence. We agree that Abib 14 is the date of the Passover, but we do not agree with him as to the timing of the Passover offering. We believe the Passover victim was slaughtered during the late afternoon portion of that day, then later that night, during the beginning portion of Abib 15, is when the "passing over" took place. Moreover, when we do a careful study of the Hebrew word translated "Passover," we find that the two primary uses of this word denote 1) *sacrifice of passover* and 2) *the animal victim of the passover*.[32] The focal point of the Passover, then, is the offering of the lambs, not the actual "passing over." If, as Mr. Wilks proposes, Yahweh passed over the Israelites' houses on Abib 14, then this day would have to be considered a holy day … and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In fact, this is precisely what Mr. Wilks believes, as evidenced by another mini-study he authored entitled "Passover – On the 14th or the 15th?"[33] As we have already read in Leviticus 23:6, however, it is the *fifteenth* day of the month on which the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins, not the fourteenth.

An historical document known as *The Book of Jubilees* demonstrates that there were first-century Jews who shared our view that the Passover was indeed eaten on Abib 15, not Abib 14.[34] The following is taken from chapter XLIX:

> 1. Remember the command which the Lord commanded thee concerning the Pascah [Passover], that thou shalt keep it in its time, on the fourteenth of the first month, that thou shalt kill it before the evening come, and that <u>they shall eat it during the night, on the evening of the fifteenth</u>, from the time of the setting of the sun, for this is the first day of the festival and the first Pascah.

Thus, we can see that not only does the preponderance of Scriptural evidence support the understanding that "keeping the Passover" does not include "eating the Passover," but the historical evidence presents the same view. While we respect the reasoning offered by those who believe the "passing over" must have occurred on the same day as the Passover, the evidence we have found

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[32] *Cf.*, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, p. 820. Also, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, by Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, 1986 (orig. published in 1848), p. 628, breaks this Hebrew word down into the two following primary uses: a) *the paschal lamb* and b) *the festival of the passover*. The latter designation became a common designation for the combining of the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[33] I call special attention to the section of this study under the heading "The 14th – A Day of Unleavened Bread." The only proof texts he offers in support of this belief come from New Testament passages, which, when examined superficially, would seem to indicate that the Passover lambs are sacrificed on "the first day of unleavened bread." Nevertheless, even the author of the study "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th" understands that we should never interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament. Rather, it should be just the opposite. Here is what he writes on page 5: "No matter what arguments are made about Passover from the New Testament, if they don't square with the law in the Old Testament, they fail. Numbers 28:17 distinctly says that the 14th is Passover and the 15th is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are NOT the same observance!"

[34] *The Book of Jubilees*, according to p. x of the Introductory Notes, "… is a production of the first Christian century." According to p. xi, "Rönsch, who has made a most exhaustive study of the book, confidently claims that it was written before the destruction of the temple, pointing to the words in c. 1, 23: 49, 27, and similar passages, which could not have been written after that event." The English translation of this book we are using here was translated by George H. Schodde, PhD., and was first printed in Oberlin, OH by E. J. Goodrich in 1888.

indicates this understanding is based upon a well-intentioned, but misguided desire to align the two closely-related words into a same-day event. Rather, the Passover lambs were slain on the afternoon of the 14th, and their blood was applied to the side-posts and upper door posts of the Israelites' houses. The lambs were roasted that same afternoon, then they were eaten that evening after sunset. That same night was when Yahweh smote all the firstborn of Egypt, passing over the houses of the Israelites.

7. Eight Days of Unleavened Bread?

We believe one of the clearest understandings brought forth in Scripture is that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a seven-day feast, and that unleavened bread is not required to be eaten at any other time of the year. However, not everyone is in agreement with this teaching, so we have decided to devote a chapter to address the belief that there are actually *eight* days during which Yahweh commanded His people to eat unleavened bread. According to this belief, the day of Passover is the first day of those eight days. As we address this topic, let's begin by reviewing the pertinent verses of Scripture.

Exodus 12:15-20

[15]Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.
[16]And in the first day there 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.
[17]And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.
[18]In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even [*ba'ereb*], ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.
[19]Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.
[20]Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

This passage makes it very plain that there are seven days of unleavened bread, not eight, but we need to specify the actual dates of the month during which unleavened bread is to be eaten because verse 18 has often served as a point of confusion. At first glance, we might get the impression that the fourteenth day of the month is one of the seven days of unleavened bread. However, take special notice of *when* on Abib 14 the Israelites were commanded to begin eating unleavened bread. It was *at even*. Of special importance is the fact that this "at even" is *not* "between the evenings" (*beyn ha'arbayim*). Rather, it is *ba'ereb*, which simply means "at evening time." Shown below is Exodus 12:18 as it appears in *The Interlinear Bible*. We are highlighting the word "ba'ereb" in order to illustrate the difference between this Hebrew word and the expression *beyn ha'arbayim* (בין הערבים, "between the evenings")[35] :

3117	5704	4682	398	6153	2320	3117	6240	702	7223
יום	עד	מצת	תאכלו	בערב	לחדש	יום	עשר	בארבעה	בראשן
day	until	unleavened bread	eat shall you	evening at	month the of	day	fourteenth the on		the In (month) first ←

[35] This Hebrew text was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 57.

6153	2320	6242	259
בערב׃	לחדשׁ	ועשׂרים	האחד
.evening at	month the of	twenty-	first the ←

As we can see by comparing the above Hebrew text with such verses as Leviticus 23:5, the Hebrew word translated "at even" in Exodus 12:18 (**בערב**) is only one word – the word *ba'ereb*, not the expression *beyn ha'arbayim* (**בין הערבים**, "between the evenings"). According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the word *ereb* literally means "dusk." According to *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, it means "*evening*, orig. sun*set*."[36]

Once we understand the difference between the two Hebrew words translated "at even" in the King James Version (Ex. 12:18 vs. Leviticus 23:5), we are then able to discern that Exodus 12:18 has nothing to do with regard to whether the Israelites were to begin eating unleavened bread "between sunset and dark" versus "between late afternoon and sunset." Instead, this use of "at even" has to do with a more specific time frame … sunset. The question we need to answer is, "Were the Israelites commanded to begin eating unleavened bread at sundown as the fourteenth *began* or was it at sundown as the 14th *ended*?"

In order to best answer this question, we would like to refer you to a similarly-worded instruction pertaining to the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). We are commanded to observe the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 27-32. As you may know, the Day of Atonement is a day of fasting and prayer … a day on which we are commanded to "afflict our souls." The Day of Atonement is observed each year on the tenth day of the seventh Scriptural month (the month known as *Tishri*). In order to give us specific instructions with regard to "when" we are to "afflict our souls," Yahweh stipulated that it is from the "ninth AT EVEN (*ba'ereb*), from even to even." We thus understand that when Yahweh tells us "in the ninth at even, from even to even," He expects us to understand that, as the ninth day is ending … and as the tenth day is beginning, we are to "afflict our souls." In other words, He doesn't want us munching on a sandwich as the ninth day is coming to a close … he expects us to fast for the full 24-hour period and, in fact, we should begin fasting *before* the ninth day of the month has officially ended.

In order to best grasp the instructions for the Day of Atonement, we are displaying Leviticus 23:27-32 below:

> [27]Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh.
> [28]And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before Yahweh your Almighty.
> [29]For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.
> [30]And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

[36] *Cf.*, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, p. 787.

> [31]Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
> [32]It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even (*ba'ereb*), from even (*me'ereb*) unto even (*ad-ereb*), shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

As this passage specifies, the tenth of the month is the actual Day of Atonement, but its observance begins as the previous day ends.

In the same way, with regard to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we are commanded to begin eating unleavened bread on the 14th day of the month *at even* until the 21st day of the month *at even*. Thus, as the day of Passover is drawing to a close, we are to cease from eating bread that contains leavening, and we do not resume eating leavened bread until the 21st day of the month has ended. With the 15th day of the month as the first full day of eating unleavened bread, by the time the 21st day has ended, we have eaten unleavened bread for a full seven days, just as commanded.

With all the above in mind, we can now review the other Scriptures which plainly specify that there are seven days during which unleavened bread is to be eaten (not eight):

> **Exodus 13:6-7**
> Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Yahweh.
> Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

> **Exodus 23:15**
> Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)

> **Exodus 34:18**
> The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.

> **Leviticus 23:6**
> And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Yahweh: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

> **Numbers 28:17**
> And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

> **Deuteronomy 16:3**
> Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

2 Chronicles 30:21
And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised Yahweh day by day, singing with loud instruments unto Yahweh.

2 Chronicles 35:17
And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

Ezra 6:19-22
And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month.
For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.
And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek Yahweh Almighty of Israel, did eat,
And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for Yahweh had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of the Almighty, the Almighty of Israel.

I believe two critical items of interest which should be gleaned from all of the above texts are 1) *Never* are eight days of unleavened bread ever specified (or implied); only *seven* are mentioned. The only Scriptural exception to this is found in Deuteronomy 16:8, where six days are mentioned. Keep in mind that in verse three of that same chapter we are *already* told that we are to eat unleavened bread for seven days. Here is what verse eight says: "Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Yahweh thy Almighty: thou shalt do no work therein." When this verse is examined in comparison with the other verses we have reviewed, it is plain that the seventh day is also intended to be understood as a day of unleavened bread. Furthermore, I don't believe it is very likely that anyone could make a case that the first of those six days falls on Abib 14, since this would cause the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to fall on Abib 19. We aren't aware of anyone who believes the 19th should be regarded as the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The other item we need to discern from the passages cited above is 2) Passover is mentioned as a distinct observance – separate from the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is made especially clear in 2 Chronicles 35:17. If Abib 14 is to be considered a day of unleavened bread, we would expect it to be designated as such. Rather, we do not read of a requirement to eat unleavened bread until Abib 15 (or, more specifically) Abib 14 "at even" (at its close).

Now that we have presented the Scriptural evidence supporting *seven* days of unleavened bread, not eight, I would like to present the perspective expressed by the opposing camp. The following is an excerpt from Voy Wilks' mini-study entitled: "Eight Days of Unleavened Bread: With Passover on the 14th":

> It is believed there are only seven days of unleavened bread. Please allow me to respectfully point out that Scriptures indicate there are eight days of unleavened bread.

> The very day on which the Passover lambs were killed was also the first day of unleavened bread (Mk. 14:12, Lk. 22:7, Mt. 26:17). If the lambs were killed on the 14th as most believe, and as Scripture says, then the 14th is a (A) day of unleavened bread. These are Biblical Scriptures, equally true as are those of the Torah, so we must accept them; or else, give up believing the lambs were killed on the 14th day. It is **written in the law,** that there are **eight** days of unleavened bread, seven of which are called the "feast of unleavened bread."[37] (emphasis his)

Mr. Wilks' desire to harmonize the New Testament text with the Old Testament is admirable, but as we mentioned in footnote #33 from our previous chapter, we must be careful to not interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament. The only proof texts he offers to justify the day of Passover being a day of unleavened bread are New Testament passages. Let's take a brief look at those three texts:

> **Mark 14:12** – 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?
>
> **Luke 22:7** – Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.
>
> **Matthew 26:17** – Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Yeshua, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

Based upon the wording of these texts alone, without any other passages with which to compare them, we can understand how someone could conclude that the day on which the passover lambs were killed, Abib 14, is "the first day of unleavened bread." However, we need to be careful before reaching premature conclusions. The author of the study entitled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," who agrees with Mr. Wilks with regard to the timing of the Passover, nevertheless cautions his readers against using New Testament passages to interpret Old Testament texts. Notice his explanation, in which he addresses all three of Mr. Wilks' proof texts[38]:

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[37] From "Eight Days of Unleavened Bread: With Passover on the 14th," by Voy Wilks, 5/19/87, pp. 1-2.

[38] This is a word-for-word reproduction of a section of the undated study titled "Why Passover Is on the 14th of Abib, Not the 15th," written by a member of Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, P.O. Box 578, Columbia, MO, p. 5. The author apparently chose to remain modestly anonymous. This study was mailed to us in April 1987 by Donald Mansager, who was at that time an elder with the assembly.

New Testament Translators Reveal Misunderstanding

By the time the New Testament was translated, the translators had lost touch with Yahweh's holy days. Not understanding the distinctions made in the Hebrew text concerning Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they merged the two in several places. In addition, some of our English translations show words being added that are not in the ancient texts. These errors have led some astray in their understanding of the separateness of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Examples follow.

• Matthew 26:17—"Now on the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Yahshua saying, 'Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover?'" The words "day" and "feast of" are not in the Greek texts. The word "first" is *protos* (*Strong's Concordance* No. 4413), and can mean foremost or before. The verse actually indicates a time period before the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

• Mark 14:1—"After two days was the *feast of* the Passover, and of unleavened bread…" Again, the words "feast of" are not found in the Greek text. It should read, "After two days was the Passover and Unleavened Bread." The two observances are separate.

• Mark 14:12—"And the first day of unleavened *bread*, when they killed the Passover…" The word "bread" was added by translators. This is the beginning of the season of unleavened bread, the time for the killing of the Passover. By this time the season was called Unleavened Bread, or more frequently, Passover. We do the same by calling December the Xmas season. The verse could have just as well been translated, "And on the beginning, time for Unleavened Bread when they killed the Passover…"

• Luke 22:1—"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." This is an example of how the Feast of Unleavened Bread came to be known by the general term "Passover." The same goes for verse 7, "Then came the day of unleavened ["bread" is not in the text], when the Passover must be killed." Because Passover preceded the Feast, it became synonymous with it. In verse 7, the word for day is *hemera* (No. 2250 in *Strong's Concordance*), figuratively meaning a period of time. So the time came for unleavened bread, which was preceded by the Passover.

• John 2:13—"And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Yahshua went up to Jerusalem…" An example of how people lost touch with Yahweh and how modern translation reflects that loss through errors and misnomers. The Companion Bible note on this verse says, "After the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah corruption proceeded apace, and Yahweh found the nation as described by Malachi. Hence, what were once 'the feasts of Yahweh' are spoken of as what they had become, 'feasts of the Jews.'"

No matter what arguments are made about Passover from the New Testament, if they don't square with the law in the Old Testament, they fail. Numbers 28:17 distinctly says that the 14th is Passover and the 15th is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are NOT the same observance!

Again, although the author of the above commentary shares Mr. Wilks' position concerning the timing of the Passover, he nevertheless expresses the understanding that our interpretations of New Testament passages should square with the law (the Torah), not the reverse, as reflected by Mr. Wilks' presentation. Choosing to interpret Torah based upon our understanding of New Testament texts is not only treated as a dangerous practice by the above author, but in particular the ones that Mr. Wilks used as proof texts are singled out by scholars as containing "problems of chronology."[39] Moreover, as one commentator puts it, "Many scholars maintain that the discrepancies are not historically reconcilable—that either the Synoptics are right or John is."[40] Indeed, this same commentator devoted four full pages towards weighing virtually every opinion that has been offered on this subject … only to conclude that

[39] From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gæbelein, Gen. Editor, Vol. 8, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, p. 532.
[40] Ibid, p. 529.

Yeshua the Messiah wasn't actually killed on the day of Passover![41] Certainly, then, it is not wise to allow such controversial texts to determine one's doctrinal stand.

Is it possible to reconcile such texts as Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 with the Old Testament Scriptures known as the Torah? We certainly do not claim to have all the answers, but the explanation that we believe makes the most sense is the one we found in a footnote from *The Hebraic-Roots Version Scriptures*. Here is what the translator had to say regarding the phrase "and on the first day," as used in Matthew 26:17:

> "and on the first day": The Hebrew (DuTillet, Munster and Shem Tob) reads וביום הרׂשון and the Aramaic (Old Syriac and Peshitta) have ביומא דין קדמיא. Both the Hebrew and Aramaic could also be read "on the day before" (as Schonfield translates it), a reading which would place the crucifixion on Pesach, in agreement with Yochanan (Jn. 13:1 & 19:24), as well as the Talmud (b.San. 43a) against the Greek of the Synoptic Gospels. See also Mk. 14:12, Lk. 22:7 & Jn. 13:1. See note to Mt. 27:62.[42]

While the above explanation seems helpful, it still presents the understanding that Yeshua's disciples approached Him on Abib 14, asking where He would eat the Passover. If this is the way it happened, neither side in the current debate can be satisfied with the sequence of events as explained above. For those who believe He ate the Passover with His disciples as the fourteenth began, the above explanation has the disciples asking Yeshua this question too late because, according to those folks, Yeshua had already eaten the Passover with His disciples the evening before. On the other hand, for those of our persuasion, we likewise believe this question would have been asked too late, for although we do not regard the Last Supper as being the Passover meal, we do agree that this meal was eaten not long after Abib 14 had begun. Until we read an explanation that resolves the discrepancies between these New Testament accounts and the instructions found in Yahweh's Torah, we are inclined to agree with Adam Clarke, who wrote the following in his commentary:

> 17. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread.* As the Feast of Unleavened Bread did not begin till the day after the Passover, the fifteenth day of the month (Lev. xxiii. 5-6; Num. xxviii. 16-17), this could not have been, properly, the first day of that feast.[43]

What About Ezekiel 45:21?

In spite of all the aforementioned and cited verses offering support for a separation between the day of Passover (Abib 14) and the ensuing seven days of Unleavened Bread (Abib 15 – 21), there is indeed one text in the book of Ezekiel that appears to support the Passover as being the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. If this one passage were all we had to go on, we would concede

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[41] Ibid, p. 530, where we read, "After nightfall on Thursday evening, when it was 15 Nisan, Jesus joined his disciples and they ate the Passover."

[42] From *The Hebraic-Roots Version Scriptures*, by James Scott Trimm, published by The Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, Hurst, TX, 2004, p.1,231 (footnote #658).

[43] From *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Adam Clarke, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, 1985 (orig. published in 1826), p. 824.

that the day of Passover must be considered a day on which unleavened bread is to be eaten. Let's take a look at this verse:

> **Ezekiel 45:21**
> [21]In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

If we were to literally apply the words of Ezekiel 45:21, we would have to begin eating unleavened bread on the fourteenth day of the month. As such, we would have to believe this feast begins on Abib 14, which would identify the 14th, not the 15th, as being the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know from the previous texts we have cited that Abib 14 is the day of Passover, but the Feast of Unleavened Bread doesn't begin until Abib 15. We would be very hesitant to use this verse in Ezekiel as our sole Old Testament "proof text" justifying the belief that no leavened bread should be eaten on the fourteenth, especially in view of the other verses in Scripture that make a clear distinction between the Passover itself and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We can see how someone could read Ezekiel 45:21 by itself, without any knowledge of the other verses of Scripture, and conclude that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a seven-day feast that begins on Abib 14. However, this would be an unbalanced approach to interpreting Scripture, and the Apostle Paul cautions us to be careful that we rightly divide the Word of truth:

> Study to show thyself approved unto the Almighty, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

How, then, do we explain such discrepancies as the one found in Ezekiel 45:21? We tend to agree with the explanation found in *Commentary on the Old Testament*, by Keil and Delitzsch, which we will display shortly. After devoting over a page to sorting out the problems posed by this one verse, their conclusion is that Ezekiel 45:21 may contain a "copyist's error." Before we review their commentary, let's take a look at the Hebrew text from which Ezekiel 45:21 is translated[44]:

7620	2282	6453		1961	2320	3117	6240	702	7223	
שִׁבְעֹת	חַג	הַפֶּסַח	לָכֶם	יִהְיֶה	לַחֹדֶשׁ	יוֹם	עָשָׂר	בְּאַרְבָּעָה	בָּרִאשׁוֹן	←
seven	feast a of	the Passover	you to	there be shall	the of month	day	tenth (and)	-four the in	first the In (month)	

398	4682	3117	
יָמִים	מַצּוֹת	יֹאכַל׃	←
.eaten is	unleavened bread	;days	

Note: We believe we should point out that the word translated "seven" above (#7620) is specifically addressed by Keil and Delitzsch's commentary below. This word can also be translated "week," as shown from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*:

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[44] This Hebrew text was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 676.

7620. שָׁבוּעַ **shâbûwa~**, *shaw-boo'-ah*; or
שָׁבֻעַ **shâbûa~**, *shaw-boo'-ah*; also (fem.)
שְׁבֻעָה **sh^{e}bû~âh**, *sheb-oo-aw'*; prop. pass. part. of 7650 as a denom. of 7651; lit. *sevened*, i.e. a *week* (spec. of years):–seven, week.

We should also note that, according to *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, this word, as used in Ezekiel 45:21, is a plural noun:

שָׁבֻעוֹת noun masc. pl. abs. from שָׁבוּעַ (§ 32. rem.1) שבע[45]

What makes this information so interesting is the fact that the same Hebrew word translated "seven" in Ezekiel 45:21 is translated "weeks" in Deuteronomy 16:9[46]:

7620	7651	5608	2490	7054	2770	2490	5608
שׁבעוֹת׃	שׁבעה	לספר	תּחל	בקמה	חרמשׁ	מהחל	תּספר־לך׀
.weeks	seven	number to	shall you begin	standing the grain	sickle the	(when) from begins	for shall you yourself number ←

The above Hebrew text is especially interesting because we have the words "weeks" and "seven" side-by-side for easy comparison. Certainly, then, we can see that there is something "fishy" about the Hebrew text of Ezekiel 45:21. With this backdrop, we can now more fully appreciate the concerns addressed by C. F. Keil in Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*:

> 45:21-25. Sacrifices at the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles.—V. 21. *In the first (month), on the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall keep the Passover, a feast of a full week; unleavened bread shall be eaten.* V. 22. *And the prince shall prepare on that day for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock as a sin-offering.* V. 23. *And for the seven days of the feast he shall prepare as a burnt-offering for Jehovah seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily, the seven days, and as a sin-offering a he-goat daily.* V. 24. *And as a meat-offering, he shall prepare an ephah for the bullock, and an ephah for the ram, and a hin of oil for the ephah.* V. 25. *In the seventh (month), on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast he shall do the same for seven days with regard to the sin-offering, as also the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering, as also the oil.*—In the words, "shall *the Passover* be to you," there lies the thought that the Passover is to be celebrated in the manner appointed in Ex. 12, with the paschal meal in the evening of the 14th Abib.—There is considerable difficulty connected with the following words, חג שׁבעוֹת ימים, which all the older translators have rendered "a feast of seven days." שׁבעוֹת signifies periods of seven days or weeks. A feast of heptads of days, or weeks of days, cannot possibly mean a feast which lasted only seven days, or a week. חג שׁבעוֹת is used elsewhere for the feast of weeks (Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10), because they were to reckon seven weeks from the second day of Passover, the day of the sheaf of first-fruits, and then to keep the feast of the loaves of first-fruits, or the feast of harvest (Deut. 16:9). Kliefoth retains this well-established meaning of the words in this passage also, and gives

[45] From *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, by Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986 (orig. published in 1848), p. 699.
[46] This Hebrew text was transcribed (without the vowel points) from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1986, p. 169.

> the following explanation: If the words חג שבעות stood alone without ימים, it would mean that in future [times] the Passover was to be kept like the feast of seven weeks [i.e., Pentecost], as the feast of the loaves of first-fruits. But the addition of ימים, which is to be taken in the same sense as in Dan. 10:2, 3, Gen. 29:14, etc., gives this turn to the thought, that in future [times] the Passover is to be kept as a feast of seven weeks long, "a feast lasting seven weeks." According to this explanation, the meaning of the regulation is, "that in future [times] not only the seven days of sweet loaves, but the whole of the seven weeks intervening between the feast of the wave-sheaf and the feast of the wave-loaves, was to be kept as a Passover, that the whole of the quinquagesima should be one Easter חג, and the feast of weeks to be one with the Passover." To this there is appended the further regulation, that unleavened bread is to be eaten, not merely for the seven days therefore, but for the whole of the seven weeks, till the feast of the loaves of first-fruits [Pentecost]. This explanation is a very sagacious one, and answers to the Christian view of the Easter-tide. But it is open to objections which render it untenable. In the first place, that ימים, when used in the sense of lasting for days, is not usually connected with the preceding noun in the construct state, but is attached as an adverbial accusative; compare שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבֻעִים יָמִים in Dan. 10:2, 3, and שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים in Gen. 41:1, Jer. 28:3, 11, etc. But a still more important objection is the circumstance that the words שִׁבְעַת יְמֵי הֶחָג in v. 23 unquestionably point back to חַג שָׁבֻעוֹת יָמִים, as there is no other way in which the article in הֶחָג can be explained, just as בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in v. 22 points back to the fourteenth day mentioned in v. 21 as the time of the *pesach* feast. It follows from this, however, that שָׁבֻעוֹת יָמִים can only signify a seven days' feast. It is true that the plural שָׁבֻעוֹת appears irreconcilable with this; for Kimchi's opinion, that שָׁבֻעוֹת is a singular, written with *Cholem* instead of *Patach*, is purely a result of perplexity, and the explanation given by Gussetius, that Ezekiel speaks in the plural of weeks, because the reference is "to the institution of the Passover as an annual festival to be celebrated many times in the series of times and ages," is no better. The plural שָׁבֻעוֹת must rather be taken as a plural of genus, as in עָרֵי, Gen. 13:12 and Judg. 12:7; בָּהֵן, Gen. 19:29; or בָּנִים, Gen. 21:7, Isa. 37:3; so that Ezekiel speaks indefinitely of heptads of days, because he assumes that the fact is well known that the feast only lasted one heptad of days, as he expressly states in v. 23. If this explanation of the plural does not commend itself, we must take שָׁבֻעוֹת as a copyist's error for שֶׁבַעַת, feast of a heptad of days, i.e., a feast lasting a full week, and attribute the origin of this copyist's error to the fact that חַג שֶׁבַעַת naturally suggested the thought of חַג שָׁבֻעוֹת, feast of weeks, or Pentecost, not merely because the feast of Pentecost is always mentioned in the Pentateuch along with the feasts of Passover and tabernacles, but also because the only singular form of שָׁבֻעוֹת that we meet with elsewhere is שָׁבוּעַ (Dan. 9:27), or in the construct state שְׁבֻעַ (Gen. 29:27), not שְׁבֻעָה and שְׁבֻעַת.[47]

The bottom line: There is a definite problem with the text of Ezekiel 45:21. In view of the fact that it is contradicted by so many other passages, we would be very hesitant about using this verse as a proof text to validate a doctrinal position.

As we have already demonstrated, other Scripture verses present the Passover as falling on Abib 14, followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which begins on Abib 15, not the 14th. And just so we know that we are to begin the Feast of Unleavened Bread precisely on time, we are told to

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[47] From *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Keil & Delitzsch, Vol. 9, (Ezekiel, Daniel, by C. F. Keil), Hendrickson Publishers, 2001 (orig. published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866 – 91), pp. 427-428.

observe it from "the 14th day of the month at even until the 21st day at even" (Exodus 12:18). This is why we don't watch the sun set on the 14th while eating our last morsels of leavened bread. We have already disposed of the last remnants of our leavened bread well *before* sunset, even though the feast doesn't actually begin until sunset.

8. Brought Out of Egypt … By Night

I remember attending a Unity Conference in Cisco, Texas where one of the presentations consisted of a man's attempt to persuade his audience that the Passover sacrifices took place on the afternoon of Abib 14, followed by the Passover seder that evening … as the 15th began. I felt he did a splendid job, but as is typical of Unity Conference presentations, the audience was divided and the reasoning he offered didn't seem to change anyone's minds. During the question & answer session that followed his presentation, one man stood up and expressed his appreciation for the insights that the speaker had shared, yet he openly expressed disappointment that the speaker had not addressed the timing of the Israelites' journey from Rameses. Because this one item had not been addressed, the man claimed, the speaker had failed in his attempt to persuade him. Regrettably, the speaker didn't have an answer to the man's objection, and since the chain of evidence is only as strong as its weakest link … and this one was apparently missing … everyone in attendance remained unmoved.

Having been a speaker at a few unity conferences, I fully appreciate the spot the speaker found himself in with the man's objection. Some folks are very adept at "thinking on their feet," so to speak, and they will often spout off quick answers that seem to fit the situation, even if we later find out those answers were not actually on target. Others, like me and the speaker I just mentioned, tend to be nervous when speaking before an audience. As a result of these "jitters," we sometimes "freeze" when faced with the simplest of questions, especially if the answer requires details that need to be presented in a neat, orderly and concise manner. The question of the Israelites' "night journey" is one such example. It turns out that the question posed during that question/answer session has an answer that validates the findings we've already uncovered in our investigation, but articulating the following answer in a public setting requires someone who, unlike me, is able to "think on his feet" and recite specific pertinent details from memory, for the answer cannot be explained in the few words normally required to hold the average listener's attention. In fact, the explanation I have put together here consists of at least eleven pages of commentary and documentation. For those who sincerely regard the timing of the Israelites' journey from Rameses as their determining factor in the timing of the Passover events, I can only ask that they prayerfully consider the reasoning we present in this chapter.

The enigma, as I understand it, is this: According to Deuteronomy 16:1, in reference to their deliverance from bondage, the Israelites were "brought forth out of Egypt by night." According to Numbers 33:3, this departure took place on Abib 15. If, as we believe, the Israelites ate the Passover meal after sundown … at the beginning portion of Abib 15 …, and if they remained in their dwellings all night (since they were prohibited from leaving their houses in Ex. 12:22), then they could not have possibly traveled on the night of Abib 15. Let's take a look at these verses in order to better familiarize ourselves with this argument:

> **Numbers 33:1-3**
> These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.
> And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Yahweh: and these are their journeys according to their goings out.
> 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.

Rameses is the Egyptian city where the Israelites had dwelt since the days of Joseph (Gen. 47:11). On the morrow after the Passover, the Israelites departed their home city and began their exodus from Egypt.

> **Deuteronomy 16:1**
> Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto Yahweh thy Almighty: for in the month of Abib Yahweh thy Almighty brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

This verse tells us that we are to observe the month of Abib because this is the month (the first month of the Scriptural year) that Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt – and it was *by night*. Just to make certain there are no misunderstandings with regard to the meaning of the word "night," we will here mention that this word is translated from the Hebrew word *layil* (word #3915 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*), which literally means "a *twist* (away of the light), i.e. *night*." This word is consistently translated "night" in Scripture.

Notice that Deuteronomy 16:1 does not say that Yahweh brought the Israelites forth out of *Rameses* by night. It says He brought them forth out of *Egypt*. Thus, one might legitimately ask the question, "Is this a reference to the Israelites' departure from Rameses or is it a reference to their actual departure from *Egypt*, when they crossed the Red Sea?" We believe this is a valid question, but for the sake of those who insist that this verse can only refer to the Israelites' departure from Rameses, we will proceed from this perspective.

With all this in mind, we can proceed with the understanding that the Israelites departed from Rameses on Abib 15, and that their departure was "by night." This brings us to the problematic text of Exodus 12:22, where, following the death of Egypt's firstborn, the Israelites were told to not leave their homes *until the morning*. If we add this stipulation to the equation, it appears that the Passover meal must have been eaten the previous evening, the night of Abib 14, which then would have freed the Israelites to have left Rameses during the nighttime hours of Abib 15. Thus, we certainly understand the reasoning presented by the opposition. However, let's take a closer look before reaching a definite, yet possibly premature, conclusion. Shown below is the text of Exodus 12:22:

> **Exodus 12:22**
> And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

This verse includes a portion of the instructions for keeping the Passover. Once they were carried out, no one was allowed to leave their houses until the following morning. Thus, they were to eat the Passover meal, but they could not leave that house until the morning. Just to make certain we all understand what is meant by "morning," I will mention that the Hebrew word translated "morning" is the word *bôqer* (word #1242 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*), which literally means "*dawn* (as the *break* of day)."

And thus we see the conundrum we are faced with: If the Israelites ate the Passover meal on the night of Abib 15, and they weren't permitted to leave their homes until the following morning, then how

were they able to depart from Rameses that same night? Before we address this question, let's take a look at how this apparent dilemma is presented by Voy Wilks, in his study entitled "Israel Came Out By Night: What is the Meaning of These Words?":

> *Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto Yahweh thy Almighty: for in the month of Abib Yahweh thy Almighty brought thee forth out of Egypt* ***by night*** *(Deut. 16:1 KJV).*
>
> *Many are unwilling to accept this Scripture at face value. Why? If anyone concedes that Israel departed from Egypt* ***at night,*** *and* ***on the 15th*** *(as Scriptures say), then it is obvious that Israel did not observe the Passover on the night of the 15th of Abib, as these beloved brethren maintain. Please remember the following:*
>
> *On Passover night –*
> *(1) Israel was not permitted to "go out of their houses until morning" (Ex. 12:22).*
>
> *(2) Israel did "as Yahweh commanded Moses and Aaron, …" (Ex. 12:28).*
>
> *All agree that they departed Rameses on the 15th of Abib.* ***If*** *they left* ***at night*** *(as the above Scripture says), and* ***on the 15th,*** *then Passover was observed on a night other than the 15th of Abib. So then, if it is conceded that they departed* ***at night****, this forever kills the possibility that the Passover observance was conducted on the night of the 15th. For this reason, these brethren believed Israel did* ***not*** *depart Egypt at (or****, by****) night.*[48] (emphasis his)

In summary of the above points, Mr. Wilks maintains that those of our persuasion cannot accept Deuteronomy 16:1 at face value because this verse depicts Israel departing Egypt by night. He is mistaken in this conclusion, as we are about to demonstrate. We have no problem with Deuteronomy 16:1 informing us that Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt by night.

To begin with, we need to point out, as we alluded to earlier, that Deuteronomy 16:1 says nothing about Yahweh bringing Israel out of *Rameses* by night. It wasn't until several days later (still in the month of Abib) that the Israelites actually left *Egypt*. This final departure from Egypt is what is known as the Red Sea crossing. There is nothing to prevent us from believing that the Red Sea crossing occurred at night, and this is when they officially left Egypt. Thus, we are willing to consider the possibility that Deuteronomy 16:1 is not a reference to the events of Abib 15; rather, it could just as easily be a reference to the Red Sea crossing, which occurred several days later. This was when the Israelites actually left Egypt, not when they left Rameses.

In reading Mr. Wilks' entire four-page study, as well as the accompanying one-page study titled "Passover Studies – Boqer,"[49] we found that he misses out on the solution to this enigma. Instead, he addresses the meaning of the Hebrew word "*layil*," which without question means "night," as Mr. Wilks unequivocally demonstrates in response to those who claim that "night" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew word in Deuteronomy 16:1. He also successfully demonstrates that the word "day" can be used

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[48] From the article "Israel Came Out By Night: What is the Meaning of These Words?" by Voy Wilks, dated 7/12/1987, p. 1.
[49] In the article "Passover Studies – Boqer," dated 4/12/1988, Voy Wilks establishes that the Hebrew word *bôqer* means "dawn (as the break of day)," a translation that we have never questioned.

in reference to activities that take place at night. As an example of this, he cites the passage of Scripture where David stole King Saul's spear and water jug while he and his men slept. This was an opportunity for David to kill Saul, who had been pursuing David, but all he did was take Saul's spear and water jug. David carried out this act during the nighttime hours, yet when Saul learned a short space of time later that his life had been spared, he remarked, "I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this ***day***." Mr. Wilks addresses the meaning of *layil* and establishes the fact that "this day" can be inclusive of nighttime hours because these are some objections that he has encountered. It is possible that Mr. Wilks has not been made aware of any other objections, so we will proceed with our explanation of why we believe the following:

1) Israel departed Rameses on Abib 15.
2) Israel was "brought out of the land of Egypt" the night of Abib 15.
3) They did not leave their homes until morning.

You may well wonder, "How is it possible that Israel was 'brought out of Egypt' the night of Abib 15 if they didn't leave their homes until the following morning?!" We will now demonstrate that each of the above is true, even if the nighttime departure from Egypt is actually a reference to the events of Abib 15.

When is the 'Night to be Much Observed'?

Exodus chapter 12 contains nearly all the information pertaining to the Passover observance that we need in order to formulate our conclusions, so if you have not read this entire chapter by now, we recommend that you do so, especially before proceeding with this portion of our study. We have already read verse 22 of this chapter, where Moses instructed the Israelites to not leave their houses the night during which the "destroyer" smote the Egyptians' firstborn children. However, if we continue reading this chapter, we read of a certain night that is to be "much observed." Let's read that passage:

> **Exodus 12:41-42**
> And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt.
> It *is* a night to be much observed unto Yahweh for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this *is* that night of Yahweh to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

We need to answer the following questions: Which night is to be "much observed"? And how is this "observance" marked?

We realize there are varying opinions with regard to what observance is being referred to in verse 42, but upon careful reflection, we believe only one fits: the vigil of the night when Egypt's firstborn were slain. This observance was marked by a Passover meal, and we know that later that night the "destroyer" slew Egypt's firstborn.

In considering any alternative "observance" possibilities, we find ourselves asking, "What else did the Israelites do that represented something 'much observed'?" We come up empty. Only the Passover observance fits. Commentators, such as Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, agree. Here is his perspective:

> That night was to be observed by all future generations as a "Watchnight Service" (Cole, p. 113), for on that night the Lord "preserved" or "kept" the destroyer from touching them (v. 42). There is a clear play on the word *šāmar* ("watch," "preserve," "keep vigil"); as Yahweh watched over Israel that night, so Israel was to watch for Yahweh by keeping this feast perpetually (cf. v. 17).[50]

Of special interest from Mr. Kaiser's commentary is how he brings out the fact that the word translated "observed" can also be translated "preserve." The Israelites' firstborn children, on the night of the Passover, were indeed "preserved." Of course, many of us have been taught that on this "night to be much observed," it was the Israelites who did the "observing." However, as Mr. Kaiser points out, it was ***Yahweh*** Who watched over (and preserved) Israel that night. He "observed" the houses with the blood smeared above the lintels and on the sides of the door posts … and He protected the residents within those dwellings from the destroyer. Yahweh continues to protect all who love Him (Psalms 145:20).

Another commentator forcefully builds on Walter C. Kaiser's premise that the "night to be much observed" is not only a reference to the night the destroyer "passed over" the children of Israel, but the night on which they were "preserved." C. F. Keil, in *Commentary on the Old Testament*, offers the following insight:

> **12:42.** This day therefore was לֵיל שִׁמֻּרִים, "*a preservation-night of the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt."* The *apax legomenon* שִׁמֻּרִים does not mean "celebration, from שָׁמַר to observe, to honor" (*Knobel*), but "preservation," from שָׁמַר to keep, to preserve; and לַיהוָה is the same as in v. 27.[51] *"This same night is* (consecrated) *to the Lord as a preservation for all children of Israel in their families."* Because Jehovah had preserved the children of Israel that night from the destroyer, it was to be holy to them, i.e., to be kept by them in all future ages to the glory of the Lord, as a preservation.[52]

We find this particular explanation to be very interesting, especially in view of the fact that, indeed, the Hebrew word from which the Hebrew expression "much observed" is derived (שָׁמַר), can mean "to preserve" or "protect." The Hebrew word translated "much observed" is the word *shimmurim* (שִׁמֻּרִים word #8107 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*), which is derived from the word *shâmar*

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[50] From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, Frank E. Gaebelein, Gen. Editor, (Commentary on Exodus by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, p. 380.

[51] Verse 27 of this chapter literally reads, "Then you shall say, A sacrifice of a passover of Yahweh [לַיהוָה], Who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He struck Egypt. And He delivered our houses. And the people bowed and worshiped." This translation comes from *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Gen. Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, p. 58.

[52] From *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Keil & Delitzsch, Vol. 1, (The Pentateuch, by C. F. Keil), Hendrickson Publishers, 2001 (orig. published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866 – 91), pp. 339-340.

(שָׁמַר, word #8104 in *Strong's*). This Hebrew word has various applications, including "to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e., *guard*, gen. to *protect*, *attend to*, etc."

As an example of this word's usage, it is translated "preserve" in Psalms 16:1, where King David prays to Yahweh for protection:

> [1]Preserve me, O Elohim: for in thee do I put my trust.

It is important for us to understand that the only difference between "shamar" (שָׁמַר) and "shimmurim" (שִׁמֻּרִים) is that the former is singular, whereas the latter is plural. This understanding is obvious to those who understand the formation of plural nouns in Hebrew, but for those who might require proof of this claim, we display the listing for this Hebrew word as it appears in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon:*

> **8107** † [שִׁמֻּר] n. [m.] watching, vigil (so Di; >*observance*);—pl. לֵיל שִׁמֻּרִים לי׳ Ex 12[42] *a night of vigils to* י׳, יִשׂ׳ לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשׂ׳ v[42].[53]

This grammatical fact is further validated by *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, under its listing for the Hebrew word שָׁמַר (*shamar*):

> שִׁמֻּרִים masc. pl. *observance*, *keeping of a festival*, Ex. 12.42.[54]

The reason we believe it is so important for us to understand that the plural form of *shamar* is used in Exodus 12:42 is this: Plurality, as applied in Hebrew, can be used to denote greatness.[55] In other words, instead of simply deriving the meaning of "vigils" or even of "preservations," we can understand the meaning of "a *great* vigil" or "a *great* preservation." Fittingly, the Hebrew scholars who compiled *The Chumash* translated this word "protection," but they didn't carry across the meaning of "great protection":

> [42]*It is a night of anticipation* [שִׁמֻּרִים] *for HASHEM to take them out of the land of Egypt, this was the night for HASHEM; a protection* [שִׁמֻּרִים] *for all the Children of Israel for their generations.*[56]

As is evident from the above translation, the translator chose to translate the same word in two different ways. He explains his reasoning as follows:

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[53] *Cf.*, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, p. 1,037.

[54] *Cf.*, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, by Benjamin Davidson, Hendrickson Publishers, 1986 (orig. published in 1848), p. 727.

[55] *Cf.*, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 14th ed., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1853, p. 209, where we read that the plural form in Hebrew is used to denote *a*) Extension of space and time and *b*) Might and power. Of the latter, Gesenius adds the following in a footnote, "The Jewish grammarians call such a plural רִבּוּי הַכֹּחוֹת (*pluralis virium* or *virtutum*); the moderns call it *pluralis excellentiæ* or *plur. majestaticus*." Note: "*Virium*" is a Latin word that means, "force, might or power."

[56] From *The Chumash*, The Stone Edition, by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, published by Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1997, pp. 359 & 361.

> **42.** שִׁמֻּרִים – *Anticipation … protection*. The word has two meanings in the verse. The first time, it refers to God's pledge to Abraham; He reserved this night for the miracle and anticipated its coming throughout the 430 years. The second time the word is used, it refers to the protection from the plague that God extended to the Jews that night. From then on, the first night of Pesach became a time when God protects Israel (*Rashi*).[57]

With all due respect to the translator of *The Chumash* (as well as the Jewish sage Rashi), we tend to agree with the observation put forth by C. F. Keil in his commentary. There is no reason this word cannot carry the same meaning in both instances, and this is what we personally believe to be true. As noted by C. F. Keil, the Hebrew word שִׁמֻּרִים can indeed mean "to preserve" or "to protect." Equipped with this understanding, as well as the force and power denoted by the plural usage of שִׁמֻּרִים, we believe Exodus 12:42 is best translated as follows:

> *It is a great protection night of Yahweh* [לַיהוָֹה] *for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this night is it, a great protection for all the children of Israel for their generations.*

It is difficult for us to imagine that anyone could regard the "night to be much observed" (or more fittingly, the "night of Great Protection") as representing anything other than the night that Yahweh protected the Israelites' firstborn from the plague in which Egypt's firstborn were slain. Nevertheless, some believers are persuaded that the "night to be much observed" is represented by the night *following* the death of Egypt's firstborn. This is the understanding expressed by Voy and Farris Wilks in their article "Yahweh's Passover":

> And at the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt. It was a **NIGHT** of watching by Yahweh, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same **night** is a **night** of watching kept to Yahweh by all the people of Israel throughout their generations (Ex. 12:41, 42).
> All this is plain, easy language. It is only a matter of believing. Israel left Egypt from Rameses on the **15th** day of the month, **at night**, while **many** ("all") of the Egyptians **saw** them leaving, as they buried their dead.[58] (emphasis theirs)

As we review the above commentary, we cannot help but wonder what it is the above authors believe was "observed" the night the children of Israel departed from Rameses. Please remember … both Voy and Farris believe the Passover had already occurred the night *before* (i.e., at midnight on Abib 14). Thus, according to this reasoning, Yahweh had already spared the Israelites' firstborn the night before the Wilks believe the Israelites departed from Rameses. If this line of reasoning is true, we are left to wonder exactly "what" was "much observed" during this night of departure. The primary thing the Israelites would have observed the night of their departure would have been the open road before them, lit by the full moon. No, we maintain that the night to be "much observed" was none other than the night of Great Protection, when Yahweh spared the Israelites' firstborn. Ironically, we share Mr. Wilks' view that the "Night to be Much Observed" indeed fell on Abib 15 … we just disagree as to what occurred that night. We believe this was the night of Israel's Great Deliverance, when the destroyer

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[57] Ibid, p. 360.

[58] From the article "Yahweh's Passover" by Voy and Farris Wilks, dated 2/23/85. This article may also be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.halleluyah.org/yahweh's%20passover.htm.

passed over their houses and spared their firstborn. Mr. Wilks believes this great event occurred the previous night.

To add to the confusion brought on by various interpretations we have encountered, we would like to point out that another group which agrees with Mr. Wilks regarding the timing of the Passover sacrifices nevertheless *disagrees* with Mr. Wilks regarding the timing of the "Night to be Much Observed." This group, known as Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, shares the Wilks' position that the Passover lambs were slain just as Abib 14 began … immediately after sundown … and then eaten that same night. However, *unlike* Mr. Wilks, they teach that this same night was the "Night to be Much Observed." Here is a summary of their perspective:

> This is really a commemoration of the command in Exodus 12:42: "It is a night to be much observed [Hebrew *shimurim*] unto Yahweh for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Yahweh to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."
>
> The "night of watching" or as Rotherham has it "night of vigil," refers to the Passover night when the destroying angel passed through the land. It was a night of fear and anxiety. This same custom was observed by Yahshua and His disciples, Matthew 26:36-45. After partaking of the last supper, the disciples went with Yahshua to Gethsemane where He asked them (Verse 38) to "tarry here and watch with me." Mark gives the same account, 14:32-41.[59]

We agree with Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah regarding their position that the "Night to Be Much Observed" is the night that the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt, but we do not agree with the date on which they teach that this event occurred. They believe it was the night of the 14th, whereas we believe it was the following night. Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah agrees with Voy and Farris Wilks' position that the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt the night of Abib 14, but they do not agree as to whether or not that night was the "Night to Be Much Observed." If you are having difficulty keeping these three positions straight, the following comparison table may be helpful:

Larry & June Acheson	Voy & Farris Wilks	Assembly of Yahweh in Messiah
* Passover lambs killed late in the afternoon of Abib 14 & eaten that night (the 15th), which is the "Night to Be Much Observed."	* Passover lambs killed immediately after sunset at the very beginning of Abib 14 & eaten that same night (the 14th). * The following night (the 15th) is the night they left Egypt & is the "Night to Be Much Observed."	* Passover lambs killed immediately after sunset at the very beginning of Abib 14 & eaten that same night (the 14th). * That same night (the 14th) is also the "Night to Be Much Observed."

[59] From the article "Passover: A Day to Remember," written by an individual who apparently chose to remain modestly anonymous, published by Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, 401 N. Roby Farm Rd., Rocheport, MO. This article may also be read online by accessing the following URL: http://www.yaim.org/literature/passover.htm.

It is up to each of us to prayerfully sort through these (and other) perspectives as we form our own conclusions. As the old saying goes, we know that all three of the above positions cannot be correct, and some folks would even claim that none of them are. I believe we have successfully demonstrated that the Passover lambs were killed the afternoon of Abib 14, according to all the rites and ceremonies assigned to this command, then eaten later that night, after the 15th had begun. If this is true, then it was this night, the 15th, that Yahweh "greatly preserved" the firstborn of the Israelites, and is rightly the "Night to Be Much Observed."

According to Exodus 12:42, this "Night to Be Much Observed" goes beyond sparing the Israelites' firstborn. It is "a night to be much observed unto Yahweh for bringing them out of the land of Egypt." According to the Wilks' position, this very thing … bringing them out of Egypt … is what defines the "Night to Be Much Observed." Voy and Farris, then, would likely protest that this verse disproves our position because of the fact that the Israelites' never left their houses the night the destroying angel passed through. It couldn't have been until the break of day that they could have left home! We would counter that even Voy and Farris cannot be serious in their belief that the Israelites left Egypt that night. It wasn't until several days later that they crossed the Red Sea, which marked their departure from Egypt.

How Were the Israelites "Brought Out of Egypt" That Night Without Leaving Home?

So how do June and I explain Yahweh "bringing them out of the land of Egypt" on a night when they weren't allowed to leave their houses? The explanation involves a simple concept that we believe runs through all of Scripture. It involves recognizing that a key event initiates a glorious result, which in turn serves as the "defining moment" of the entire process. This is how, in Psalms 2:7, David can prophetically write, "Yahweh hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Are we to believe that this is a prophecy of Yeshua's birth or are we to believe He was literally begotten the day on which King David penned this verse? We believe Yeshua was not literally begotten when that verse was penned, yet the process was initiated long beforehand. Similarly, Yeshua, as the lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), was not slain before His death at Calvary, yet this, too, is describing a process that was begun long before His birth. Also, we know that Yeshua was not a priest before His birth, yet we can understand from Psalms 110:4 that "Thou art (present tense) a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."[60] This, too, is a reference to a future event as though it actually began in the past … long before Yeshua actually became our high priest. Finally, we know that Adam and Eve did not die the day they ate the forbidden fruit, yet this is what Yahweh told them would happen if they did such a thing (Gen. 2:17). As we all know, the "death process" began that day, not only for Adam and Eve, but for all of mankind as well. In the same way, the **"Exodus process"** began on Abib 15 when the destroying angel slew all of Egypt's firstborn, but Yahweh "watched over" (protected) Israel's firstborn.

That very night Israel was delivered from the hands of Egypt, even though they never so much as set their feet on the doorsteps of their houses. Their release from the bond of servitude to their cruel

[60] See also the Septuagint reading of this verse (Psalms 109:4).

taskmasters and their departure from Egypt was secured that night, even though they never left Egypt for several more days. Yahweh did not instruct us to mark the date of the Red Sea crossing to commemorate "bringing them out of Egypt." Rather, He chose the night on which He spared Israel's firstborn as the memorial date.

We therefore hope you can understand that, on the night of Abib 15, Yahweh spared Israel's firstborn, and that same night they were "brought forth from Egypt," even though they did not leave their houses. At the break of day, still on Abib 15, they "spoiled the Egyptians" (Ex. 12:36), even as their former taskmasters were burying their firstborn (Nu. 33:4). They were literally "thrust out" because the Egyptians had certainly seen enough and knew that a subsequent plague would probably take their own lives (Ex. 12:33). In fact, the Egyptians were "urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste."

As we can see from the above-cited verse, this scenario requires a hasty departure from Rameses. The morning following the death of Egypt's firstborn, the Israelites had little time to "spoil the Egyptians" and gather what they could for their journey which, as we know, began on Abib 15. Not so if the "passing over" took place on Abib 14. That scenario would require believing that the Israelites spent an entire day gathering their belongings and spoiling the Egyptians. For someone like me who can pack his belongings for a trip in an hour or less, such a situation does not seem realistic in view of what we are told in verse 33. On top of that, if, as the Wilks' claim, the Israelites began their journey that night (as the 15th began), then they would have been weary from the very start, having been without sleep since the previous night, unless they all took afternoon naps.

Were the Israelites all compelled to go without sleep the night the destroying angel passed over their houses? Contrary to what we had been taught, there is nothing in the text of Exodus 12 suggesting that the Israelites stayed up all night "watching," even though they were commanded to eat the Passover "in haste" and with their staffs in hand (Ex. 12:11). Rather than suggesting that eating in haste was commanded in order that they be ready for an immediate departure after the Passover meal, or even an interruption *during* the meal, we believe this particular command was commemorative of the sudden departure that was about to take place … not during the Passover meal, but after the plague of the death of the firstborn had been inflicted upon the Egyptians. It was *then* that the Egyptians "thrust them out."

If, as taught by the Wilks' and Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, the destroying angel passed over the Israelites' houses the night of Abib 14, then once the Israelites left their houses the following morning, they spent all day gathering their belongings and spoiling the Egyptians. Then, after all their packing, it wasn't until after sunset that they actually left Rameses. Not only does it seem unusual to begin such a journey after sunset, but, as mentioned earlier, they would have done so with little or no sleep since the previous night. Then, after traveling all night, they would have arrived at Succoth … to do what? Pitch their tents and sleep until noon! With all this in mind, it seems far more likely that, once the Israelites left their houses the morning of Abib 15, they wasted little time in gathering what little they had, combined with what valuables the Egyptians gave them, and then they left for Succoth, probably arriving there at or near sunset. After such an exhausting journey, I'm sure they were ready to pitch their tents and get some much-needed sleep.

The above scenario does not fit the Scriptural presentation of a hasty departure from Rameses. Scripture informs us that the Egyptians were "urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste." This same understanding is conveyed in an ancient text called *The Book of Jasher*, but *The Book of Jasher* has the Israelites answering the Egyptians, "Not so fast!" This book is actually referenced in Scripture (Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18), but there is no way of knowing whether or not the book commonly known as *The Book of Jasher* is the actual text that the writers of Scripture had in mind, even though the text was found preserved in non-vowel-pointed Hebrew. Nevertheless, no proof of its existence can be validated prior to its having been published in Venice in the year 1625 CE. In spite of this shortcoming, the extant book offers some tremendous "behind the scenes" insights to Scriptural accounts dating from the creation of man to the Israelites taking possession of the Promised Land. *The Book of Jasher's* account of the Exodus strongly infers that the Israelites did not actually depart Rameses until the daylight portion of Abib 15. The following is taken from chapter LXXX, verses 60-61:

> And the children of Israel delayed going forth at night, and when the Egyptians came to them to bring them out, they said to them, Are we thieves, that we should go forth at night?
> And the children of Israel asked of the Egyptians, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and the children of Israel stripped the Egyptians.[61]

The above text does not explicitly tell us whether it was night or day when the Israelites departed Rameses, but it certainly lets us know that they delayed going forth at night, most likely because they were intent on obeying the command to not leave their houses until morning (Ex. 12:22). Moreover, the fact that the Israelites didn't appreciate being pressed by the Egyptians to leave as though they were "thieves in the night" implies that they purposefully proceeded to request valuables from the Egyptians, an act that further delayed their departure. The text goes on to state that Moses went to the river of Egypt and retrieved the coffin of Joseph. In fact, the children of Israel followed suit and brought up the coffins of the fathers of each respective tribe. We're not going to come out and say that such a task, in addition to spoiling the Egyptians and the other nocturnal events, could not have been completed in coordination with a night departure; however, we will say that completing all these tasks before daybreak seems very unlikely, and it would certainly have been a violation of the command found in Exodus 12:22. Their release from bondage was secured at night, but we are persuaded that their actual departure from Rameses took place during the daytime hours.

[61] *The Book of Jasher*, chapter LXXX, vv. 60-61, translated from Hebrew to English in 1840, reprint of photo lithographic reprint of exact edition published by J. H. Parry & Company, Salt Lake City, UT, 1887. Copyright 1988 by Artisan Sales, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1990 printing, p. 229.

9. The Historical Perspective

When we perform a step-by-step analysis of how the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the Passover are presented in Scripture, as we have done in this study, I believe the objections presented by the opposition melt away. I am persuaded that each chapter of this study, in and of itself, could stand alone as sufficient evidence warranting the belief that the Passover lambs were killed during the late afternoon hours of Abib 14. They were then prepared that same day, then eaten that night. While we believe that combining each piece of evidence we've presented seals the matter, we understand that not everyone will be persuaded. While our study is intended more as an explanation of our position than an attempt to persuade anyone to change their previously-held belief, we nevertheless do want to provide our perspective for those who are earnestly seeking answers in their own quest for truth. One item that we feel is worthy of consideration when examining this issue is that of historical evidence.

We have always maintained that we should abide by the instructions found in Scripture first and foremost; however, when it can be demonstrated that, historically, Judaism believed and practiced the observance of Passover just as we have presented, we believe this is something that should not be ignored. Historical evidence will not always support a teaching of Scripture; but when it does, this should tell us something!

The primary sources of historical evidence pertaining to the observance of Passover are the writings of Philo and Josephus. First century Jewish author Philo of Alexandria was a contemporary with Yeshua the Messiah, having lived from circa 20 B.C.E. until 50 C.E. His writings are readily available, whether you visit a well-stocked library or if you have access to the internet. The same goes for Flavius Josephus, who lived from circa 37 C.E. until 100 C.E. Our experience has been that serious Bible students either love Philo and Josephus or they intensely distrust them, depending on whether or not they agree with the information found in their writings. We urge using caution when comparing anyone's writings with the teachings found in Scripture, but we feel a great amount of credibility can be attributed to the writings of both Philo and Josephus.[62] What did these ancient scholars have to say about Passover observance? As we are about to see, both Philo and Josephus understood the Passover sacrifice as occurring during the late afternoon hours of Abib 14 – as the day was winding down, *not* as it was beginning. Here is what Philo wrote:

> 11. (Ex. xii. 6c) Why is the Passover sacrificed at evening?
>
> Perhaps because good things were about to befall at night (and because) it was not the custom to offer a sacrifice in darkness, and for those who were about to experience good things at night it was not (proper) to prepare it before the ninth hour.[63] Therefore it was

[62] We give detailed reasons for why we believe credibility should be attached to the writings of both Philo and Josephus in our study titled *Facing the Pentecost Controversy*, chapters 7 and 12.

[63] In ancient times, the measurement of the day began at sunrise, which is generally regarded as around 6:00 A.M. Thus, the "ninth hour" would have answered to around 3:00 PM with the modern reckoning of time. The following translator's footnote appears in the Ralph Marcus translation of Philo's commentary pertaining to "the ninth hour": "*i.e.* 3 P.M. In Palestine the Paschal lamb was usually slaughtered at about 3 P.M., although theoretically the slaughtering might be done 'between noon and twilight.'" Note: In another writing, *De Specialibus Legibus, 2* ("*Special Laws, 2*"), sec. 145, Philo sets the time for sacrificing the Paschal lambs "from noon till eventide." Either way, the lambs were sacrificed during the afternoon portion of the day Abib 14.

> not at random but knowingly that the prophet set a time between the evenings. That is the literal meaning. But as for the deeper meaning, this should be said. The true sacrifice of Almighty-loving souls consists in abandoning an empty and visible splendour and attempting to change to the unapparent and invisible. Now the time of evening does not have a refulgent brightness, such as occurs at midday, nor is it darkened, although while day is near and close to night, it is dimmed to a certain extent.[64]

Elsewhere, Philo specified that the Passover lambs were slain during the afternoon portion of the day:

> After the New Moon comes the fourth feast, called the Crossing-feast, which the Hebrews in their native tongue call Pascha. In this festival many myriads of victims from noon till eventide are offered by the whole people, old and young alike, raised for that particular day to the dignity of the priesthood.[65]

In the first quote from *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, we observed that Philo recorded that the lambs were not prepared before the ninth hour (3:00 PM). In *Special Laws, 2*, Philo sets the time for sacrificing the Paschal lambs "from noon till eventide." In view of the conflicting time frames, some folks are bound to portray Philo as having been confused, even though only a few hours of difference are in question. Either way, as Philo understood the procedure, the lambs were sacrificed during the afternoon portion of the day Abib 14.

First century historian Josephus likewise recorded that the Passover sacrifices were carried out during the afternoon portion of Abib 14:

> On this day they slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour until the eleventh, with a company of not less than ten belonging to every sacrifice -- for it is not lawful for them to have the feast singly by themselves -- and many of us are twenty in a company.[66]

Despite the clear evidence of ancient Judaism's understanding that the Passover lambs were killed during the late afternoon hours of Abib 14, biased authors often attempt to disparage Philo and Josephus while upholding their own interpretation of Scripture. Other authors ignore these ancient witnesses or else subvert their testimony. For example, I recently read an online study titled "Date and Hour of the Crucifixion Passover," authored by the late Grace Edith Amadon, in which she wrote, "Only an after-sunset sacrifice and supper could agree with Philo's description." The author regrettably equates the ninth hour with "the ending of the day," a mistake that leads to her mistaken understanding of what both Philo and Josephus meant.

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[64] Philo of Alexandria: *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, translated by Ralph Marcus; Volume 401 of Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1970, pp. 20-21.

[65] Philo of Alexandria, *De Specialibus Legibus, 2* (*Special Laws, 2*), sec. 145-146, translated by F.H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. VII, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA,1937.

[66] Josephus: *The Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, ch. x, sec. 3, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, A. M., Vol. I, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 470.

10. Passover and Unleavened Bread Originally Separate and Distinct Festivals - A Fallacy of the Critical View

By Chuck Henry
chuck.henry@sbcglobal.net
http://www.halleluyahfellowship.com
rev. 5/11/2013

Larry and June's note: It wasn't until recently (2013) that I came to realize many individuals regard Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread as originally having been separate festivals, thus lending credence to the view that Passover was observed at the very beginning of Abib 14, then the Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed at the beginning of Abib 15. One author put it this way: "While most Jews now observe Passover on Nisan fifteen, the first high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it's widely acknowledged these two celebrations were originally separate. Were they combined before or after the Messiah's death?" Fellow believer Chuck Henry not only addresses (and refutes) the notion that Passover and Unleavened Bread were originally observed separately in his online study *Passover and Unleavened Bread: Time-Sensitive Information*, but he also traces this teaching to "scholars" whose foundations were driven by heathen concept instead of Scriptural underpinnings. Chuck was gracious enough to allow us to incorporate his commentary into our own study:

> "The feast of Passover consists of two parts: The Passover ceremony and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Originally both parts existed separately; but at the beginning of the Exile they were combined."
>
> -- The *Encyclopædia Judaica*, Article: "Passover."

Introduction

The information contained herein is a chapter excerpted from a longer treatise, "*Passover and Unleavened Bread: Time-Sensitive Information*" (http://www.halleluyahfellowship.com/articles/passover-and-unleavened-bread-time-sensitive-information).

It is presented separately here, as a shorter article, in hope of bringing to light a common misunderstanding with regard to a popular citation from the *Encyclopædia Judaica*. In addition, information similar to what is found in the *Judaica* is also found in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which is also examined herein.

The Encyclopædia Judaica, Article: "Passover"

> "Passover," *Encyclopædia Judaica, Second Edition*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. Vol. 15, pp. 678, 680.
>
> Document URL:
> http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587515458&v=2.1&u=imcpl1111&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w

To begin, let us get right to quoting the pertinent material from the *Judaica*—

> The critical view points to two distinct festivals in the Bible; the feast of unleavened bread, a pastoral feast, and the Passover, an agricultural feast (see below) [*sic*]. *
>
> * Incidentally, the *Judaica* article apparently has the references transposed because it refers to the feast of unleavened bread as being pastoral (having to do with animals) and Passover as being agricultural (having to do with crops). In actuality, unleavened bread is agricultural (related to the barley crop) and Passover is pastoral (related to the paschal animal).

Following the directive within the *Judaica* article to "see below," we are led to this additional information contained in the article—

> **Critical View**
> The feast of Passover consists of two parts: The Passover ceremony and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Originally both parts existed separately; but at the beginning of the Exile they were combined.

These words *seem* to be strong support for showing that Passover and Unleavened Bread were originally two separate and distinct festivals that were later combined. If this is true, it is impossible that the Passover meal would have been on the beginning of Abib 15, the eve beginning the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

At first glance, this would seem to settle all arguments, such that it is impossible to place the Passover meal at the beginning of Abib 15, thus forever solving the 14th vs. 15th debate.

However, it will be necessary to more closely examine this material. As you can see from both the first and second citations above, it refers to something called the "critical view."

A little later in this study, we will return to the *Judaica* article for further review. Having examined this bit of material from the *Encyclopædia Judaica*, which has served as an introduction to our topic, let us now proceed on to our next reference, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

The Jewish Encyclopedia, Article: "Passover"

> "Passover," *Jewish Encyclopedia*. 1906.
>
> Document URL:
> http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11933-passover

Like the *Judaica* article, the article from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* also contains a sub-heading entitled, "**—Critical View**." The information found there corroborates what we have already seen in the *Encyclopædia Judaica*; namely, according to the Critical View, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were originally separate and distinct festivals which were later combined:

> Two festivals, originally distinct, have become merged, their underlying ideas reappearing both in the legend associated with the holy day as its assumed historical setting and occasion, and in the ritual.

In explaining the Hebrew root from whence comes the word "Passover," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, still under the sub-heading "**—Critical View,**" states:

> The name must be taken to be derived from that meaning of the root which designates the "skipping," "dancing" motions of a young lamb (Toy, in "Jour. Bib. Lit." 1897), only secondarily connoting "passing over" in the sense of "sparing." Pesah, thus explained, is connected with pastoral life; it is the festival celebrated in early spring by the shepherds before setting out for the new pastures. In the ordinance of Ex. xii. the primitive manner of preparing the lamb for the family feast is still apparent. Such a family feast, naturally, was in the nature of a sacrifice, the gods of the clan being supposed to partake of it as well as the human members.

Critiquing the Critical View

By now you may be wondering, "What is all the fuss over the '**Critical View**,' and to what does it refer?"

We will now begin to discuss and explain the Critical View in more detail.

Highlighted text in the quotes above are intended to call the reader's attention to the fact that, according to the Critical View, the original Passover was a primitive festival, existing many years *before* the Passover in Egypt and consequent exodus from Egypt. To reiterate, according to the Critical View, Passover is considered to originally have been a festival related to pastoral life, *pre-dating* the Passover in Egypt, and thus, originally, having *nothing to do with* the Passover and deliverance in Egypt.

The *Encyclopædia Judaica* declares, according to the Critical View:

> Nothing is found in the Bible about the original meaning of the Passover rite (*Judaica*, p. 680).

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* states:

> In the ordinance of Ex. xii. the primitive manner of preparing the lamb for the family feast is still apparent.

Notice the word "primitive" contrasted with "still apparent" in reference to Exodus 12, thus denoting a time *prior to* Exodus 12. According to the Critical View, the original Passover festival existed *before* Exodus 12, and it had a *different meaning* and a *different purpose*! However, according to Scripture, the very first Passover was in Egypt for the *express purpose* of freeing the children of Israel from slavery.

The Critical View asserts that the "underlying ideas" of the "originally distinct" festivals *reappear* "… both in the legend associated with the holy day as its assumed historical setting and occasion, and in the ritual."

A careful analysis reveals that, according to the Critical View—

- The "original" Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread existed long before Exodus 12.
- Credit is given to these "original" festivals for supplying the underlying ideas that *reappear* in the Exodus account.
- The story of Exodus 12 is a "legend."
- The historical setting and occasion of the events surrounding the Exodus 12 account of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are "assumed."
- It is really a mistaken notion to think that the Exodus 12 account truly describes the origins of these festivals.

Furthermore, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* reports that the Critical View associates its alleged original Passover festival with polytheism—

> …the gods of the clan being supposed to partake of it as well as the human members.

Polytheism, of course, is clearly forbidden in Scripture.

> Exo 20:3
> You shall have no other mighty ones before Me.

Continuing in the Jewish Encyclopedia article, we read:

> The lamb served, however, the purpose of propitiating the gods and securing the prosperity of the flock about to depart for the pasture. Wellhausen's surmise that the lamb was a firstling, though not borne out by the Biblical data, seems to throw light on the connection, apparently very primitive, between the festival and the escape of the first-born and their subsequent devotion to Yhwh (Ex. xii., xiii.). The first-born of the flock (and even of men) was offered that the lives of those born later might be safe. Hence the ceremony came naturally to be associated with the intention of "saving," and then with the fact of having "spared," from which secondary meaning of the root came the tradition that the Hebrews' first-born had been "spared" in Egypt, God "passing over" their houses. The sprinkling of the blood points in the same direction. This was a feature accompanying every propitiatory slaughtering (see Samuel Ives Curtis, "Ursemitische Religion," p. 259, Leipsic, 1903). It is suggested that when later the tendency became dominant to

> give old festivals historical associations—a tendency clearly traceable in the evolution of the Biblical holy days—this very primitive practise was explained by a reference to the occurrence in Egypt during the "night of watching"—another expression which plainly refers to the night preceding the day of the flock's departure, and which, as such, was marked by a proper ritual.

Let us look closely at the material just cited.

There is yet more polytheism connected with the Critical View's explanation of a supposed "primitive" Passover—

> The lamb served, however, the purpose of propitiating the gods and securing the prosperity of the flock about to depart for the pasture.

What's more, notice that the Critical View even associates its theoretical original Passover festival with human sacrifice—

> The first-born of the flock (and even of men) was offered that the lives of those born later might be safe.

Polytheism … human sacrifices … – these things clearly reveal the fallacy of the Critical View and show that it is rife with pagan thought.

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* confirms, according to the Critical View, that the true, Scriptural account of Passover is only a *secondary* meaning, and calls it a …

> …tradition that the Hebrews' first-born had been "spared" in Egypt, God "passing over" their houses.

Actually, the very opposite is true – the *Critical View* is a tradition, a made-up fable, while the Scriptural account of Passover in Exodus 12 is the true, authentic, genuine article.

The Critical View also suggests there came a time when the tendency was to associate historical events with older primitive festivals. According to the Critical View, this is…

> …a tendency clearly traceable in the evolution of the Biblical holy days…

The Critical View, then, reduces the origin of the "night to be much observed" (Exo 12:42) to merely a night preceding the day of a flock's departure to pasture.

The *Encyclopædia Judaica* adds these statements further describing the Critical View (all from p. 680):

> Passover was originally not a pilgrimage feast, but a domestic ceremony consisting of the slaughtering and eating of the paschal animal.
>
> Originally the Passover was celebrated by transient breeders of sheep and goats, later by the Israelites, to secure protection for their flocks prior to leaving the desert winter pasture for cultivated regions.
>
> Hence the old nomadic custom is "historicized" by being connected with the main event in the

> Israelite salvation history, the Exodus.

Once again, a quote I feel is worth repeating:

> Nothing is found in the Bible about the original meaning of the Passover rite.

Background Information about the Critical View

Notable scholars of the Critical View were men by the names of:

- Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-1869)
- Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918)

Red flags should go up when these names are encountered. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* refers to Wellhausen by name in material previously cited in this study.

The Critical View is also known as—

- The Graf-Wellhausen Theory
- The Documentary Hypothesis
- The Wellhausen (or Graf–Wellhausen) Hypothesis
- The Critical-Historical Method
- The JEDP Theory (a reference to the document labels, explained below)

The Documentary Hypothesis

The Critical View holds the false belief that the first five books of the Bible were *not* written by Moses, but instead are a blended patchwork of different documents by various authors. Each such alleged document is given a label (listed below, arranged in order from oldest to newest, according to the theory):

- J = Yahwist – (the "J" being for Jehovah)
- E = Elohist
- D = Deuteronomist
- P = Priestly

Notice the word "hypothesis" in "Documentary Hypothesis." A "hypothesis" is an assumption or concession made for the sake of argument. This is a dead giveaway that this is only a theory. Yet it is this type of thinking that is revered as *critical scholarship*.

In continuing with our review of the Passover article from the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, still under the heading "**—Critical View**," we will see that it openly reflects the Documentary Hypothesis by referring to

the document labels J, E, P, and D. The article continues:

> Both the J-E (Jahvist-Elohist) and the P (Priestly) narratives emphasize the historical prominence of the day. It is J-E that explains mazzot as due to the haste of the departure (Ex. xii. 34, 39), while P presupposes their use at the meal in Egypt (Ex. xii. 8, 15-20). The Deuteronomist (D) seems to follow J-E in calling mazzot "the bread of affliction."

The *Encyclopædia Judaica* article also openly reflects the Documentary Hypothesis:

> The oldest literary record in Exodus 12:21 (J) already presupposes the Passover.

Conclusion

The *Encyclopædia Judaica* is typically quoted as alleged proof that the Passover meal was originally separate and distinct from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, thus also allegedly proving that the Passover was both slaughtered and eaten during the beginning of Abib 14. Similar information is also found in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

Coming from such sources as the *Encyclopædia Judaica* and the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, this information would certainly seem authoritative. However, a closer examination reveals that both the *Encyclopædia Judaica* and the *Jewish Enclyclopedia* clearly admit that this is according to the Critical View.

An astute observation has been made in the *Wikipedia* article, "Passover":

> To critical scholarship, rather than being connected to remembrance of an ancient plague, the modern Passover festival is the combination of two similar ancient festivals celebrating successful yields in farming, one of agriculture, and the other of livestock.
>
> -- "Passover," INEX: *Wikipedia*, Article ID: 23059, Subheading: "Origins of the feast"
> Accessed as of 9/25/2009 at the following URL:
> http://infao5501.ag5.mpi-sb.mpg.de:8080/topx/archive?link=Wikipedia-Lip6-2/23059.xml&style#1

The "critical thinkers" have invented the theory that, historically, Passover was celebrated in primitive times, ***before*** the Exodus from Egypt and was *separate* and *distinct* from the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then, later, from the time of the Exodus (referred to as the Exile in the *Judaica* article), the allegedly original festivals of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were merged together.

This theory has ***no*** actual historical evidence and is, in effect, a hoax.

The Critical View relegates Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to primitive farming and ranching festivals. This takes away from Yahweh the authenticity of the original, true, Scriptural Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is interwoven with His performing miraculous acts that resulted in a mighty deliverance for the Israelites!

One of the characteristics of the Critical View which makes it very persuasive, and thus very deceptive, is

that the message it presents seemingly goes the furthest back into antiquity of any references, and thus it would seem to settle all arguments as to what is the *original*, ultimate truth of the matter. However, when a source goes back into antiquity on the basis of false hypotheses and theories, this makes the source false, unauthentic, unreliable, and mythical.

Sadly, the Critical View is actually revered as high scholarship and may be reflected in various Bible reference works. Therefore, due caution is advised.

The "Critical View" of the origins of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is non-Scriptural. The "Critical View" shows that these so-called critical thinkers, deemed scholars, are rife with pagan thought, and that they do not believe the true origin of the Biblical Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Consequently, the theory of an ancient Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread that were totally separate and distinct from each other and pre-dated the Passover in Egypt is utterly false and can be discarded.

Part III. The Passover Observed by Messiah

Our Passover study was interrupted back in 2008 just as I was about to begin composing a chapter outlining our reasons for believing that Yeshua the Messiah did not eat a Passover meal with His disciples the year He was crucified. As interruptions go, sometimes it's difficult to pick up where you left off, and such was the case with this study. Three years later, in the year 2011, our son, Rusty, forwarded us a concise study authored by a believer named Bryan Huie that adequately represented our perspective on this topic. My only concern was an unrelated matter of the author's not referring to the Almighty by His name Yahweh. Two years later, we found ourselves fellowshipping with a believer named Kathy who had previously made the acquaintance of Bryan Huie, but we didn't know anything about their friendship until one Sabbath in April 2013, when we found ourselves discussing this very topic. During our discussion, I shared my self-disappointment about not having completed our study, but I referred her to a nice article on the topic of the "Last Supper," and when I mentioned Mr. Huie's name, her eyes lit up. One thing led to another, and we discussed the possibility of incorporating Bryan's article into this study; however, before we could pursue such a course, I knew that he would need to allow us to convert "God" and "the LORD" to "Yahweh." I am pleased to report that Bryan Huie exhibits a terrific spirit of cooperation. He was very gracious in offering the use of his study so long as we provide a link to the web site from which it is borrowed.[67] Here, then, is Bryan Huie's contribution to our Passover study:

[67] Bryan Huie's study *Was the "Last Supper" the Passover Meal?* Is taken from the following link with his permission: http://www.herealittletherealittle.net/index.cfm?page_name=Last-Supper-Passover-Meal. The only changes are "God" and "the LORD" to Yahweh, as well as "Christ" to "Messiah."

11. Was the "Last Supper" the Passover Meal?

By Bryan T. Huie (www.herealittletherealittle.net)

Several conflicting opinions exist regarding the meal that took place on the last night of the Messiah's life. Many people believe that Yeshua ate a Passover meal with his disciples, as the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke appear to indicate. Others disagree, pointing to John's Gospel, which clearly shows that this "last supper" occurred **before** the Passover feast. Is there a way to reconcile the two differing accounts? Can both accounts be correct?

To fully understand this topic, let's examine the Gospel reports of Yeshua's final meal. First, we'll look at John's account of the "last supper." Many scholars believe that John wrote his Gospel late in the 1st century, decades after the Synoptic Gospels had been written. By the time John wrote, Gentiles likely comprised a significant portion of the Church.

Probably because of the number of Gentile converts in the Church and the anti-Jewish bias that had begun to take root, John's Gospel is different from the Synoptic Gospels. John went to great lengths to emphasize the Messiah's heritage. He stressed that Yeshua was a Jew who routinely kept Jewish customs, including the observance of Yahweh's commanded feast days (listed in Leviticus 23). John refers to at least three Passovers during the ministry of Yeshua (John 2:13; 6:4; 19:14), including his final one. He also mentions the Feast of Tabernacles, known by the Jews as ***Sukkot*** (John 7:2), the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which the Jews called ***Hoshanah Rabbah*** (John 7:37), and the Feast of Dedication, commonly known as ***Chanukah*** (John 10:22).

Let's review the beginning of John's account of the "last supper," which is found in chapter 13 of his Gospel:

> JOHN 13:1 Now **before the Feast of the Passover**, Yeshua knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him, 3 Yeshua, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from Yahweh, and was going back to Yahweh, 4 rose from supper, and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, he girded himself about. 5 Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. (***NASU***)

John shows that the "last supper" took place on the same night Judas Iscariot betrayed Yeshua (John 13:21-30). The first verse plainly states that this was "**before** the feast of the Passover," which lasts for seven days (from Nisan 15 through Nisan 21). John is obviously referring to the same night described by the other three Gospel writers (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22). John goes on to reiterate several times that these events took place **before** Passover. Clearly, the Passover meal traditionally eaten on the evening of Nisan 15 had not yet been observed.

> JOHN 13:21 When Yeshua had said these things, he was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. 26 . . . It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, he gave

> it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Yeshua said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 28 But no one at the table knew for what reason he said this to him. 29 For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Yeshua had said to him, "**Buy those things we need for the Feast**," or that he should give something to the poor. 30 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. (***NKJV***)
>
> JOHN 18:28 Then they led Yeshua from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but **that they might eat the Passover**. (***NKJV***)
>
> JOHN 19:14 Now **it was the Preparation Day of the Passover**, and about the sixth hour. And he [Pilate] said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" (***NKJV***)
> JOHN 19:31 Therefore, because **it was the Preparation Day**, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the **Sabbath** (for **that Sabbath was a high day**), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (***NKJV***)
>
> JOHN 19:42 So there they laid Yeshua, because of the Jews' **Preparation Day**, for the tomb was nearby. (***NKJV***)

The Jews reckoned days from sunset to sunset. As you can see, John points out repeatedly that the "last supper," the betrayal by Judas, and Yeshua's trial and crucifixion all occurred **before** the Passover, on the Preparation Day. But exactly when was the Preparation Day?

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary says that the Preparation Day for the Passover was from the evening (end) of Nisan 13 until the evening (end) of Nisan 14 (p. 411). E.W. Bullinger, in Appendix 156 to ***The Companion Bible***, states: "Wednesday, Nisan 14th (commencing on Tuesday at sunset), was 'the preparation day,' on which the crucifixion took place" (p. 180).

As shown in John 19:31 above, the day following the Preparation Day was an annual high Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, which fell annually on Nisan 15. Yahweh commanded the Israelites to observe this high Sabbath every year:

> EXODUS 12:16 "**On the first day there shall be a holy convocation**, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat; that only may be prepared by you. 17 So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall **observe this day** throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance." (***NKJV***)
>
> LEVITICUS 23:6 "And on the **fifteenth day** of the same **month** [Abib, later called Nisan] is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; **seven days you must eat unleavened bread**. 7 **On the first day you shall have a holy convocation**; you shall do no customary work on it." (***NKJV***)

Now let's examine the accounts of this event recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the Synoptic Gospels and compare them with John's version:

MATTHEW 26:17 **Now on the first** *day* **of** *the Feast of* **the Unleavened Bread** the disciples came to Yeshua, saying to him, "**Where** do you want us to **prepare** for you to eat the Passover?" 18 And he said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."'19 So the disciples did as Yeshua had directed them; and they **prepared the Passover** [*hetoimasan to pascha*]. 20 When evening had come, he sat down with the twelve. 21 Now as they were eating, he said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." (***NKJV***)

MARK 14:12 **Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover** *lamb*, his disciples said to him, "**Where** do you want us to go and **prepare**, that you may eat the Passover?" 13 And he sent out two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. 14 Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "**Where is the guest room** in which I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' 15 Then he will show you a **large upper room**, furnished and prepared; **there make ready for us**." 16 So his disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as he had said to them; and they **prepared the Passover** [*hetoimasan to pascha*]. 17 In the evening he came with the twelve. 18 Now as they sat and ate, Yeshua said, "Assuredly, I say to you, **one of you who eats with me will betray me**." (***NKJV***)

LUKE 22:7 **Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed**. 8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and **prepare the Passover** for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare?" 10 And he said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "**Where is the guest room** where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; **there make ready**." 13 So they went and found it just as he had said to them, and they **prepared the Passover** [*hetoimasan to pascha*]. 14 When the hour had come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15 Then he said to them, "**With fervent desire I have desired** [*epithumia epethumesa*] **to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of Yahweh." (***NKJV***)

First, let's note the timing of these events. Matthew says it was "the first of Unleavened Bread." On the surface, this appears to contradict John's account, which plainly states that the "last supper" occurred before the Feast of Passover. However, Mark and Luke add an additional detail that helps clarify the time. Mark says it was "the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover"; Luke states it was "the day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover must be killed."

The Bible tells us in Exodus 12:6 that the Passover lambs were to be killed "between the evenings" on Nisan 14. The Jews have traditionally interpreted "between the evenings" to mean "in the afternoon." For an in-depth discussion of this phrase, refer to "What Does 'Between the Evenings' Mean?" and "Exodus 12-When Was the First Passover?"

The Jews at the time of Yeshua killed the Passover lambs on the afternoon of Nisan 14. In ***The Wars of the Jews***, Josephus records that in the 1st century, the Passover lambs were slaughtered "from the ninth hour till the eleventh" (***Wars*** 6.9.3), which corresponds to our 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Obviously, the day Matthew and Mark call the "first day of Unleavened Bread" is the same day that John calls the "the Preparation Day of the Passover." ***The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*** says that the 14th of Nisan was "called until the evening the preparation for the Passover" (p. 411). As shown below, all three Synoptic Gospels confirm that Yeshua was crucified on the "Preparation Day," Nisan 14:

> MATTHEW 27:62 On **the next day** [Nisan 15], which followed the **Day of Preparation**, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate. (***NKJV***)
>
> MARK 15:42 Now when evening had come, because it was the **Preparation Day**, that is, the day before the [high] Sabbath, 15 Joseph of Arimathea . . . went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Yeshua. (***NKJV***)
>
> LUKE 23:54 That day was the **Preparation**, and the [high] Sabbath drew near. (***NKJV***)

Going back to the Synoptic accounts of the meal, Matthew and Mark show that the disciples came to Yeshua just as the Preparation Day (Nisan 14) was beginning, which would have been at sunset. They asked him **where** he wanted them to prepare to eat the Passover meal, which would occur the next night (see John 18:28 above). Luke records that in response to their question, Yeshua instructed Peter and John how to find the place where they should prepare to eat the Passover on the night of Nisan 15. He told them the owner of the house would show them a large furnished upper room. Mark and Luke both state that it was there, **in that room**, that they were to prepare for the Passover (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12).

As you can see from all three accounts (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7-9), the disciples waited until the **beginning of Nisan 14** to ask the Messiah **where** to prepare the Passover. If the time between sunset and dark on the 14th was the correct time to slay the Passover lambs, as some erroneously teach, why would they have waited so very late to question Yeshua about preparing for the meal? Or if the Passover meal would not take place for at least another 24 hours, why would they prepare for it **that evening**?

In Jacob Neusner's translation of the Jewish ***Mishnah***, we can see why the disciples would have been concerned with preparing for the Passover that evening, even though it wouldn't be eaten until the next night:

> PESAHIM 1:3 **A.** R. Judah says, "They seek out [leaven] (1) on the night of the fourteenth, (2) on the fourteenth in the morning, and (3) at the time of removal." **B.** And sages say, "[If] one did not seek out [leaven] on the night of the fourteenth, he may seek it out (1) on the fourteenth. **C.** "If he did not seek it out on the fourteenth, let him seek it out (2) at the appointed time [11 a.m. to 12 noon on the fourteenth]. **D.** "[If] he did not seek it out at the appointed time, let him seek it out (3) after the appointed time [to nightfall]." (p. 230, ***The Mishnah: A New Translation***)

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary confirms how the Jews prepared for the observance of the Passover:

> On the evening of the 13th Nisan [as that day ended and Nisan 14 began], which, until that of the 14th, was called the "*preparation for the Passover*" (John 19:14),

> every head of a family searched for and collected by the light of a candle all the leaven. Before beginning the search he pronounced the following benediction: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and hast enjoined us to remove the leaven." After the search he said, "Whatever leaven remains in my possession which I cannot see, behold, it is null, and accounted as the dust of the earth." (p. 411, "Festivals")

The phrase "prepare the Passover" found in Matthew 26:19, Mark 14:16, and Luke 22:13 comes from the Greek phrase ***hetoimasan to pascha***. According to ***Strong's Concordance***, the Greek verb root ***hetoimazo*** means: "1) to make ready, prepare 1a) to make the necessary preparations, get everything ready . . . drawn from the oriental custom of sending on before kings on their journeys persons to level the roads and make them passable." Clearly, the reason the disciples questioned Yeshua about **where** they were going to eat the Passover meal was because Jewish custom required that the location be prepared by removing the leaven from it on the night of Nisan 14.

As mentioned earlier, the Jews ate the Passover meal on the night of Nisan 15, which was the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Exodus 12:15 commands the Israelites to remove all leaven from their dwellings and prescribes the penalty for eating leavened bread during this feast:

> EXODUS 12:15 "For a seven-day period shall you eat matzos [unleavened bread], but on the previous day [the Preparation Day] you shall nullify the leaven from your homes; for anyone who eats leavened food - that soul shall be cut off from Israel, from the first day [Nisan 15] to the seventh day [Nisan 21]." (***Stone Edition Tanach***)

When the disciples questioned Yeshua about where they were going to eat the Passover meal the next night, they still did not fully understand that he would be **dead** then! The Messiah would not be able to eat the Passover lamb because he was destined to be sacrificed as **our** Passover (I Cor. 5:7). But instead of explaining to them **then** that he would be in the grave when the time came to eat the Passover lamb, he simply told his disciples **where** to prepare to eat the Passover meal. After Peter and John had deleavened the room and made ready for the upcoming feast, Yeshua used their final meal together on the night of the 14th to instruct his disciples one last time before his death.

Luke 22:15 has been used to support the assertion that the Messiah and his disciples ate the Passover meal. In this Scripture, Yeshua says: "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." The Greek phrase translated "with fervent desire I have desired" is ***epithumia epethumesa***. It literally means "with desire I desired."

The first word of this phrase, ***epithumia***, is a noun. According to the ***Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament***, usually this word "has the ambivalent sense, *desire, strive for, long to have* / *do* / *be* something." It can also be "used for (*forbidden*) *desire*" (p. 27, vol. 2). Yeshua uses ***epithumia*** in this sense in Luke 22:15.

In the article "The Lord's Supper," the ***New Bible Dictionary*** says that ". . . Lk. 22:15 may be read as an unfulfilled wish" (p. 707). Yeshua truly longed to eat that coming Passover with his disciples, but his desire could not be realized! It was forbidden because it would have destroyed the plan of Yahweh,

since Yeshua was destined to be sacrificed as our Passover lamb on the afternoon **before** the Passover meal.

In his Bible translation, Ferrar Fenton accurately captures the meaning of Yeshua's words in these verses:

> LUKE 22:15 "And he said to them: '**I have longingly desired** [epithumia epethumesa] **to eat this Passover with you before my suffering**; 16 **however**, I tell you that **I shall not eat of it**, until it can be administered in the Kingdom of the Almighty.'" (***The Holy Bible in Modern English***)

The last meal that Yeshua and the disciples ate together was obviously some type of preparatory meal, not the Passover meal itself. Jewish scholar David H. Stern writes of this meal:

> The Last Supper is considered by most scholars to have been a Passover meal or *Seder*. Many *Pesach* themes are deepened, reinforced and given new levels of meaning by events in the life of *Yeshua* the Messiah and by his words on this night. However, Joseph Shulam has suggested that it may not have been the *Seder* but a *se'udat-mitzvah*, the celebratory banquet accompanying performance of a commandment such as a wedding or *b'rit-milah*.
>
> Here is the background for his argument. When a rabbi and his students finish studying a tractate of the Talmud, they celebrate with a *se'udat-mitzvah* (also called a *se'udat-siyum*, 'banquet of completion,' i.e., graduation). The Fast of the Firstborn, expressing gratitude for the saving of Israel's firstborn sons from the tenth plague, has been prescribed for the day before *Pesach*, Nisan 14, at least since Mishnaic times. When it is necessary to eat a *se'udat-mitzvah*, this takes precedence over a fast. With a modicum of foresight a rabbi can plan to complete a tractate on Nisan 14 and thus avoid having to fast; doing so is not construed as cheating, and in fact it has become the custom.
>
> The tradition of the Fast of the Firstborn dates at least from Mishnaic times. But, Shulam reasons, if it goes back a couple of centuries more to the time of *Yeshua*, and if the *si'udat-siyum* custom applied in the first century to the completing of any course of study, then *Yeshua* might have arranged to have himself and his *talmidim* finish reading a book of the *Tanakh* on Nisan 14. Or, since *Yeshua* knew he was going to die, he may have regarded it as appropriate to complete his disciples' earthly "course of study" with a banquet. This solution would also resolve the perceived conflict between *Yochanan* [John] and the Synoptic Gospels over the timing of the Last Supper. (p. 77, ***Jewish New Testament Commentary***)

In ***The Companion Bible*** comment on Luke 22:15, Bullinger states that the last supper Yeshua and his disciples ate was "not the eating of the Lamb, but the *Chagigah* or feast which preceded it . . ." (p. 1500). He goes on to explain that "it follows, therefore, that the Lord being crucified on 'the preparation day' could not have eaten of the Passover lamb, which was not slain until the evening of the 14th of Nisan (i.e. afternoon). . . . Thus it is clear, that . . . no 'Passover lamb' could have been eaten at the 'last supper' on the previous evening" (p. 180, Appendix 156).

None of the four Gospels mentions a lamb being eaten at the "last supper." The time had not yet come to slay the Passover when the Messiah and his disciples ate their last meal together.

In addition, Deuteronomy 16:2, 5-6 shows that the disciples would have also had a problem with **where** to slay a Passover lamb, had they desired to kill one:

> DEUTERONOMY 16:2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto Yahweh thy Almighty, of the flock and the herd, **in the place which Yahweh shall choose to place His name there**. . . . 5 Thou mayest **not** sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which Yahweh thy Almighty giveth thee: 6 But at the place which Yahweh thy Almighty 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** [Aviv, see Deu. 16:1] that thou camest forth out of Egypt. (***KJV***)

Yahweh, through Moses, gives instructions regarding the proper place to sacrifice the Passover in this Scripture. As shown above, Yahweh did not allow that the Israelites to sacrifice the Passover anywhere they wanted, but only at the place where He chose to put His name. During Yeshua's life, the Temple in Jerusalem was the place where Yahweh had placed His name, and that's where the Jews killed the Passover lambs in accordance with this command.

Raymond F. McNair of the Global Church of God writes in his article "When Should the True Passover Be Observed?" that the Messiah's disciples "certainly could not have gone into the Temple at the beginning of the 14th of Abib to have the priests and Levites assist them in the sacrifice of their Passover lambs. Why not? Simply because the Jews (who then controlled the Temple ritual) would not have permitted anyone to kill their Passover lambs approximately 21 hours before they allowed, and supervised, the killing of Passover lambs in the court of the Temple!" (p. 11, ***Global Church News***, March-April 1996).

Yeshua and his disciples obviously could not have eaten a Passover lamb with their meal that night. The Scriptures clearly state that Messiah was our Passover (I Cor. 5:7). Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record that Yeshua died at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.). This is the same time Josephus records that the slaughter of the Passover lambs commenced. Yeshua the Messiah fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover lambs exactly by giving his life just as the unblemished Passover lambs began to be slain on the 14th of Nisan!

CONCLUSION

We can see that the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) do not conflict with John's account of the "last supper" when understood correctly. A careful study of all four Gospels shows that Yeshua and the disciples did **not** eat the Passover meal. There was no way they could have, since the time had not yet come to sacrifice the Passover lambs. They simply prepared for the Passover by deleavening the location they planned to use for the Feast. Afterward they ate some type of celebratory or preparatory meal on the evening of Nisan 14. At this supper, Yeshua instituted the New Covenant symbols of the bread and wine. After the meal, Judas Iscariot rose and left to betray Yeshua to the Jewish authorities. When approached with an open mind and the belief that the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35), we **can** reconcile all these accounts.

Still to Come …

June and I would like to thank Bryan Huie for so graciously allowing us to incorporate his article into chapter 10 of our study. His contribution effectively replaces our intended chapter, which would have been titled "Did Yeshua Eat the Passover With His Disciples?" We still plan to resume our work on *Facing the Passover Controversy* at a later date (hopefully we won't have another five-year delay), not only providing information about how first-century Judaism understood the reckoning of Passover observance, but also addressing the following aspects related to Passover:

Part III. The Passover Observed by Messiah

10. ~~Did Yeshua eat the Passover with His disciples?~~ (Thanks, Bryan!)

11. On which day of the week was the Messiah crucified? (For now, please read chapter 3 of our study *Balancing the Calendar II*.)

12. The "Type/Anti-type" factor

Part IV. Did Yeshua and His Disciples Eat Unleavened Bread at the Memorial Supper?

Part V. The Passover Cup: Wine or Grape Juice?

Part VI. Is Abib 14 a holy day?

A preview of this chapter: Several years ago, an acquaintance bombarded us and everyone on his mailing list with articles he authored which he felt proved Abib 14 to be a holy day … the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Even before this onslaught of articles began, we were painfully aware of how people can read the plainest verses of Scripture and come away with a distorted interpretation. However, we have to be careful about pointing these things out because the opposition most certainly will bring out their view that *we* are the ones who are misinterpreting Scripture. Nevertheless, when we first began reading this man's studies pertaining to why he believes Abib 14 is a holy day, we responded with what we felt were some obvious Torah texts invalidating his claim. However, we soon learned that he distorted the interpretation of those texts as well, and after a few unproductive exchanges, we decided to agree to disagree. It wasn't until a few years later that we found additional (clinching) proof from the Messianic Accounts that the early believers could *not* have regarded Abib 14 as a holy day.

Briefly summarizing this for those who may be interested, on the night that Yeshua was betrayed, the disciples thought that Judas was going to go out and purchase items for the feast, which means that day could not have been a holy day, since it is unlawful to buy or sell on a holy day. However, some contend that this meal actually took place on Abib 13, not Abib 14. This cannot be true because at this same meal Yeshua told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. We can safely presume that Yeshua was referring to a rooster that would crow the following morning, since roosters don't skip "crowing days." It was after Yeshua's arrest during this same 24-hour period of Abib 14 that Peter denied Yeshua … and *then* the rooster crowed. The fact that the rooster crowed on the morning which followed what is known as "The Last Supper," which we know was the same day on which Yeshua was crucified, … combined with the fact that the disciples anticipated Judas going out to purchase items for the Feast of Unleavened Bread … demonstrates that neither Yeshua nor His disciples considered Abib 14 to be a holy day.

Part VII. Should Modern-Day Believers Kill a Passover Lamb? (For now, please read our online study titled *Should We Kill a Lamb for Passover?).*