

9. When Passover Falls on the Day of the Weekly Sabbath

Lunar Sabbatarians put quite a bit of effort into creating apparent “problems” for those who observe the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath. We have already covered the “Battle March of Jericho,” but another one that has made the rounds involves the perception that if the ancients had observed continuously-repeating weekly Sabbaths, occasionally a year arose in which the Passover fell on the day of the weekly Sabbath. Of course, the day of Passover, as specified by Yahweh, is Abib 14. This day, as anyone familiar with the Torah instructions knows, involved considerable work for the Israelites, not only with regard to the removal of leavening from their dwellings, but especially when it came to the Passover sacrifices. In a year when the Passover falls on the day of the weekly Sabbath, the mandated Passover *work* might appear, at least on the surface, to conflict with the *no work* requirement pertaining to the weekly Sabbath day. June and I completed our original study in early 2003 without addressing this particular concern, and later that year Lunar Sabbatarians Arnold Bowen and Matthew Janzen used a four and a half-hour long cassette tape “discussion” to point out this and other *apparent* weaknesses in our position. One of those weaknesses involved the question of what June and I do when the Passover falls on the day of the weekly Sabbath.

For Lunar Sabbatarians who observe weekly Sabbaths that fall on the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days of the month, it is all too obvious that the labors mandated in connection with an Abib 14 Passover observance can never interfere with the observance of their version of lunar sabbaths. However, Matthew Janzen and Arnold Bowen, upon realizing that those who observe continuously-repeating weekly Sabbaths must occasionally come face-to-face with observing a weekly Sabbath on Abib 14, seized this realization as an opportunity to take a jab at those of our persuasion. Here, then, is an excerpt from their cassette tape discussion:

Matthew Janzen: Now I wanna play [a recording of] two places where brother Larry has said that Yahweh makes it **plain**, brother Arnold, that **NO work** is to be done on the Sabbath day, **and we agree**, we are in the affirmative on that. Yahweh does make it plain. This is what brother Larry says:

Larry (from recorded tape message previously sent to Arnold Bowen): "' ... in all your dwellings.' So Yahweh makes it pretty plain that no work is to be done on His weekly Sabbath day."

Matthew Janzen: Now, he very clearly said, "**No work is to be done on His weekly Sabbath day.**" He said it and he made it pretty plain. Also he says, uh, just about the same thing, but I **do** want to play this. OK, here we go:

Larry (again, from recorded tape message previously sent to Arnold): "Only servile work is prohibited, whereas on the weekly Sabbath, as shown in verse three, no work **AT ALL** is allowed."

Matthew Janzen: Now, that is **two places** on the tape where he said "*no work at all*" is allowed on the weekly Sabbath. However, let me point out that **every single year** on the calendar that Yahweh gave to Moses ... or to Israel ... there were **three specific days** in the month of Abib, the first month of the year, that work was **commanded** to be done. These days were the tenth of Abib, that is the day when the lamb had to be put up, and if anybody's ever tried to catch a lamb before, you know that that's ... can be **hard work**, especially if they aren't tame, which they usually aren't ... on the fourteenth day of the first month between the evenings, which would be approximately around 3:00, the lamb ... the Passover ... or the lamb, was to be

slain. That's **a lot of work** involved in that as well. And then on the **16th day of Abib**, brother Arnold, the sheaf had to be cut ... put the sickle to the grain

Arnold Bowen (chiming in): ... **Work day**

Matthew Janzen: So there are **three work days** there Now,

Arnold Bowen (chiming in): ... **Commanded** work days

Matthew Janzen: Three work days that are **commanded work days** in the Word of Yahweh. Now, the weekly Sabbath ... Saturday Sabbath ... it is a **floating Sabbath**. They claim that our ... **we** have a "floating Sabbath," but our Sabbath is **fixed in the heavens**, and it only **seems** to float to them because they have that **Roman calendar**. But **theirs** is actually floating, because it floats, but their Sabbath will fall on the 10th, the 14th and the 16th, ... **very regularly** ... at least three times every seven years. Now ..., and that ... that obviously is an approximation. Now, let's say that Saturday, the Sabbath that many people keep in this day and time, happens to fall on the fourteenth day of Abib

Arnold Bowen (interrupting): And they **will** fall on them days

Matthew Janzen: Oh yeah. They definitely **will** fall on them days

Arnold Bowen: ... Which is **contrary to Yahwah's Word**.

Matthew Janzen: **Right** **What do you do?** Now brother Larry has just said, "**NO WORK,**" and Yahweh made it **very plain** that no work is to be done

Arnold Bowen (interrupting): ... And we **agree** with that.

Matthew Janzen: ... And we **do** agree with that. Now ... but when it falls on the fourteenth, what were the Israelites to **do**, brother Larry? Were they to keep the Sabbath that Yahweh made very plain in His Word where **no work** was to be done? **OR** ..., were they to **kill the Passover**? Now if you say, "Well, they were to kill the Passover," then show me in the Bible where Yahweh makes precedence for this. Show me where He says, "**If the fourteenth falls on a Sabbath, that you are to kill the Passover.**" Show me where Yahweh says, "**If the tenth falls on a Sabbath, you should go ahead and put the lamb up.**" Show me where He says, "**If the sixteenth falls on a Sabbath, you're still to put the sickle to the grain.**" But see, there's **nowhere in the Bible** that Yahweh shows these things. Yahweh **never** makes these exceptions. Why? Because the weekly Sabbath **cannot fall**

Arnold Bowen (interrupting): **Never**.

Matthew Janzen: ... on these days!

Arnold Bowen: **Not on Yahwah's calendar**.

Matthew Janzen: Right. If you keep the Sabbath by the lunar cycle, guess what?

Arnold Bowen: **You don't have this problem**.

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Matthew Janzen: You don't have the problem. And Yahweh is very plain in sayin', "**NO WORK SHALL BE DONE ON THE SABBATH.**" But when you ... when you have this *floating Saturday Sabbath*, the ... the commands are **contradictory**, brother Arnold.

Arnold Bowen: He's **not** the author of confusion, folks! Brother Larry, you **know** that. So if the Sabbaths in these pin ... where we pinpointed all these ... **OVER 60 weekly Sabbaths** ... and they're always on these days, which does not conflict with the ... uh, fourteenth, the sixteenth ... they **never, ever, ever** contradict. Now ... Matthew spoke of the **floatin' Sabbath** that they accuse us of, but ... notice most people's Sabbath in the days of Unleavened Bread ... sometimes it'll be on the sixteenth ... fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteen ... you see it floatin' through the week of Unleavened Bread. There's how you can tell whose Sabbath's movin' ... and who ... whose is sittin' still. Ours is **always** on the fifteenth.

Matthew Janzen: Right.

Arnold Bowen: Theirs floats out through the weeks of Unleavened Bread, and you see **whose Sabbaths is floatin'.**

Arnold Bowen (continuing): Now **listen** ... no work ... but now how ... how in the world can you have a "**absolutely no work**" day ... followed on a "**absolutely work**" day ... in Yahwah's calendar you **can't**, but in man's calendar, the Gregorian, or Julian, or whichever, uh ... Smith's calendar ... whoever's calendar you want, you will have this **collidin'** with Yahwah's holy feast days ... brother Matthew?

Matthew Janzen: Now what brother Larry will most likely say to this is, "**Well, this is the exception, Matthew, and it is not the rule.**" In other words, each and every year the Sabbath will not fall on one of these days. Now it will happen quite often, because there's three days right there close together. But he'll say, "**Well, it's the exception.**"

Matthew Janzen (continuing): But brother Larry, **answer the question. Answer the question: WHAT DO YOU DO??** Let's say it is the exception for you. **What do you do?** Do you kill the lamb or do you keep the Sabbath? Do you put the lamb up or do you keep the Sabbath? Do you cut the grain or do you keep the Sabbath? **You have to answer this!** This is a question ... **this is a challenge put forth to all those whose Saturday Sabbath falls on these work days that Yahweh has commanded. WHAT DO YOU DO??** Yahweh hasn't said **anything** about this in His Word. Now, the only way that you'll be able to decide what you do is to ... think within your finite mind, "**What am I supposed to do?**" ... because Yahweh's not told you what to do!¹

By the time I received the four and a half-hour cassette tape discussion, June and I had already spent considerable time addressing other Lunar Sabbatarian arguments, and the one presented above by Matthew Janzen and Arnold Bowen was one that we considered so ridiculous that we didn't feel it was worth the trouble of even addressing it. The other arguments raised on the cassette tape were, in our estimation, equally nebulous, so suffice it to say that by this time, June and I were ready to "wash our hands" of Lunar Sabbatarians.

¹ This is a transcribed excerpt from the audio cassette recorded discussion between Matthew Janzen and Arnold Bowen of Conyers, Georgia, which Matthew Janzen mailed to June and me in September 2003.

However, a few months went by, and during the month of January 2004, I was invited to participate in an e-mail discussion pertaining to the "true Sabbath." One thing led to another, and eventually the discussion was moved www.elijah.com, where a gentleman offered to create a special forum entitled the "True Sabbath" forum. For those who aren't already familiar with the developments of that Internet discussion, please see our [introduction](#). During that discussion, Matthew Janzen chose to once again present his argument that those who observe continuously-repeating weekly Sabbaths must somehow determine how to simultaneously observe the command to do "no work" on the weekly Sabbath while performing the required Passover "work" when it happens to fall on the Sabbath day. In so doing, he created a new "topic thread" entitled "**Conflicting Commands**." In one of his postings, he summarized the "apparent" problem facing those of our persuasion when Abib 14, the day for killing the Passover lambs, happens to fall on the weekly Sabbath. Here is what he wrote:

quote:

Let's say that the weekly Sabbath fell on the 14th of Aviv when the Passover is to be killed. The process of killing an animal, especially the Passover, seeing no bone could be broken, was very time-consuming, not to mention the fact that the command includes roasting the Passover with fire (Ex. 12:9). I'd say the whole process is AT THE LEAST a 4-hour process. Please tell me Scripturally or Historically what the Israelites were to do. Please comment as well on the Scriptures of Ex. 16:5,23 in conjunction with this scenario.²

Matthew had already gone to quite a bit of trouble to point out this "apparent problem" in the 4½ hour cassette tape response he had sent us the previous September, so when I saw the above commentary, I realized that this was a point that he felt served to solidify his position that those who are faithful to Yahweh should observe Lunar Sabbaths. As previously mentioned, for folks like us who observe the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath, occasionally the 14th of Abib will indeed fall on the weekly Sabbath, and we all know that on the 14th of Abib the Israelites were commanded to kill the Passover lambs, which obviously involves **work**. In fact, they were commanded to roast the Passover lambs on the 14th of Abib, and we hopefully understand that food preparation is prohibited on the weekly Sabbath, so Matthew Janzen was quite convinced that his argument poses a problem for those of our persuasion. Why? Because Yahweh makes it plain in His Word that "no work" is to be done on the day of the weekly Sabbath! How, then, do we justify observing the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath, knowing that Passover will occasionally fall on the day commonly known as "Saturday"?

I replied to Matthew Janzen's inquiry, and to his credit, I am pleased to report that, in the end, Matthew agreed that his argument was an invalid one, not necessarily because of anything I wrote, since two other individuals had also contributed responses that Matthew appreciated more than mine.³

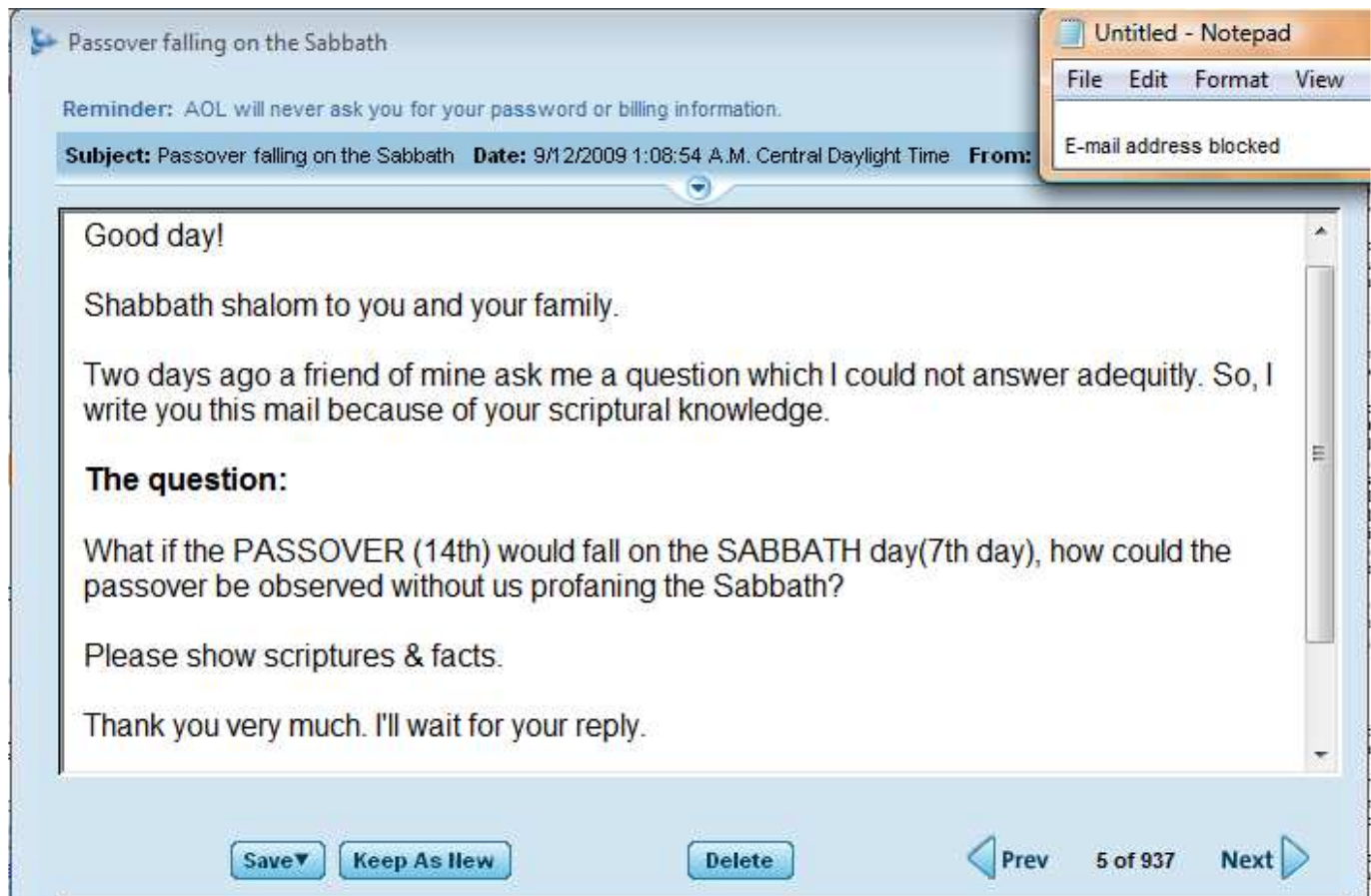
Matthew Janzen, as of this writing, is still a lunar sabbatarian, and a fairly influential one at that. Therefore, I would have expected that his concession would carry considerable weight among lunar

² Posted on 01-30-2004 at 06:28 AM by Matthew Janzen under the screen name "emjanzen" in the now-defunct "True Sabbath" forum at www.elijah.com. This particular thread was entitled "**Conflicting Commands**."

³ Here is Matthew's pertinent statement, presented here as an excerpt from a posting that he submitted to the same forum thread mentioned above on 01-31-2004 at 03:59 PM: "I studied the John 7 passage, and have meditated on it for a while. I would have to agree that it proves that a law of Moses (actually law of Yahweh) is to be carried out no matter what day it falls on. I really think that is what the principle of the passage is teaching."

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sabbatarianism, resulting in the above argument fading into oblivion. However, over five years later, a gentleman seeking to answer lunar sabbatarian arguments sent me an e-mail request for how to answer the contention that those who observe continuously-repeating weekly Sabbaths must somehow address how to harmonize the “no work” command associated with the weekly Sabbath with the “work” requirements involved with Passover observance when the two days happen to coincide. Here is what he wrote:



Upon reading the above e-mail, I realized that I should have known better than to think that an argument, even though it’s been so clearly disproven (and *agreed* to be disproven even by lunar sabbatarianism themselves), would cease to be circulated. With this in mind, I have decided to incorporate an excerpt from my response into our Lunar Sabbath study. Here is the text of my answer to the above e-mail inquiry:

I believe the answer is very simple: Yahweh ordained that the priests were to offer sacrifices each weekly Sabbath day. In fact, the Sabbath sacrifice was double that of the daily sacrifice, which in turn means the priests had *twice* the normal work on the weekly Sabbath. Thus, in spite of the fact that the Israelites were commanded to not work on the weekly Sabbath, the priests were still obligated to carry out the required sacrifices on that day. Therefore, it can be rightly stated that no work is to be done on the weekly Sabbath *UNLESS* Yahweh specifies otherwise.

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With this understanding in mind, it seems to me that in John 7:21-24 Yeshua provided the answer as to what should be done when the weekly Sabbath coincides with a day on which any work is commanded to be done.

²¹ Yeshua answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

²² Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers ;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

²³ If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

²⁴ Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Also, please notice what Yeshua said in Matthew 12:5:

⁵ Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

The above verses make it very plain that the priests, although they "profaned the Sabbath," were considered "blameless." Why? Because they were not released from their commanded obligation to perform various duties associated with temple work, including the "double sacrifices." In the same way, I believe it is important to understand that on the day of Passover, the entire nation of Israel was considered to be priests, and as priests they became obligated to offer that sacrifice on Abib 14, regardless of the day of the week upon which it might happen to fall. Just as Yahweh commanded that the priests perform a special work on the weekly Sabbath, in the same way the entire nation of Israel, on that one day of the year, Passover, *became as priests*, including being required to slay the Passover lambs, regardless of the day on which it fell.

A first-century Jewish writer named Philo understood that the nation of Israel became priests for this occasion. In his work entitled "The Decalogue," chapter 30, section 159, he wrote,

quote:

"...Pascha [Passover], on which the whole nation sacrifices, each individual among them, not waiting for the priests, since on this occasion the law has given, for one especial day in every year, a priesthood to the whole nation, so that each private individual slays his own victim on this day."

Since, for the occasion of Passover, **the entire nation of Israel became priests**, they were simultaneously given the same functions that had to be carried out by the regular ordained priesthood, regardless of which day of the week Passover might fall upon. Therefore, contrary to Lunar Sabbatarian claims that it would have been unlawful to have sacrificed a lamb on Abib 14 if it happened to fall on the day of the weekly Sabbath, it is *exactly the reverse*. It was not only lawful, it was **LAW**. It was required, and when Yahweh ordains that a man carry out the function of a priest, that is what he is to do. This function not only fulfills the requirements of killing a lamb on Passover,

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but also putting the sickle to the grain and yes, even selecting the Passover lamb on the tenth day of Abib (these are other alleged "work" days that have been brought up by Lunar Sabbatarians). If those days happened to fall on the weekly Sabbath, the required directives were still carried out, because each individual was given that role as the function of the priesthood.

I hope you find this response helpful as you compose your response to your friend. I may add this as an additional chapter to our current revision, which has obviously been on "hold" for a very long time!

Take care and may Yahweh bless!

Love in Messiah,
Larry⁴

Will the above answer cause the misleading and unfair generalizations issued by lunar sabbatarians to cease? Probably not. Nevertheless, in the interest and hope of providing fellow truth seekers with our perspective, this is our response to the argument that we must compromise our "no work" weekly Sabbath principle when the Passover happens to fall on that day.

⁴ This commentary is an excerpt from the reply I sent to the individual (whose identity I choose to keep anonymous) on 9/12/2009 at 6:08:42 P.M. Central Daylight Time.