

The Lord's Passover

When Was the Passover Sacrifice and When Was Christ Our Passover Lamb Sacrificed?

By Brett Gray

“And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.” — Ex. 12:11

About 3,500 years ago, hordes of Israelite families watched as their lambs sizzled over searing flames — each family roasting its own lamb according to God's command. They smeared the lambs' blood on their doorposts and hastily devoured the roasted flesh behind fastened doors. Soon thereafter, all those who took shelter behind the lambs' blood were spared from the death angel and forever freed from the bonds of earthly slavery (Ex. 12).

Again, about 2,000 years ago, Jews and Roman soldiers gathered around a cross and watched as Jesus Christ died for all humanity as our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:19). All who take shelter under His blood and partake of His sacrifice can be forever free from the bondage of sin and eternal death (John 3:16; Rom. 6:10; Heb. 10:10).

Though the Israelites did not know it, the millions of Passover lambs they slaughtered in Egypt and the centuries thereafter foreshadowed Jesus' sacrifice — the most crucial event in human history. The Passover lambs died so that the Israelites might live. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, died so that all of us might live!

Jesus' sacrifice happened on the 14th day of the Hebrew month Nisan (also called Abib).¹ This we know because the Crucifixion day was also the preparation day for the high holy day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread (John 19:14, 31). Lev. 23:6 reveals that the First Day of Unleavened Bread falls on Nisan 15, and thereby fixes Christ's death on the previous day, the preparation day, the 14th.

¹ See Appendix D for overview of Hebrew calendar.

We also know that Christ died on the afternoon of the 14th, about 3:00 PM. Mat. 27:45-50, Mark 15:33-37, and Luke 23:44-46 all testify that it was about the ninth hour. John 11:9 explains that a day has twelve hours, and Mat. 20:1-16 illustrates that the hours began with sunrise and ended with sunset. This puts the ninth hour at mid-afternoon, or what we call 3:00 PM.

Under the Old Covenant, too, the Passover lambs shed their blood on Nisan 14 each year. We know this from Ex. 12:6, Lev. 23:5, Num. 9:3-5, and 2 Chron. 35:1. The question is, at what time on the 14th were the lambs slaughtered and roasted? Was it the beginning or the end of the 14th? Also, the Passover meal naturally followed the sacrifice; when exactly did it take place? Did Christ our Passover Lamb die at the same time the Passover lambs had always died?

Only the Bible can answer these questions. We must allow the Bible to interpret the Bible. Therefore, please do not believe me or anyone else on this topic, but believe your Bible and only your Bible.

God's Word demands careful examination: **“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little”** (Isa. 28:10).² We must put the whole Bible together, or else we might gawk at one of a thousand pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and fancy we see the whole picture.

Please remember the Bereans, who “were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so**” (Acts 17:11). As Prov. 18:13 tells us, **“He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.”** In addition, 1 Thess. 5:21 commands us, **“Test [Strong's #1381; examine, prove, scrutinize] all things; hold fast what is good.”** Therefore, the Bereans listened with open ears and minds, but scrutinized everything in the light of God's Word.

O reader, are you a Berean? Will you commit to hearing this matter before answering it? Will you promise to search God's Word diligently to see whether these things are so? The choice is yours!

² All Scripture references are from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.

When Was the Passover Sacrifice?

Let's pick up our Bibles and turn first to Ex. 12:5-6, where God instructed Israel concerning the Passover lambs: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight."

The Hebrew phrase translated "twilight" is *bayn ha-aryim*, which literally means "between the evenings," or, by implication, "between the two evenings." The translators believe the two evenings to be sunset and dark, hence the translation "twilight." We will return to this definition shortly.

After Ex. 12:6, God's Word uses this phrase ten more times. It's used again in Lev. 23:5: "On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight [between the two evenings] is the LORD's Passover." Again, in Num. 9:3-5: "On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight [between the two evenings], you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it. So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight [between the two evenings], in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did."

Definitions of Passover

1. The lamb (Ex. 12:21; Deut. 16:1-7; 2 Chron. 30:15, 17; 1 Cor. 5:7)
2. The sacrifice (Ex. 12:27; Num. 9:2-9)
3. The whole service, both sacrificing and eating (Ex. 12:48; 2 Kings 23:21-23)
4. The Days of Unleavened Bread (Luke 22:1; Ezek. 45:21)

When Israel "kept" the Passover in this passage, the word "kept" is Strong's #6213, *asa*, and means "do, make, labor, work."³ *Young's Literal Translation* translates it as "prepare" in this passage. It's used roughly fifty times in the Bible to describe the act of offering a sacrifice, as it is in Ex. 29:36, Lev. 9:7, Lev. 15:15, Judg. 6:19, and 1 Kings 18:23, to name a few. Num. 9:7 & 13 show that this is the meaning intended, as Num. 9:13 tells us, "But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep [*asa*] the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its

³ *Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon* and *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*

appointed time....” So Israel offered the Passover on the 14th of Nisan between the two evenings, that is, they slaughtered the Passover lambs at that time, just as Ex. 12:6 told us.

Biblical Timekeeping

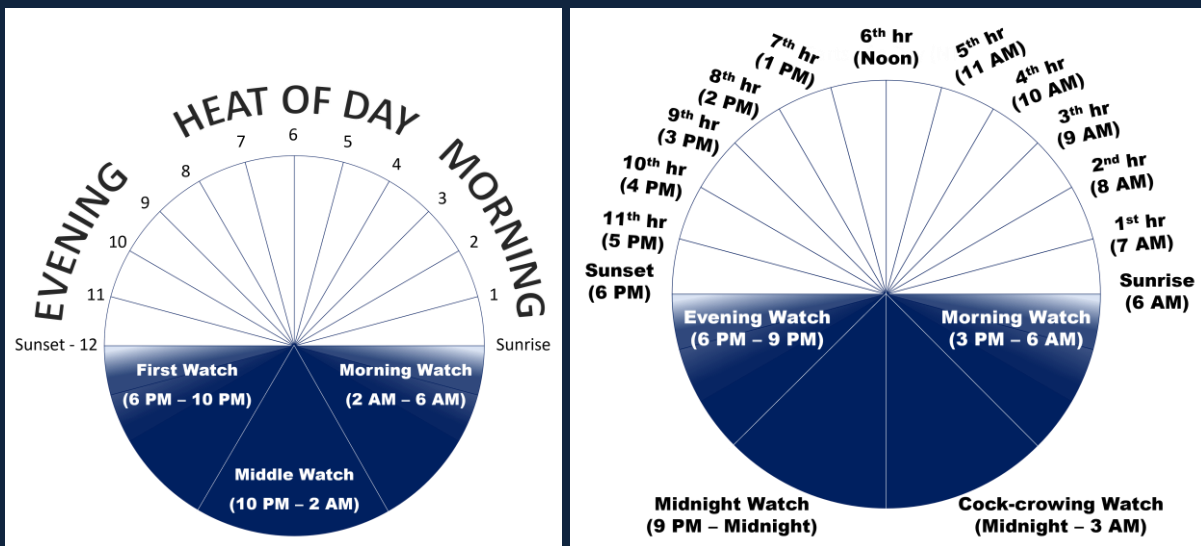
In Bible days, centuries before the widespread use of mechanical clocks, people told time by the sun and other heavenly bodies (Gen. 1:14).

Although it’s certainly possible that the Israelites always divided the day into hours, the Old Testament makes no mention of this. Instead, it mentions three distinct periods of daylight: morning (mentioned frequently), the heat of the day (Gen. 18:1, 1 Sam. 11:11, 2 Sam. 4:5), and evening or afternoon (Jer. 6:4, Judg. 19:8), when the shadows are beginning to stretch out.

The Israelites divided the night into three watches: the first watch or evening watch (Lam. 2:19), the middle watch (Judg. 7:19), and the morning watch (Ex. 14:24, 1 Sam. 11:11).

In New Testament times, the Jews divided the daylight into twelve hours, beginning with sunrise and ending with sunset (John 11:9; Mat. 20:1-16). The Romans held four watches during the night, all of which Jesus mentioned in Mark 13:35: the evening watch, the midnight watch, the cock-crowing watch, and the morning watch.

Below are diagrams of timekeeping in the Old Testament (left) and the New Testament (right).



Josh. 5:10 adds: “Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept [*asa*] the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.” However, the word translated “twilight” here is simply the Hebrew word *erev*, or “evening” (Strong’s #6153). “Kept,” again, is *asa*, which is to tell us that Israel offered the Passover lambs on the 14th of Nisan in the evening.

So Israel killed the Passover lambs on Nisan 14 between the two evenings, or simply in the evening. What time of day was this? Was it really twilight? Is it possible that the Bible defines “evening” and “between the two evenings” for us? If so, we ought to let the Bible interpret the Bible!

Is Evening the Beginning or End of the Day?

In God’s Word, a 24-hour day ends at sunset, and therefore the next 24-hour day also begins at that time. Deut. 23:11 illustrates this with the following instructions for an unclean man: “But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.” Later, during the conquest of the promised land, Joshua hanged the king of Ai on a tree, and we read in Josh. 8:29, “And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree...” In both cases, it’s obvious the day ended at sunset.

Finally, God tells us that the Day of Atonement lasts “from evening to evening.” In Lev. 23:27, we’re told that Atonement falls on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), while in v. 32 we’re told it is “on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening.” In other words, the Day of Atonement lasts from the evening of the ninth day until the evening of the tenth day — that is, it lasts from the end of the ninth day until the end of the tenth day!

Clearly, evening can be the end of the day. What does this mean for the Passover sacrifice on the evening of Nisan 14? Does this mean it happened at the end of the day and not at the beginning?

Let’s continue, and look at some fascinating instructions God gave us for the Days of Unleavened Bread. First, let’s turn to Lev. 23:6-8: “And on the fifteenth day of the same month [the first month, Abib or Nisan] is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD

for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.”

So there are seven days of unleavened bread. The first day is a holy day, and falls on Nisan 15. The seventh day is also a holy day. Here’s how it lays out:

1. Nisan 15
2. Nisan 16
3. Nisan 17
4. Nisan 18
5. Nisan 19
6. Nisan 20
7. Nisan 21

The First Day of Unleavened Bread is on Nisan 15, and the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread is on Nisan 21.

Lest there be any doubt, Num. 28:17-18, 25 repeats the same instructions: “And on the fifteenth day of this month [Nisan, or Abib] is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.”

Both passages establish that the Days of Unleavened Bread last seven days, from Nisan 15 through Nisan 21. It’s simple math plus straightforward Scripture. It’s engraved in stone!

Now, let’s turn to Ex. 12:18-19: “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses...”

Again, just as in Lev. 23 and Num. 28, God tells us there are seven days of unleavened bread. This time, however, we see something similar to the instructions for the Day of Atonement: God tells us that the first day, the 15th, begins at the evening of the 14th — the end of the 14th! The seventh day ends on the evening of the 21st, that is, at sunset at the end of the 21st day.

This is the only possible meaning. If “evening” is the beginning of the day, that would mean that the Days of Unleavened Bread begin on the 14th and end on the 20th — contradicting

Lev. 23 and Num. 28. If the evening of the 14th is the beginning of the day and the evening of the 21st is the end of the day, then there would be eight days of unleavened bread and not seven — contradicting not only Lev. 23 and Num. 28 but also the very next verse!

Therefore, the First Day of Unleavened Bread — Nisan 15 — starts with the evening of the 14th. The evening of the 14th is the end of the day!

As you likely noticed, this is also the time of Passover: the evening of the 14th. Both the First Day of Unleavened Bread and Passover begin on the evening of the 14th. Are they both at the same time — the end of the 14th? As we asked a few paragraphs earlier, when the Passover lambs were sacrificed on the evening of the 14th, was it the end of the day rather than the beginning?

Consider, please, Ezek. 45:21: “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.” Wait a minute! Isn’t Passover one night? Since when is Passover a seven-day feast? The answer is found in Luke 22:1: “Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.” The Days of Unleavened Bread ARE Passover!

Here, then, Ezekiel dubs the Days of Unleavened Bread “Passover” and tells us they begin on the 14th, just like Ex. 12:18-19. Again, as in Exodus, this could only mean the end of the 14th, or else God’s Word would contradict itself. So, not only do the Days of Unleavened Bread begin at the evening of Nisan 14, just like Passover, but they are also called Passover!

Furthermore, we saw that a day begins at the end of the previous day. Lev. 23:27, 32 shows that Tishri 10, the Day of Atonement, begins on the 9th at evening. Four Scriptures (Ex. 12:18-19; Lev. 23:5-6; Num. 28:17-18, 25; Ezek. 45:21) show that Nisan 15 is both the First Day of Unleavened Bread and that it begins on the 14th at evening. Therefore, the beginning of the 14th would be the 13th at evening!

The Passover lambs sacrificed on the evening of Nisan 14 must have been sacrificed at the end of the day! Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, also died toward the end of Nisan 14. Coincidence? Or did His Passover sacrifice happen at the same time the Passover sacrifices had always happened?

Though this is an exciting thought, we’ve barely scratched the surface. What else does God’s Word tell us about the Passover sacrifices — and Christ’s ultimate Passover sacrifice?

Are There Actually Two Evenings?

Now that we know “evening” often means the end of the day, especially for the holy days, what about the phrase “between the two evenings”? The Bible uses it eleven times, all in the five books of Moses. It’s used to pinpoint the Passover sacrifice in Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; and Num. 9:3, 5, and 11. Does God’s Word define this phrase for us? Does it mention two distinct evenings? Indeed it does!

When Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, the Bible documented two distinct evenings. First, in Mat. 14:15, we read, “When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.’” Remember, the daylight was divided into twelve hours, so the phrase “the hour is already late” tells us that the sun was getting low in the sky. After the five thousand ate their fill and the disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of fragments, Christ sent away both His disciples and the multitudes (vv. 22-23). Then we read, “And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there” (Mat. 14:23).

There we have it: two evenings. One evening came before Christ fed the five thousand, and the other came afterward. Our Savior literally fed the five thousand between the two evenings!

Other passages mention separate evenings, too. Several passages mention an evening that is clearly before sunset, and others mention an evening that is clearly after sunset.

First, let’s look at the verses where evening is clearly before sunset. We’ve already read one, in Deut. 23:11: “But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.” First came evening, and then came sunset.

At Christ’s death, too, the Bible notes an evening before sunset. Matthew wrote, “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him” (Mat. 27:57-58 [mirrored in Mark 15:42]). Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Christ’s body in the evening, but it was awhile before sunset, for Luke 23:54-56 shows that He was also buried before sunset.

Finally, the prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Prepare war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe to us, for the day goes away, for the shadows of the evening are lengthening. Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces” (Jer. 6:4-5). Evening is between noon and night, but still before sunset. Otherwise, there would be no lengthening shadows. There’s a similar expression in Judg. 19:8, where the Hebrew phrase translated “afternoon” (*yom nata*; Strong’s #3117 and #5186) literally means “stretching out of the day.”

As we can see, “evening” can not only mean sunset, but it can also mean quite some time before sunset. It can mean afternoon, as the shadows are lengthening and the day is drawing to an end. This is when Jesus fed the five thousand; it’s when the unclean would wash their clothes and prepare to reenter the camp; and it’s when Joseph of Arimathea asked for Christ’s body.

Evening can also be after sunset. Here’s an example in Prov. 7:9: “In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.” The word “twilight” here is *neshef* (Strong’s #5399) and means “breeze,” referring to either the evening breeze or the early morning breeze. “Evening” is here associated with the beginning of night.

In one of His parables, Jesus said, “So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first’” (Mat. 20:8). Verses 6 and 12 of the same passage show that workers had been hired at the eleventh hour and worked one hour, or until the end of the day. Therefore, “evening” in this passage is probably after sunset.

During his affliction, Job lamented, “When I lie down, I say, ‘When shall I arise, and the night [evening] be ended?’ For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn” (Job 7:4). “Night” is the Hebrew *erev*, or evening, proving that evening can be after sunset.

Finally, David wrote in Psa. 30:5, “For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night [evening], but joy comes in the morning.” Again, “night” is *erev*, or evening.

Here, then, are two separate evenings: one before sunset and one after sunset. One during daylight, and one at dusk/dark. They are two separate evenings because they are on two separate days! Moreover, “evening” can mean sunset itself, as we saw with the Day of Atonement and the Days of Unleavened Bread. If we interpret “between the two evenings” in the most literal way, it would put us at sunset — again at the end of the day. This again points to the Passover lambs being sacrificed at the end of the 14th, not the beginning.

Does the Bible give us any other guidelines on interpreting “between the two evenings?”
Indeed it does!

When Exactly Is “Between the Two Evenings?”

As mentioned previously, Moses used the phrase “between the two evenings” eleven times in the first five books of God’s Word, but not always in reference to Passover. It was also the appointed time for the daily offerings and other services in the tabernacle/temple.

In Ex. 29:38-39, we find: “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight [between the two evenings].” Num. 28:4-8 mirrors this account, including the specification that the evening sacrifice be offered “between the two evenings.”

“One” lamb was to be offered in the morning. “One” is *echad* (Strong’s #259) in both Ex. 29 and Num. 28 and means “one” or “first.” It’s used to designate the first day of creation in Gen. 1:5, as well as one of Adam’s ribs in Gen. 2:21.

Another lamb, a second lamb, was to be offered “between the two evenings.” The word translated “other” is *sheni* (Strong’s #8145) and primarily means “second.” It’s used for the second day of creation (Gen. 1:8), for the second month (Gen. 7:11), for Pharaoh’s second dream (Gen. 41:5), for Joseph’s second son Ephraim (Gen. 41:52), for the second year after Israel came out of Egypt (Ex. 40:17), and many other such examples. It’s also the root word of the Hebrew *shenayim* (Strong’s #8147), or “two.”

So the priests offered two burnt offerings each day: the first in the morning, and the second “between the two evenings.” This proves that “between the two evenings” has to be at the end of the day, not the beginning. If “between the two evenings” was the beginning of the day, the second lamb would be the first lamb and the first lamb would be the second — contradicting God’s Word!

The priests performed additional ceremonies along with the morning and evening sacrifices — a fact that will pinpoint “between the two evenings” for us. In Ex. 30:7-8, we find: “Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense

on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight [between the two evenings], he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.”

So three ceremonies took place in the tabernacle/temple each morning and evening (between the two evenings): offering a yearling male lamb as a burnt sacrifice; tending the lamps; and offering incense on the altar of incense.

This wasn't all, though. Another important event happened at these same times: the people gathered outside the temple to pray. Numerous verses in God's Word show us this when we put them all together, “line upon line, here a little, there a little” (Isa. 28:10, 13).

First, David wrote in Psa. 141:2: “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Prayer, the incense offering, and the evening sacrifice — all together! Lest the connection between prayers and the incense offering be lost on us, Rev. 5:8 explicitly tells us that incense represents the prayers of the saints.

The Levites also had a special duty “to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening...” (1 Chron. 23:30). As the priests offered the sacrifice, tended the lamps, and burned incense, both the Levites and the people simultaneously thanked and praised the Lord. No wonder David linked his prayers to the evening sacrifice, and no wonder the psalmist pleaded in Psa. 119:108, “Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD”!

David further wrote in Psa. 55:17: “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.” That's now three times a day, not just two.

Did any of God's other servants pray to Him three times a day? Yes indeed! “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Dan. 6:10).

Daniel later elaborated that he prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice: “Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering” (Dan. 9:20-21).

In the New Testament, John the Baptist's father, Zacharias the priest, whom God's Word tells us was a righteous and blameless man (Luke 1:6), held the duty of offering incense during the morning and evening sacrifices. Notice Luke 1:8-10: "So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense."

Again, we have Biblical proof of the link between the incense offering, the daily sacrifices, and prayer. This hour of incense could also be called the hour of prayer!

Now, we know from the Psalms that one of the three hours of prayer was noon. Acts 10:9 confirms this: "The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, **Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.**" The 6th hour, of course, was noon, the 6th hour after sunrise.

What about the other two hours of prayers, which corresponded to the morning and evening sacrifices? Does God's Word pinpoint those for us, too? Yes it does!

Let's turn over to Acts 10:30 and drop in on Peter's visit with Cornelius: "So Cornelius said, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and **at the ninth hour I prayed** in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.'"

The 9th hour was the 9th hour after sunrise, or about 3:00 PM. It corresponded to the evening sacrifice and the evening incense offering, both of which happened "between the two evenings"! God's Word pinpointed "between the two evenings" for us and gave us an exact hour! The Bible does indeed interpret the Bible; we need only to put everything together!

Lest there be any doubt, we find this explicit statement in Acts 3:1: "Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour." There we have it: an open and shut case!

As for the morning sacrifice, God's Word gives us some clues about that as well. By putting Acts 2:1-4 and Acts 2:14 together, we discover that God sent the Holy Spirit at the 3rd hour (9:00 AM), as the disciples gathered together on the Day of Pentecost. Why were they gathered together at the 3rd hour, and why did God choose that specific hour? How about this passage in Acts 1:14, where we find that the disciples "all continued with one accord in

prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

These, then, are the hours of prayer: the 3rd hour, the 6th hour, and the 9th hour. When David said he prayed at morning, noon, and evening, these are the hours he was talking about. When Daniel prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem, this is when it happened. When the incense was offered, it was the 3rd hour and the 9th hour. When the daily offerings were sacrificed, it was at the 3rd hour and the 9th hour.

When is “between the two evenings”? It’s the 9th hour! That’s the time of the evening sacrifice, and also of the Passover sacrifice! Therefore, “between the two evenings” means after the start of the evening before sunset, but before the evening that’s after sunset. It’s toward the end of the day, but before the beginning of the next.

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus confirmed God’s Word on this matter, as if such a thing were needed. He wrote that the Passover lambs were slain “from the ninth hour till the eleventh” (*Wars of the Jews* 6:9:3). He also chronicled that the evening sacrifice during Pompey’s siege of Jerusalem took place at the ninth hour (*Antiquities of the Jews* 15:4:3).

What else is significant about the 3rd hour, the 6th hour, and the 9th hour? Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross at the 3rd hour (Mark 15:25), darkness fell over the land at the 6th hour (Mat. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44), and He died at the 9th hour (Mat. 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-39; Luke 23:44-46). Jesus Christ, our Savior and Passover Lamb, died on Nisan 14 at the 9th hour — between the two evenings! He was sacrificed at the precise moment the Passover lambs had always been sacrificed!

Furthermore, he was nailed to the cross at the time of the morning sacrifice, and died at the time of the evening sacrifice. This is why there were two daily burnt offerings, one in the morning and one in the evening: they foreshadowed Christ’s own sacrifice and even foretold the time of day it would happen!

Our Passover sacrifice took place at the 9th hour on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan. This cannot be disputed. It is a fact.

Elijah's Sacrifice

Another passage of Scripture confirms that the evening sacrifice took place in the afternoon, and that's the story of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18.

Following a three-year drought, in which not a drop of rain fell on Israel, Elijah challenged the Israelites to stop riding the fence and make a decision: follow God or follow Baal.

Further, he challenged the prophets of Baal: both he and they would prepare burnt offerings, but would light no fire. If Baal answered their prayers and kindled a fire on their burnt offering, then Baal was the true god. But if he did not, and if God answered Elijah's prayer and kindled a fire on his burnt offering, then He was the true God (1 Kings 18:20-24).

As agreed, the prophets of Baal built a great altar, slaughtered a bull, and laid it upon the altar. They began to call on Baal, but there was no answer. "From morning even till noon" they called out, chanted, and danced about their altar, but nothing happened (v. 26).

"And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.' So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them" (vv. 27-28).

The prophets of Baal continued this display until the time of the evening sacrifice (v. 29). From morning until noon until the evening sacrifice, they had cried out, danced around, and cut themselves, but Baal kindled no fire.

Then, at the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prepared his own burnt offering. He built the altar, laid the wood upon it, slaughtered a bull, and laid it on the altar. He had the altar doused with water three times, and then called upon God (vv. 36-37).

"Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!'" (vv. 38-39).

Following Elijah's offering — at the time of the evening sacrifice — he gave the command to seize the prophets of Baal. So the Israelites seized them and executed them by the brook (v. 40).

Then, Elijah told Ahab to go eat and drink, but he himself set off on a different mission. He and his servant climbed back atop Mt. Carmel, where Elijah kneeled down before God. Seven times he sent his servant out to look at the sky, and the seventh time the servant saw a small cloud rising up out of the sea. Elijah now sent his servant to tell Ahab to go home before the rain stopped him (vv. 42-44).

“Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel” (vv. 45-46).

Here’s the key point: there was still daylight at this time. Elijah’s servant could not only see a tiny cloud in the sky, he could see the sea far off on the horizon. Only then did the sky become dark, but not because the sun had set; it was dark with rain clouds!

Elijah built an altar, cut a bull in pieces, piled up the wood and the pieces of the bull on the altar, soaked it with water, and offered his offering at the time of the evening sacrifice, which took some time. The people rejoiced. They seized the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah, who were no doubt kicking and screaming and resisting, and executed them at the Brook Kishon, which took some time. Elijah spoke with Ahab, then climbed Mount Carmel, which took some time. Once atop Mount Carmel, he prayed and sent out his servant seven times, which took some time. After seeing the cloud, he sent his servant back

Major Events Between the Two Evenings

- Israel killed the Passover lambs in Egypt (Ex. 12:6, Lev. 23:5)
- God sent the quail, which the Israelites killed and ate that night (Ex. 16:12)
- Evening sacrifice (Ex. 29:39, 41; Num. 28:4, 8)
- Evening incense offering (Ex. 29:39, 41; Num. 28:4, 8)
- Lighting the lamps in the tabernacle & temple (Ex. 29:39, 41; Num. 28:4, 8)
- Evening prayer (Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)
- Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:36-40)
- Daniel visited by the angel Gabriel (Dan. 9:21)
- Jesus fed the five thousand (Mat. 14:15-23)
- Jesus died on the cross (Mat. 27:46, Mark 15:34, Luke 23:44-46)
- Peter and John healed a lame man at the temple (Acts 3:1)
- Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:30-44)

down the mountain and through the valley to Ahab, which took some time. And only then did the sky become dark — with rain clouds!

There was plenty of daylight left after the evening sacrifice, when Elijah prepared and offered his sacrifice. This confirms what we have already seen: the evening sacrifice took place mid-afternoon at the 9th hour, not after sunset. If the evening sacrifice took place mid-afternoon at the 9th hour, then the Passover sacrifice also took place mid-afternoon at the 9th hour!

Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread Are One

We have now established that the 9th hour was “between the two evenings” and that “between the two evenings” means mid- to late-afternoon. We also now know that the Passover sacrifice, both Christ’s and the Passover lambs’ in the Old Testament, occurred at the 9th hour on the afternoon of Nisan 14.

Furthermore, we saw previously that both Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread start at the evening of Nisan 14 (Ex. 12:18-19; Ezek. 45:21), and that the Days of Unleavened Bread are, in fact, called Passover (Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:1). The First Day of Unleavened Bread could just as easily — and just as Biblically — be called the First Day of Passover!

In fact, God ordained the Feast of Passover to be one of the three annual pilgrimage feasts (along with Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles), at which He commanded the Israelites to appear before Him at His sanctuary (Ex. 23:14-17; Ex. 34:18-23; Deut. 16:16). In obedience to this command, Jesus and His parents went up to Jerusalem to observe Passover, as we read in Luke 2:41-43.

We’ve also seen that “Passover” can mean, 1) the lamb, 2) the sacrifice, 3) the whole service (sacrificing and eating), and 4) the Days of Unleavened Bread. When we think of “Passover,” we tend to think only of the service, but that isn’t necessarily the Biblical definition. The context always determines the meaning.

When is the Passover service? Is there any span of time between the Passover service and the Days of Unleavened Bread? Are they one feast, or did God intend for them to be separate?

First of all, one could not eat the Passover (the lamb) before it had been sacrificed. The lamb had to be slaughtered, then roasted whole. Roasting a lamb whole can take up to five or six hours, meaning that the Passover meal had to be several hours after the sacrifice at the 9th hour of the 14th day. It took place that night — on the 15th, the First Day of Unleavened Bread!

The original Passover instructions in Ex. 12 make this plain. After instructing Israel to slaughter the Passover lambs on the 14th between the two evenings (Ex. 12:6), which we now know to be the 9th hour, God further commanded them to “eat the flesh on that night” (Ex. 12:8). That night could only be the 15th!

King Josiah’s Passover in 2 Chron. 35 reinforces this point. First, in 2 Chron. 35:1, we read, “Now Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.” Next, we discover that Josiah and the other leaders of Judah gifted the people and the Levites 41,400 lambs, goats, and cattle for the Passover sacrifice (2 Chron. 35:7-9). The priests and Levites then slaughtered this horde of animals and divided them among the people (2 Chron. 35:11-13). We further read that they “were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat **until night**” (2 Chron. 34:14). So the people of Judah ate the Passover after the 14th had ended and the night of the 15th had begun!

As an aside, this passage further solidifies when “between the two evenings” is. If one goes by the Biblical definition which we have established, then it is no problem to believe that the priests and Levites were busy slaughtering 41,400 animals and offering sacrifices from mid-afternoon until nightfall. It was a gigantic task!

However, if one still holds that “between the two evenings” means twilight, then accomplishing this task before nightfall becomes not a gigantic task, but an impossible one! It would require the priests and Levites to slaughter 41,400 animals, bleed them out, skin them, divide them among the people, roast the Passover lambs, boil other offerings, and offer burnt offerings in about thirty minutes to an hour between sunset and dark. If that had happened, it would have been an astounding miracle that God’s Word somehow failed to mention! Therefore, we see mounting evidence that “between the two evenings” cannot be twilight.

Once again, this places the Passover sacrifice on the afternoon of the 14th, and the eating of said sacrifice that night on the 15th — the beginning of the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Thus, there would be no separation between the Passover ceremony and the feast of

Passover, that is, the Days of Unleavened Bread. Rather, the Passover ceremony leads right into the Days of Unleavened Bread, without interruption!

Turn, please, to Mark 14:1: “After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death.” Notice that Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread both happened at the same time: after two days! It is utterly impossible, then, for Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread to be separated by a whole day — or any length of time at all! There can be no separation between them.

Deut. 16 affirms this as well. First, let’s turn to Deut. 16:1-3: “Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name. You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it....”

“Passover” here means the lamb, for God commanded Israel to “sacrifice the Passover.” He further instructed Israel to eat unleavened bread for seven days WITH IT, that is, with the Passover sacrifice. In other words, there was no gap between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread — the Days of Unleavened Bread began with the eating of the Passover sacrifice!

Continuing on in vv. 4-6, we read, “And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight [*erev*; evening] remain overnight until morning. You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight [*erev*; evening], at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.”

Notice that the Passover sacrifice is to be “the first day at evening,” which God further described as “at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.” We know the slaughtering of the Passover sacrifice was not on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, but rather on the afternoon of the 14th. However, much of the roasting and all the eating — the partaking of the sacrifice — did indeed take place on the night of the 15th — the First Day of Passover (Unleavened Bread)!

Num. 9, too, confirms that Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are one. Let's pick up the account in Num. 9:1-3: "Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight [*bayn ha-aryaim*; between the two evenings], you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it."

As we observed earlier, "keep" is Strong's #6213, *asa*. It means "labor, work, do, make, prepare, and offer,"⁴ among other things. When Moses asked Pharaoh to let Israel go away to sacrifice to God (Ex. 10:25), this was the word he used for "sacrifice." It's used roughly fifty times in God's Word for "offer" or "sacrifice," especially for burnt offerings. Therefore, Israel prepared and offered the Passover on the 14th, between the two evenings, just as they had always been commanded!

Otherwise, if the whole Passover is in fact to be kept at twilight, then the whole observance must be over by dark. Slaughtering the lambs, smearing the blood on the doorposts, roasting the lambs, eating the lambs — all of it must be completed in about thirty minutes to an hour between sunset and dark! Clearly, that idea is absurd. "Keep" is a mistranslation; the correct translation would be "offer."

Getting back to the story, a new development appeared at this Passover: "Now there were certain men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep [*asa*; #6213) the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. And those men said to him, 'We became defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?'" (Num. 9:6-7). Under Old Testament law, anyone who touched a human corpse would be unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11).

Now notice: they could not keep Passover ON THAT DAY, not that night! They came before Moses ON THAT DAY. Did they really wait until twilight, when they were supposed to be sacrificing the lambs, and suddenly spring it on Moses that they couldn't keep Passover? Did they become defiled right at sunset, mere seconds before slaughtering the lambs, and run through the camp searching for Moses to tell him what happened? Of course not! They became defiled during the day of the 14th, and duly informed Moses before the sacrifices had even begun.

Hearing of the men's predicament, Moses inquired of God, and we read in Num. 9:9-13: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: "If anyone

⁴ *Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon* and *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*

of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.”””

Thus at Israel's second Passover, God introduced a special Passover in the second month for anyone who could not keep it in the first month. This law would later be applied on a mass scale during the days of the Divided Kingdom.

Let's turn over to 2 Chron. 30:2-3, 13 and see how this came to be: “For the king [Hezekiah] and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem.... Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.”

Hezekiah's decision to keep Passover in the second month was in accord with Num. 9:10-11. Those who were not properly sanctified — and the priests and Levites were not — were commanded to keep the Passover in the second month, according to all its normal regulations. Notice, though, that Hezekiah and the people of Judah celebrated the entire feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, all seven days, in the second month. It wasn't just the Passover sacrifice and meal, but the entire feast. Why? Because Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are one, inseparable feast!

So we see throughout God's Word that Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are one. Moreover, there is no mention anywhere in Scripture of a whole day's gap between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, or any gap at all. Such a thing is actually impossible, as we've seen.

It makes sense when you consider that there is no holy convocation (sacred assembly) on the 14th in Lev. 23 (or anywhere else), yet Passover is an appointed time (Num. 9:13) and a Feast (Ex. 34:25)! This is an unexplainable mystery to those who believe that Passover is at the beginning of the 14th. They must argue that Passover is simultaneously holy but not a holy day. For those of us who believe that the Passover sacrifice was on the afternoon of the 14th

and the Passover meal afterward on the night of the 15th, there is no mystery at all. The Passover meal is on a holy day, so of course Passover is holy!

Finally, in Ezek. 45:21, as we saw earlier, there is no distinction between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover sacrifice occurred at the 9th hour on Nisan 14, and the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Passover feast began that night. The Feast of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are the same thing! Passover is a feast (Ex. 12:14; 34:25) of seven days (Ezek. 45:21).

The Old Testament Passover

Having discussed the timing of the Passover sacrifice, the Passover meal, Christ's sacrifice, and the Days of Unleavened Bread, the next matter is to begin putting all the pieces together. Let us start with Israel's Passover in Egypt.

Prior to the Passover, the Israelites borrowed from the Egyptians. God commanded them to do so in Ex. 11:1-3, before Moses gave any word of warning about the death of the firstborn or any instructions concerning Passover. When Israel borrowed from the Egyptians, God "gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians" (Ex. 11:3). "Favor" is Strong's #2580, *hen*, and means, "grace, favor, goodwill."⁵ This favor and goodwill with which the Egyptians viewed Israel stood in stark contrast to their attitude after the death of the firstborn, when, overwhelmed with grief and fear, they "urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, 'We shall all be dead'" (Ex. 12:33). Therefore, Israel's borrowing from the Egyptians had to take place before the death of the firstborn, in the same order God's Word recorded!

On Nisan (or Abib) 10, the Israelite families each chose a male lamb of the first year, without spot or blemish (Ex. 12:5). They kept the lamb for several days, "until the fourteenth day of the same month" (Ex. 12:6), no doubt continuing to inspect it daily for blemishes. Then, they slaughtered it "between the two evenings," which we have proven to be the afternoon of the 14th.

After slaughtering the lamb, the Israelites smeared its blood around the doorways of their houses to safeguard themselves from the death angel God would send to strike down the firstborn (Ex. 12:7). Each family roasted its lamb whole, "its head with its legs and its entrails" (Ex. 12:9). Roasting a lamb whole, even a small one, takes several hours, so the

⁵ *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*

lamb would not be ready to eat until after sunset, on the night of the 15th; hence God's instructions to eat it that night (Ex. 12:8).

God told the Israelites to eat the Passover meal "with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste" (Ex. 12:11). In other words, the Israelites were to be ready to leave in a hurry, at a moment's notice!

At midnight, the death angel passed through the land of Egypt and struck all the firstborn, "both man and beast" (Ex. 12:12). "So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead" (Ex. 12:30).

The grief-stricken pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron immediately, "by night" (Ex. 12:31), and ordered them to get out of his land at once (Ex. 12:31-32). The rest of the Egyptians, too, "urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, 'We shall all be dead'" (Ex. 12:32). The word "urged" is Strong's #2388, *hazaq*, and means "strong, bind, squeeze."⁶ In other words, the Egyptians virtually grabbed ahold of the Israelites to throw them out! One can scarcely imagine the grief, anger, and panic surging through their hearts.

Ex. 12:39 adds that the Israelites "were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves." "Driven" is Strong's #1644, *garash*, and means, "to drive, to thrust, to expel."⁷ Again, God's Word impresses upon us that the Egyptians virtually threw the Israelites out of Egypt, so that Israel "could not wait"!

Continuing on in Ex. 12:33, "So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders." Again, we see that the Israelites began to leave immediately, just as God had commanded them to be ready to do.

Indeed, when God tells someone to flee in haste, He doesn't mean tomorrow, or in a few hours, or in the person's own good time, He means NOW! Remember the example of Lot and his family, who lingered while getting ready to leave Sodom, so that the angels sent to deliver them "took hold of his hand" (Gen. 19:16) and whisked him out of the city.

Remember, too, Jesus' instructions in Mat. 24:16-18: "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."

⁶ *Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon* and *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*

⁷ *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*

So it was with Israel. They ate the Passover in haste, ready to leave at a moment's notice. When the word came, they left immediately, as soon as it was light, "in the sight of all the Egyptians... [who] were burying all their firstborn" (Num. 33:3-4). They left their homes to begin their journey immediately, "and could not wait"! Lest any of them tarry or dilly-dally, the Egyptians urged them on, "thrusting" the Israelites out of their land.

Num. 33:3 further tells us that Israel "departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians." In this verse, the phrase "on the day after" is Strong's #4283, *mahorat*, and means "morrow." It can mean either the next calendar day, or the morning following the night, as it does in Gen. 19:34. Both definitions fit this verse: the morning of Nisan 15 was the day after the Passover sacrifice on the afternoon of the 14th, and it was also the morning following the night of the 15th, when the Passover had been eaten.

Finally, in Ex. 12:40-41, Moses wrote that Israel left Egypt after sojourning 430 years, "on that very same day," which Gal. 3:17 clarifies to be 430 years after God's covenant with Abraham. Then, in the next verse, he wrote, "It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations" (Ex. 12:42).

Putting this verse together with Num. 33:3 and Ex. 13:3-7, we know that Israel left Egypt on Nisan 15, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, so this "night of solemn observance" when Israel left Egypt is Nisan 15. Furthermore, Deut. 16:6 and Ex. 12:43-51 establish that the night Israel was delivered from Egypt was the same night they observed Passover.

This makes it an open and shut case with simple, inescapable logic. Some verses tell us Israel left Egypt on the night they observed Passover, while others tell us Israel left on Nisan 15, the First Day of Unleavened Bread. They both mean the same thing, for God cannot contradict Himself. The Passover meal, then, can only be on Nisan 15!

After all, what night could be a night of solemn observance more than Passover? The phrase "solemn observance" can also be translated "vigil" or "watching." Again, Passover was the night of vigil and the night of watching, for the Israelites were awaiting their deliverance. They were on high alert, waiting for the word to leave in haste!

Thus there is no separate "Night to Be Much Observed" one night after Passover. Search, please, and see if there is any record in Scripture of a "Night to Be Much Observed" being

celebrated one night after Passover — or being celebrated at all. The night to be much observed is Passover, not a separate celebration that's mentioned nowhere else in Scripture!

God's Word is logical and sensible. All we have to do is put all the pieces together, and we see a picture that's beautiful in its simplicity and clarity!

What About the Last Supper?

If the Passover sacrifice occurred at the 9th hour on the afternoon of the 14th, and the Passover meal happened that night — on the 15th — then what are we to make of the Last Supper? Did Christ eat the Passover with his disciples a night early? Did He institute a new ceremony and change when the Passover is to be observed? Or is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8)?

The Gospel of John tells us, **“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father,** having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. **And supper being ended,** the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself” (John 13:1-4).

This is the beginning of John's account of the Last Supper, yet he prefaces it by telling us it was before Passover. God's Word tells us, right here, that the Last Supper at the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th, was BEFORE PASSOVER! Of course it was. We have already seen, repeatedly, that the Passover sacrifice took place the following afternoon, at the same time Jesus would offer Himself up as our Passover Lamb!

Some proponents of an early-14th Passover have attempted to argue that “before the Feast of the Passover” simply means “before the Days of Unleavened Bread,” but that's a moot point. It could not be “before the Feast of the Passover” — a phrase used in Ex. 34:25 to include the Passover sacrifice — if Passover had already occurred! Passover is not before itself. That would be like saying it's “before the Sabbath” when the day has already begun. Either it was before Passover, or it wasn't. God's Word tells us it was before Passover.

The next morning — the morning of the 14th — as the Jewish rulers brought Jesus before Pontius Pilate, John further recorded, “Then they led Jesus 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” (John 18:28).

The Passover had not yet been observed when the Jewish rulers brought Jesus before Pilate! Why? Because the beginning of the 14th was not Passover, and never had been. God’s Word established Passover at the end of the 14th, not the beginning, as we have already seen.

What, then, are we to make of the other three gospels — Matthew, Mark, and Luke? What do their accounts tell us?

Here’s Mat. 26:17-19: “Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?’ 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.’”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.”

Mark says,

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?” 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. 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?”’ Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.” 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. (Mark 14:12-16.)

Finally, Luke recorded,

Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?” 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. “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?”’ Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. (Luke 22:7-13.)

Firstly, all three accounts appear to indicate that the Passover lambs were sacrificed on the First Day of Unleavened Bread — an impossibility. It would contradict not only John 13:1

and 18:28, but also the entirety of the Old Testament. Obviously, God’s Word cannot contradict itself. Any appearance of contradiction is a failure of understanding on our part, not a failure of God’s Word!

In Mat. 26:17 and Mark 14:12, “first” is Strong’s #4413, *protos*, and means, “first, beginning, chief, previous.”⁸ “Day” in all three accounts is Strong’s #2250, *hemera*, and means “day,” both in a literal and figurative sense. For example, the Septuagint uses the same word for the “Day of the Lord” in the Old Testament, as John does also in Rev. 1:10. We might interpret it as “time” or “season,” as in, “the time of the Great Tribulation.” “Bread” is not in the Greek text; the phrase is simply “first day of unleavened.”

Based on the above facts, this could simply mean “the beginning day of the unleavened,” or, “the former day of the unleavened,” or even, by implication, “the first day of de-leavening.” This would mean one of the days of preparation leading up to the actual Days of Unleavened Bread. Based on the timeline of events in the gospels, this would have been at the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th. All leaven had to be removed before the end of the 14th, and the lambs were to be slaughtered that afternoon. Time was winding down, everyone was making final preparations before Passover, nearly every home in Jerusalem was already filled up with out-of-town guests, and the disciples were beginning to wonder where they would be keeping the Passover! Their Master had kept them waiting until the last possible moment.

Secondly, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him where they should prepare the Passover. Now, what would have been going through the disciples’ minds when they asked this? We already saw that, 1) Passover encompasses the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread, and, 2) Passover is a pilgrimage feast. Therefore, although the disciples asked specifically about eating the Passover (the lamb), they would have prepared for the whole Passover feast, not just one night.

Indeed, when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection and ate with them, it was not only during the Feast of Passover, but also in this very house and this very room! On the first day of the week, at evening, Jesus appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together behind locked doors (John 20:19-20, Luke 24:33-43).

Thirdly, in the original Greek, none of these three accounts include a declaration from Jesus, “I will eat the Passover with My disciples,” but rather, “I may eat,” “I might eat,” or “I could eat.” Nor is there any mention — not in Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, nor John — of Jesus partaking of either the bread or the wine at the Last Supper. Search, please, and see!

⁸ *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*

Furthermore, Jesus' statement in Mat. 26:18, "I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples," is worthy of further examination. "Keep" is Strong's #4160, *poieo*, and means, "make, create, produce, be the author of, provide."⁹ In addition, the translation "at your house" is more of an interpretation than a translation. The literal phrase in the Greek text is "with you" or "near you," as *Young's Literal Translation* renders it. Here's a more literal translation: "With you [or near you], I will make the Passover with My disciples."

Is this passage hinting at Jesus' death as our Passover Lamb? "Near you, I will provide the Passover with my disciples." What Passover would He provide? Himself! Furthermore, His death would be near this man's house in Jerusalem, and it would be in the presence of some of His disciples!

Also, nowhere does the Bible call the Last Supper a Passover meal. Jesus did eat with His disciples during the Feast of Passover (the Days of Unleavened Bread), after His resurrection, but the Last Supper itself is never called Passover. Indeed, the apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. 11:23, wrote that the Last Supper took place on the night Jesus was betrayed — but he did not call it Passover! Again, please search and see whether there is any passage, anywhere in the Bible, that specifically tells us the Last Supper was a Passover meal.

There are additional clues that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal. One of the most glaring is Jesus' statement in Luke 22:15-16: "Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'"

"Desire" is Strong's #1939, *epithymia*, and means, "desire, craving, longing, desire what is forbidden."¹⁰ "Desired" is Strong's #1937, *epithymeo*, and has the same meaning. Jesus used the same phrasing in Mat. 13:17: "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired [*epithymeo*, #1937] to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Again, in Luke 15:16, in the midst of His parable of the prodigal son, Jesus said, "And he would gladly [*epithymeo*, #1937] have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything." Again, in Luke 17:22: "Then He said to the disciples, 'The days will come when you will desire [*epithymeo*, #1937] to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.'" Finally, in Rev. 18:14, we read, "The fruit that your soul longed for [*epithymia*, #1939] has gone from you, and all the

⁹ *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

¹⁰ *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.”

Basically, Jesus was telling His disciples, “With fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, but I cannot.” Or, “I wish with all My heart that I could eat this Passover with you before I suffer!”

Why could He not eat that Passover meal? Because He would be the sacrificial lamb for it, and therefore He would already be dead! Christ could not eat a Passover meal in which He Himself was the sacrifice.

This brings up another reason the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal: there was no lamb! There is no mention of Christ and the disciples eating a lamb; in fact, it would have been impossible for them to do so.

We saw already that the Passover lambs were slain on the afternoon of the 14th, and historical records such as Josephus confirm that is when the Jews of Christ’s day slaughtered the Passover lambs. In order for Christ and the disciples to have eaten a Passover lamb at the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th, they would have had to slaughter and roast it themselves, privately, outside the Temple. That, however, was specifically forbidden under God’s law (Deut. 16:5-6)!

Furthermore, Christ Himself was to be the Passover Lamb that year, and all years thereafter (1 Cor. 5:7). He offered one sacrifice for all time and all humanity (Heb. 7:27). Like the Passover lambs, He was without spot and without blemish (1 Pet. 1:19). Like the Passover lambs, His blood spared us from death.

Now what happened at the Last Supper? Jesus told His disciples that the bread represented His body (Mat. 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24), and that the wine represented His blood (Mat. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25). He had taught the same thing publicly earlier in His ministry (John 6:31-35, 41, 48-51, 58). Was it fulfilled at that time? Had He yet been sacrificed? No! “Without shedding of blood there is no remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22)!

Why, then, did Jesus share a last supper with His disciples? To teach them what His death the following afternoon would mean. To show them that He was to be the Passover sacrifice. To teach them that the flesh and blood of a lamb would be replaced with His

own flesh and blood. But it had not yet happened! It is impossible to partake of a sacrifice that has not yet happened.

Therefore, there was no sacrifice of any kind, and no shed blood, at the Last Supper. Without a lamb's flesh and blood, there could be no Passover. There was indeed a Lamb present — but He was still alive and His sacrifice had not yet happened! Furthermore, He was still alive the following afternoon, and it was against God's law to let any of the Passover lamb remain until the following morning (Ex. 12:10, 34:25; Deut. 16:4).

If the Last Supper had been a Passover meal, it would have violated God's law! It was against God's law — and therefore sin, for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4 [KJV]) — to offer the Passover sacrifice outside the Temple (Deut. 16:5-6). It was against God's law — and therefore sin — to hold Passover without the sacrifice of a Passover lamb (Num. 9:13). It was against God's law — and therefore sin — to hold over the Passover lamb until the following day (Deut. 16:4).

Remember, the Old Covenant was still in effect until Christ died (Heb. 9:16-18)!

9 Reasons the Last Supper Wasn't a Passover Meal

1. Happened before Passover (John 13:1, 18:28)
2. No mention of a lamb; impossible to have Passover without shed blood (Num. 9:13; Heb. 9:22)
3. God's law forbade sacrificing the Passover outside the Temple (Deut. 16:5-7). Transgressing the law is sin (1 John 3:4), and Christ never sinned (Heb. 4:15)
4. Jesus said He longed in vain to eat the Passover before He suffered (Greek text of Luke 22:15)
5. The Last Supper is never specifically called a Passover meal
6. Christ had not yet died, so the meaning of the bread and wine had not yet taken effect
7. Impossible to have a Passover meal before the Lamb (Christ) had been sacrificed
8. Its purpose was to show the disciples the meaning of Christ's sacrifice the following afternoon as our Passover Lamb
9. The bread and wine are memorials of Christ's death (1 Cor. 11:26), which happened the afternoon after the Last Supper. Keeping Passover at the beginning of the 14th prioritizes the Last Supper over Christ's death

Yet to argue that Christ and His disciples kept Passover early on the 14th would require all of these things. Either they sacrificed the Passover lamb on their own — and sinned, or they kept Passover without a sacrifice — and sinned. Furthermore, the Passover Lamb Himself would not shed His blood until the following afternoon. We know that Christ never sinned (Heb. 4:15); therefore He never broke the law of God!

Furthermore, when Jesus gave the bread and wine to His disciples, He said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-26). When we do the same, we “proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). When were they to remember Him? Not at that moment, for He was still alive. They were to remember Him after His death — the following night at Passover, and at all Passovers thereafter!

Now, did Jesus tell us to proclaim His last meal, or to proclaim His death? His death! Jesus pointed ahead to His death, as He had throughout His ministry. When did His death occur? On the afternoon of the 14th at the same time the Passover lambs were killed.

Can an event be remembered before it happens? If you celebrate your wedding anniversary, would you commemorate the day before it happened? Of course not! Why, then, would anyone argue that we ought to commemorate Christ’s death on the night before it happened?

Jesus’ instructions to His disciples at the Last Supper could be distilled down to this: “I wish with all My heart that I could eat this Passover with you, but I will not be here. I will be the Passover sacrifice instead. This is how you will remember Me.”

There’s a reason, then, that the Last Supper is never specifically called a Passover meal: it wasn’t! That idea becomes impossible. The Last Supper was the last meal shared between the Master and His disciples. He imparted to them His final instructions before suffering and dying on their — and our — behalf. He taught them the true meaning of Passover. He taught them how to observe Passover. He taught them that He Himself would be the Passover Lamb. So, the Last Supper was vitally important. But it wasn’t Passover.

Passover is all about Christ’s death. At His death, He became our Passover sacrifice. At His death, He covered us with His blood. With His death and our acceptance of His blood, we have been spared from death.

Without Christ’s death, there is no sacrifice. Without a sacrifice, there is no Passover. Without a sacrifice, there is no blood. Without blood, we are under the doom of eternal death, for “without shedding of blood, there is no remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22)! Therefore,

the Last Supper was not Passover, Christ's Passover sacrifice remains at the end of Nisan 14 just as it was in the Old Testament, and the Passover meal remains at the beginning of Nisan 15 just as it was in the Old Testament.

Reconstructing the Week Leading Up to the Crucifixion

The four gospels give us enough details that, with a little detective work, we can piece together a timeline of the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. This timeline reinforces that the Last Supper was before Passover, just as the Gospel of John tells us. It further shows us that Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, entered Jerusalem on Nisan 10 — the very same day the Passover lambs in the Old Testament were set aside!

Furthermore, each day from the 10th until the 14th, Jesus was "daily in the Temple" (Luke 19:47, 22:53), being examined and cross-examined by the Jewish leaders, who searched in vain for some fault in Him. Finally, on the morning of Nisan 14, Pontius Pilate declared three times, "I find no fault in Him." (John 18:38; 19:4, 6). Just before His sacrifice, the Passover Lamb — the Lamb of God — was declared to be "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19), just as God's law required of all Passover lambs (Ex. 12:5)!

Below is the timeline, complete with supporting Scriptures.

- **Nisan 9 — Sunset Thursday to sunset Friday**
 - Six days before Passover, Jesus eats dinner at Lazarus's house; Mary anoints His feet (John 12:1-3)
- **Nisan 10 — Sabbath (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday)**
 - Jesus rides into Jerusalem in the afternoon, mounted on a donkey and greeted by adoring throngs chanting, "Hosanna!" (John 12:12; Mat. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40)
- **Nisan 11 — Sunset Saturday to sunset Sunday**
 - In the morning, Jesus curses the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Jesus fashions a whip and drives the money changers out of the Temple (Mark 11:15-19; Mat. 21:12-17; Luke 19:45-48)
- **Nisan 12 — Sunset Sunday to sunset Monday**
 - The disciples see the withered fig tree (Mark 11:20)
 - Jesus silences His questioners in the Temple (Mark 11:27-12:34; Mat. 21:23-22:46; Luke 20)
 - The Olivet prophecy (Mark 11; Mat. 24; Luke 21)

- Two days before Passover (Mat. 26:1-2; Mark 14:1)
- Jesus eats dinner at the house of Simon the Leper; a woman anoints His feet (Mat. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9)
- Judas Iscariot meets with the priests and agrees to betray Jesus (Mat. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11)
- **Nisan 13 — Sunset Monday to sunset Tuesday**
 - Judas Iscariot begins to seek opportunity to betray Jesus (Mat. 26:16; Mark 14:11)
 - The disciples prepare the Passover (Mat. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13)
 - Jesus and His disciples eat the Last Supper at evening, the end of this day and beginning of the 14th (Mat. 26:20-35; Mark 14:17-31; Luke 22:14-38; John 13:17)
 - The Last Supper is before Passover (John 13:1-2, 18:28)
- **Nisan 14 — Sunset Tuesday to sunset Wednesday**
 - The Last Supper concludes at night (John 13:30)
 - Jesus and His disciples go across the Brook Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives (Mat. 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39; John 18:1)
 - Jesus is arrested at night by the henchmen of the Jewish rulers (Mat. 26:47-57; Mark 14:43-53; Luke 22:47-54; John 18:3-14)
 - Jesus is questioned by the priests (Mat. 26:59-68; Mark 14:55-65; Luke 22:63-71; John 18:19-24)
 - Jesus is brought before the governor, Pontius Pilate (Mat. 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28)
 - Three times, Pilate pronounces Jesus to be without fault (John 18:38; 19:4, 6)
 - Jesus is crucified at the 3rd hour (Mark 15:25)
 - Darkness falls over the land at the 6th hour (Mat. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44)
 - Jesus dies at the 9th hour (Mat. 27:45-50; Mark 15:33-37; Luke 23:44-46)
 - The Passover lambs are sacrificed at the Temple, beginning at the 9th hour, as Jesus dies (Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3; Deut. 16:2, 5-6)
 - Jesus is buried at evening, before sunset (Mat. 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:31, 38-42)
- **Nisan 15 — Sunset Wednesday to sunset Thursday**
 - Passover meal (Ex. 12:8; Deut. 16:3; John 18:28)
 - Jesus' Passover sacrifice remembered from this night forth (1 Cor. 11:26)

- First Day of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:18-19; Lev. 23:6-8; Num. 28:17-18, 25; Ezek. 45:21)
- The priests ask Pilate to put a guard on Christ's tomb (Mat. 27:62-66)
- **Nisan 16 — Sunset Thursday to sunset Friday**
 - Mary Magdalene and the other women buy and prepare perfumes and spices for Christ's body (Mark 16:1)
- **Nisan 17 — Sabbath (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday)**
 - Jesus rises from the dead on Sabbath evening (end of three days and three nights [Mat. 12:40, 27:63; Mark 8:31; John 2:19-22])
- **Nisan 18 — Sunset Saturday to sunset Sunday**
 - Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene (Mat. 28:1-10; Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18)
 - Jesus appears to the disciples (Luke 24:13-43; John 20:19-23)

Now notice that when Jesus ate at the house of Simon the Leper, it would have been the end of Nisan 12 and beginning of Nisan 13, according to the order of events in Mark. Yet moments earlier, at the end of a long day of teaching, He had told His disciples that Passover was TWO days away, not one. Two days after the end of Nisan 12 brings us to the end of Nisan 14 — when we've already established that the Passover ceremony began! Jesus' statement harmonized beautifully with the rest of God's Word. Again, we can clearly see that the Last Supper was not Passover, but rather the night before Passover.

When Did Christ and the Disciples Actually Keep Passover?

If the Last Supper was not Passover, then when did Jesus and His disciples actually keep Passover? Did they sacrifice the Passover lambs at the end of the 14th and partake of the sacrifice on the 15th, as God's law prescribed and the Jews of that day observed? Does Scripture tell us this? Indeed it does!

When Jesus was twelve, He accompanied His family up to Jerusalem for Passover, that is, the whole seven-day feast. We read, "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it..." (Luke 2:41-43).

Under the Old Covenant, God commanded His people to celebrate Passover in the place He put His name (Ex. 23:14-18, 34:23; Deut. 16:2, 5-6, 16), which was in Jerusalem at the Temple. Jesus' parents obeyed this command, as did Jesus Himself. There is no mention of Jesus' parents keeping Passover apart from the rest of the Jews, or at a separate time from the Jews.

Jesus' relative, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, served in the Temple as a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). Again, there is no indication of Zacharias and Elizabeth keeping Passover apart from the rest of the Jews, especially since he himself was a priest whose duties included offering Passover sacrifices! Further, there is no indication that the parents of either Jesus Himself or John the Baptist taught them to keep Passover apart from the rest of the Jews, yet God's Word tells us they were blameless.

In fact, throughout Jesus' adult life, He continued to keep the pilgrimage feasts at the Temple with the Jews, as we see in John 2:13, 23 and John 7:1-10. There is no mention of His keeping Passover apart from the rest of the Jews, nor did He ever condemn any of them for keeping Passover at the wrong time.

On the contrary, Jesus instructed His followers, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Mat. 23:2-3). He also taught that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Throughout His ministry, Jesus lambasted the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy and fake piety, yet He commanded His followers to follow their teaching of the law. The timing of the Passover observance was part of this physical aspect of the law, and therefore part of their teaching!

It is known from both the Bible and secular history that the Jews killed the Passover lambs on the afternoon of the 14th and held the Passover meal that night on the 15th, at the beginning of the Feast of Passover (Unleavened Bread). Jesus not only kept Passover with them, according to the law, but He instructed His disciples to follow the same instructions. Therefore, anyone who professes to follow Christ's example ought to eat Passover on the night of the 15th, just as He did His entire life!

If anyone would argue that Christ changed Passover to the 14th, remember that God does not change (Mal. 3:6), and that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul described himself as a Pharisee (Acts 22:2-5, 23:6; Phil. 3:5) who kept the law blamelessly according to its physical requirements (Phil. 3:6). He also wrote that one must be a spiritual Jew to be saved (Rom. 2:28), and that “the oracles of God” were committed to the Jews (Rom. 3:2). Again, just like Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, and Jesus’ original disciples, Paul found no fault with the Jews’ observance of Passover.

Nowhere, in the entirety of God’s Word, is there any condemnation of the Jews’ observance of Passover. Nowhere does it say they kept it at the wrong time. Search, please, and see if you can find any mention that the Jews kept Passover at the wrong time. It does not exist. Why? Because they kept the Passover ordinances blamelessly!

Christ Our Passover

Passover is all about “Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). It always has been and always will be. His death was ordained “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). His sacrifice not only fulfilled the Passover sacrifices of the Old Covenant; it’s what they foreshadowed all along!

Israel chose the Passover lambs on Nisan 10 (Ex. 12:3); Christ entered Jerusalem on Nisan 10 as the crowds hailed Him their King (John 12:1, 12). The Passover lambs were inspected for blemishes from the 10th until the 14th (Ex. 12:5-6); Christ was daily questioned and examined by the Jews in the Temple (Luke 22:53) from the 10th until the 14th, when Pilate declared three times, “I find no fault in him” (John 18:38; 19:4, 6).

Israel sacrificed the Passover lambs on the afternoon of the 14th (Ex. 12:6); Christ died as our Passover Lamb on the afternoon of the 14th (Mat. 27:46-50). The Passover lamb was slain “at its appointed time” (Num. 9:2-13); Christ’s death was ordained “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

Not a bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (Ex. 12:46); not a bone of Christ’s was broken (John 19:36). All Israel had to kill the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:6); all mankind is responsible for Christ’s death (John 3:16). God spared those who accepted the blood of the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:22-23); God will spare those who accept Christ’s blood from eternal death (John 3:16). The death of the Passover lamb delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt; Christ’s death delivered us from the bondage of sin and death.

The blood the Israelites smeared around the doors of their homes in Egypt, too, pictured Christ's sacrifice, for Jesus is the door (John 10:7, 9) through which we must enter to find eternal life. Not only did He bleed when scourged and crucified, but after He was dead, a Roman soldier "pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34). Just as Israel was saved by the blood of the lamb around the door, so we are saved by the blood of the Lamb, who is also the Door!

Even the fiery roasting of the Passover lambs foreshadowed Christ's death. Fire represents trial and suffering for the purpose of purification (1 Pet. 4:12-13, Mal. 3:2-23, 1 Cor. 3:15). Christ suffered on our behalf, being beaten nearly beyond recognition (Isa. 52:14) and suffering "even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). God's Word both says Christ's sacrifice was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10) and compares it to a fiery trial (1 Pet. 4:12-13)! Furthermore, the normal manner of roasting a whole lamb is on a spit, suspended in the air between two stakes. Jesus Christ died hanging on a cross between two criminals (Luke 23:32-33).

In every way, "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7) fulfilled the Passover sacrifice perfectly, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). God our Father left nothing to chance! He is the Master Architect and Designer. He planned out everything, down to the smallest detail. He designed everything in the universe, even the cells in your body and the rods and cones in your eyes!

Christ's death and resurrection are the two most important events in all of human history. Could anyone truly believe that their timing was meaningless — subject to the whims of the Romans?

If the timing was meaningless, why is His hour of death repeated three times in the gospels? Is the time given just for filler? Trivial details? Or is it extraordinarily important? Our salvation — our eternal life — God's entire plan — hinges on Christ's sacrifice! Without Christ's sacrifice, we are nothing. We are dead men walking.

At Christ's death, He became our Passover sacrifice. At His death, He covered us with His blood. With His death and our acceptance of His blood, we have been spared from death.

Without His death, there is no sacrifice. Without a sacrifice, there is no Passover. Without a sacrifice, there is no blood. Without blood, we are under the doom of eternal death!

If, then, Christ is our Passover and we are spared by His blood, then on what day and at what time of day did He die as our Passover sacrifice? On the afternoon of the 14th. When did His blood cover us? On the afternoon of the 14th. When, then, is Passover? It can only be after the death of the Lamb on the afternoon of the 14th. This alone should settle any question of when the Passover sacrifice was!

Furthermore, everything in the Old Testament pointed to “Christ and Him crucified” and showed that His blood sanctifies us. All the sacrifices. All the tabernacle and temple ceremonies. All the laws regarding ritual uncleanness. It all pointed to Christ and Him crucified.

Why did the unclean wash with water, become clean, and reenter the camp after sunset? Because we were all unclean. We had to wash with water (baptism). We partake of Christ’s sacrifice after sunset, following His crucifixion. This is what makes us clean!

Why did Israel offer two lambs as burnt offerings each day, one in the morning and one in the evening? Because it foretold when Christ would be crucified! As a writer named Juan Rains elegantly put it, “...the priests offered no sacrifice before the morning sacrifice and they offered no sacrifice after the evening sacrifice.... Therefore, the Messiah hung on the tree for the entire duration of time that Israel offered **any** sacrifice or made any offering. Christ is the sacrifice to end all sacrifices; He covered them all. Christ was the morning sacrifice, the evening sacrifice, and the Passover offering. He is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega.”

Why did Israel choose lambs on Nisan 10? Because Christ would enter Jerusalem on Nisan 10 and be chosen by the multitudes as their King. Why did Israel scrutinize the lambs for blemishes? Because Christ would be “daily in the temple” scrutinized for sin.

Why did Israel kill the lambs between the two evenings on the afternoon of the 14th? Because that’s when Christ would die. God our Father ordained it “from the foundation of the world!”

Weighing the Options

Having now presented the case for a late-14th Passover sacrifice and early-15th Passover meal, let us now weigh the options. How does an early-15th Passover observance fit the Biblical facts, and how does an early-14th Passover observance fit the Biblical facts?

Let's start with the late-14th/early-15th Passover:

- The Israelites chose lambs on Nisan 10, just as Christ entered Jerusalem on Nisan 10
- Israel borrowed from the Egyptians at a time when the Egyptians revered Moses and viewed Israel with favor (Ex. 11:2-3)
- The lambs were sacrificed on the afternoon of the 14th, leaving plenty of time to apply the blood and finish preparations
- The evening of the 14th means the end of the day, and is the designated time for both Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:6, 12; Lev. 23:5-6; Ezek. 45:21)
- Passover is the night that Israel was delivered from the land of Egypt; it is a night to be much observed, a night of watching (Ex. 12:41-51)
- Israel left promptly, as the Egyptians buried their dead, and could not wait, as the panicked Egyptians hurried them along (Ex. 11:1; 12:33-34, 39)
- Passover, arguably the most important event of the year, is a holy convocation and a sacred assembly, for it is part of a holy day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread
- There is no separation between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, for they are one feast (Ezek. 45:21, Luke 22:1)
- Jesus Christ and his parents (Luke 2:41-43), John the Baptist, Zacharias the priest, Elizabeth, Paul, and the other disciples all kept Passover with the Jews and did so “blamelessly” (Luke 1:6, Phil. 3:4-6)
- Jesus found no fault with the Jews’ observance of Passover, but commanded His disciples to do as the scribes and Pharisees taught them (Mat. 23:2-3)
- Christ ate the Last Supper before the Passover (John 13:1-2), because He died as our Passover Lamb the following afternoon, while the lambs were sacrificed at the Temple
- Christ indeed yearned to eat a Passover He could not eat, because He knew beforehand that He would be its sacrificial Lamb
- Jesus Christ died at the 9th hour on Nisan 14, at the exact same time as the Passover lambs under the Old Covenant, having fulfilled the Passover sacrifice perfectly
- The Passover must take place after Christ’s death, for without His sacrifice and His blood “there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22)

As you can see, this version of events does not contradict a single Scripture. Every verse fits perfectly into this scenario, like a hand in a glove.

Now, let's look at how an early-14th Passover fits the facts:

- The 14th at evening means different things for Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread
- Despite being ready to leave at a moment's notice, Israel did not leave Egypt for an entire day, from the night of the 14th until the night of the 15th
- Israel was driven out in haste while also lingering for a whole day
- Since the Israelites left Egypt as the Egyptians buried their dead, the Egyptians likewise had waited a whole day in order to bury their dead at night
- When borrowing from the Egyptians after the death of the firstborn, Israel had favor from the very people who were also driving them out
- Although Passover is a night to be much observed and the night when Israel came out of Egypt, the Night to Be Much Observed is a separate observance that's mentioned nowhere else in Scripture
- Passover is holy but not a holy day or a holy convocation
- The priests in King Josiah's time sacrificed 41,000 animals in about an hour between sunset and dark
- Elijah built an altar, offered a sacrifice, descended the mountain and killed the priests of Baal, talked with Ahab, climbed the mountain again, and sent his servant out seven times after sunset but well before dark
- Christ kept the Passover with the Jews and did not condemn them, even though they kept it on the wrong day
- "Passover" can sometimes mean Passover and sometimes the Days of Unleavened Bread, even though they're separated by a whole day
- Christ fulfilled the Passover lambs in every manner except for the time of His death
- Christ died when the Jews sacrificed the Passover lambs, not when God commanded the Passover sacrifice

As we can see, an early-14th Passover is a self-contradiction at every level. In fact, an early-14th Passover is only tenable by starting with the conclusion and then, through mental gymnastics, trying to force the facts to fit. We might also call this "circular reasoning."

The Story of Passover and Redemption

Here, then, is the story of Passover and our redemption, fully assembled. All the facts and all the verses come together beautifully to paint this picture.

On Nisan 10, the Israelites chose yearling lambs for the Passover sacrifice. Over the next several days, they monitored them for blemishes which would disqualify them. The Passover sacrifice must be without blemish.

Sometime between now and Passover, the Israelites borrowed from the Egyptians. God granted the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians.

On the afternoon of Nisan 14, the Israelites slaughtered and sacrificed the lambs and smeared the blood around their doorposts. That night on the 15th, the Israelites ate their lambs in haste, prepared to leave Egypt at a moment's notice. For them, it was a night of watching, a night of solemn observance. At midnight, the death angel passed through Egypt and killed all the firstborn throughout the land, sparing only the homes with lambs' blood on their doorposts.

Stricken with grief, the pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and commanded them to depart at once. As the morning of the 15th dawned, the Israelite families assembled outside their homes and began their journey. As they walked, the Egyptians around them buried their dead and pleaded for greater haste.

All day long, the Israelites walked, not stopping until nightfall. At this time, they enjoyed a meal of unleavened bread, for they had left in a hurry and their dough had had no time to leaven. For a total of seven days, the Israelites ate unleavened bread.

Year after year, the Israelites continued to keep the Passover, selecting the lambs on Nisan 10, slaughtering them on the afternoon of the 14th, and eating the flesh that night on the 15th. Once they entered the Promised Land, the Passover sacrifice and 7-day feast became a grand pilgrimage celebration at the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple.

As the Tabernacle, and then the Temple, took center stage in Israel's worship, sacrifices and ceremonies did as well. Each day, at the 3rd hour and again at the 9th hour (the latter being the same hour the Passover sacrifice began), the priests offered a yearling lamb, tended the lamps, and burned incense. Outside, the people gathered to pray.

Around AD 9, at the age of 12, Jesus Christ accompanied His earthly parents to Jerusalem for the 7-day feast of Passover. Throughout His life, He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover each year, obeying His Father's command to appear before Him at Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each year, He participated in the Passover sacrifices at the Temple and the feast thereafter, for He kept the law perfectly. When the time came, He would fulfill these ceremonies.

In AD 30, on Nisan 10, the same day Israel chose the Passover lambs each year, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, greeted by a cheering throng waving palm branches. From then on, the Jewish leaders cross-examined Him, questioned Him, and tested Him, seeking to find fault in Him, but there was none to be found.

On the 13th, He instructed His disciples to begin preparing for the 7-day feast of Passover. As they all sat down to a meal that night, at the beginning of the 14th and before Passover, Jesus instructed His disciples how to keep the Passover in the future. There would no longer be an earthly lamb; He Himself would be the Lamb, and His sacrifice was to be commemorated by bread and wine. That night, He was arrested.

As morning came, Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, who declared Him to be without fault. He was a Lamb without spot or blemish. At the 3rd hour, He was nailed to the cross, even as the priests offered the morning sacrifice and the people prayed. At the 9th hour on Nisan 14, He died, at the time of the evening sacrifice and as the Passover lambs began to be slaughtered. Before sunset, as the Passover sacrifices concluded, He was taken down from the cross and buried. He had fulfilled every requirement for the Passover sacrifice.

Three days later, on Nisan 17, as the weekly Sabbath drew to a close, Jesus rose from the dead, giving life to all who repent of their sins and accept His blood. The next day, He joined His disciples for a meal during the 7-day feast of Passover, even as He had promised.

Closing Thoughts

In closing, I repeat once again, do not believe me or this paper. Believe your Bible. Search these things out in your Bible and see whether they are so. Study and pray for wisdom from God, “who gives to all liberally and without reproach” (Jam. 1:5).

Ask questions. Question everything. Seek Biblical answers. “The word of our God stands forever” (Isa. 40:8). The truth will stand. A lie hates to be questioned, lest it be exposed. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “Prove [Strong’s #1381; test, examine, scrutinize] all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21).

Feel free to seek counsel from brethren and ministers. Perhaps they have insight you or I have overlooked. Study their counsel in the light of Scripture. Are their responses to you Scripturally sound, or are they based on misconceptions, emotion, or the opinions of others?

Above all, follow God and Him alone. Wherever He may lead you, follow Him. Whatever He commands you, do it. Whatever He teaches you, accept it.

When we follow God and God alone, there may be times that friends and relatives think we're weird or ignorant or even that we've forsaken the truth. This cannot stop us. We cannot let the fear of man outweigh our fear of God. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

We may be outnumbered. Truth is never decided by a majority vote. "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Mat. 7:14).

We may go against what beloved ministers have taught us. Does any minister have greater authority than the Word of God?

Changing the observance of Passover from the night of the 14th to the night of the 15th might seem like a small step, but we all know in our hearts that it's a huge step. Israel leaving Egypt was also a huge step. Peter stepping out of the boat was a huge step. Your own baptism was a huge step!

If you search your Bible thoroughly and are convicted, then this huge step is indeed what God requires of you, no matter how daunting it might seem! Remember Isa. 66:2: "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word." Remember Rom. 14:23: "Whatever is not from faith is sin." Remember Jam. 4:17: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."

If we want God's favor, we must obey Him! As the prophet Samuel told King Saul, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king" (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

God did not call us to an easy life. He called us to take up our cross and follow Christ (Mat. 16:24). As Jonah learned, it's possible to run from God, but it's impossible to hide. The truth doesn't go away if we choose to ignore it.

Let us also not hold the truth in secret, as if ashamed of it. The Apostle John recorded, "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees

they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42-43). Let us not love the praise of men more than the praise of God!

In fact, our Savior warned us, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). In contrast, “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets” (Luke 6:22-23). Jesus even told us, “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service” (John 16:2).

Hopefully, you won’t encounter any genuine persecution when discussing Passover with others. Nevertheless, watch for circular reasoning. Watch for dogmatic and even angry responses without Scriptural backing. Watch for refusal to discuss the matter at all. Watch for personal attacks against you or others for daring to question tradition. I have experienced all of these, and you may also. These are signs of people who are insecure in their own understanding. Respond to them with love and kindness.

If there is to be any pride, condescension, or malice, let it not come from us! God’s Word warns us many times not to become puffed up, even when we learn something new. “...[though I] understand all mysteries and have all knowledge... but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2). “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8:1-2). Finally, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Understanding is a gift from God that we ought to share with others, but we must not use it to exalt ourselves over others. Rather, let the Apostle Peter’s instructions guide our conduct in all things: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed” (1 Pet. 3:15-16).

May God our Father be with you and guide you in all things. May He grant each of us the wisdom to understand His truth, and the strength and courage to follow it at any cost!

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APPENDICES

Scripture References & Additional Notes

APPENDIX A: Scriptures on “Between the Two Evenings”

“Between the two evenings” is used eleven times in God’s Word. Here is the full list:

- Ex. 12:6 — Passover lamb slain
- Ex. 16:12 — God sends the quail
- Ex. 29:39, 41 — the daily offerings
- Ex. 30:8 — Aaron lights the lamps
- Lev. 23:5 — the Lord’s Passover
- Num. 9:3, 5, 11 —the Passover sacrifice
- Num. 28:4, 8 — the daily offerings

Verses That Show Two Evenings:

- Mat. 14:15, 23 — two evenings mentioned; first is late afternoon
- Evening Before Sunset
 - Mat. 27:57
 - Mark 15:42
 - Deut. 23:11
 - Jer. 6:4
- Evening After Sunset
 - Job 7:4
 - Psa. 30:5
 - Prov. 7:9
 - Mat. 20:8

APPENDIX B: Scriptures About the Feast of Passover

- Ex. 11:1-13:10 — Instructions on borrowing from the Egyptians, sacrificing and eating the Passover lambs, keeping the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and leaving Egypt
- Ex. 23:14-18 — Passover/Unleavened Bread is a pilgrimage festival
- Ex. 34:18, 25 — Unleavened bread to be eaten for seven days; Passover sacrifice (“sacrifice of the Feast of Passover”) not to be left until morning
- Lev. 23:5-8 — The Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread reviewed
- Num. 9:1-14 — Israel’s second Passover; provision made for a special Passover (7-day feast) in the second month
- Num. 28:16-25 — Sacrifices during the 7-day feast
- Num. 33:3-4 — Israel left Egypt on the morning after Passover in the sight of the Egyptians, who were burying their firstborn
- Deut. 16:1-8 — Passover sacrifice not to be performed at a private residence; additional review of Passover instructions
- Josh. 5:10-11 — Israel sacrifices the Passover and observes its first Passover in the Promised Land
- 2 Kings 23:21-23 — King Josiah’s Passover celebration
- 2 Chron. 8:13 — Reiteration that Passover is a pilgrimage festival
- 2 Chron. 30:1-5, 13-27 — King Hezekiah keeps the 7-day Feast of Passover in the second month, as prescribed in Num. 9
- 2 Chron. 35:1-19 — King Josiah’s Passover celebration recorded in greater detail; the priests offer Passover sacrifices from afternoon until nightfall
- Ezra 6:19-22 — The Jews celebrate Passover after returning from Babylon
- Ezek. 45:21 — Passover is a 7-day feast
- Mat. 26:2 — Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread happen at the same time
- Mat. 26:17-19 — Jesus’ disciples prepare for the Passover
- Mat. 26:26-30 — Jesus explains His role as the Passover Lamb
- Mat. 27:1-61 — Jesus’ trial, suffering, and death
- Mark 14:1 — Reiteration that Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread happen at the same time
- Mark 14:12-16 — Jesus’ disciples prepare for the Passover
- Mark 14:22-26 — Jesus explains His role as the Passover Lamb
- Mark 15 — Jesus’ trial, suffering, and death
- Luke 2:41-44 — Jesus and His parents make their annual pilgrimage to celebrate Passover at Jerusalem

Luke 22:1 — Feast of Unleavened Bread is also Passover
Luke 22:7-13 — Jesus' disciples prepare for the Passover
Luke 22:15 — Jesus longed in vain to eat Passover with His disciples before His death
Luke 22:17-20 — Jesus explains His role as the Passover Lamb
Luke 23 — Jesus' trial, suffering, and death
John 2:13, 23 — Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with the Jews
John 6:4 — Passover mentioned
John 11:55 — Passover draws near at the end of Jesus' ministry
John 12:1, 12 — Six days before Passover, Jesus dines at Lazarus's house and enters Jerusalem the next day
John 13:1-2 — Jesus eats the Last Supper with His disciples before Passover
John 18:28 — The Passover meal eaten after Christ's death
John 18:39 — Pontius Pilate offers to release Jesus at Passover
John 18:28-19:42 — Jesus' trial, suffering, and death
John 19:14 — Jesus crucified on "the Preparation Day of the Passover," that is, the 14th.
(On a side note, "the sixth hour" likely means the sixth hour after Jesus' arrest rather than a specific time of day, for the other three gospels tell us Jesus was crucified from the 3rd to the 9th hour.)
Acts 12:4 — King Herod arrests Peter during the Days of Unleavened Bread, intending to give him a show trial "after Passover"
Acts 20:6 — Paul and his companions keep the Days of Unleavened Bread/Passover
1 Cor. 5:7-8 — Christ is our Passover Lamb, sacrificed for us
1 Cor. 11:23-31 — Christ's Passover sacrifice must be partaken of in a worthy manner
Heb. 9:16-10:18 — Christ's sacrifice fulfilled the sacrifices of the Old Covenant and covers our sins
Heb. 11:28 — Moses kept Passover in Egypt by faith
1 Pet. 1:19 — Christ is our perfect Lamb, "without blemish and without spot"

APPENDIX C: Scriptures About the Daily Offerings, Incense Offerings, and Hours of Prayer

Ex. 29:38-42 — Two lambs offered daily, the first in the morning and the second in the evening

Num. 28:3-8 — Reiteration of Ex. 29:38-42

Ex. 30:7-9 — The priests to offer incense and tend the lampstand morning and evening (same time as daily offerings)

Psa. 141:2 — David links prayer with incense and the evening sacrifice

Rev. 5:8 — Incense represents prayer

1 Chron. 23:30 — The Levites stood every morning and evening to praise God

Psa. 119:108 — Prayers again linked to offerings

Psa. 55:17 — David prayed three times a day: evening, morning, and noon

Dan. 6:10 — Daniel also prayed three times a day

Dan. 9:20-21 — Daniel prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice

Luke 1:8-10 — The people prayed at the temple during the incense offering (and evening sacrifice)

Acts 10:9 — Peter prayed at the 6th hour (noon)

Acts 10:30 — God sent an angel to Cornelius while he was praying at the 9th hour (mid-afternoon)

Acts 3:1 — “Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” This establishes the 9th hour as the hour of the evening prayer, the incense offering, and the evening sacrifice

APPENDIX D: The Hebrew Calendar

God’s calendar, the Hebrew calendar, is the one on which the dates of all the Biblical holy days are determined. It is a lunar-solar calendar, meaning (to oversimplify) that the months are calculated by the moon, while the years are calculated by the sun.

Here are the months of the Hebrew calendar, along with other details:

	Month	Length	Other Names	Time of Year
1	Nisan	30 days	Abib	Spring
2	Iyar	29 days	Ziv	Spring
3	Sivan	30 days		Late spring-early summer
4	Tammuz	29 days		Summer
5	Av	30 days		Summer
6	Elul	29 days		Late summer-early fall
7	Tishri	30 days	Ethanim	Fall
8	Cheshvan	29 or 30 days	Bul	Fall
9	Kislev	29 or 30 days		Late fall-early winter
10	Tevet	29 days		Winter
11	Shevat	30 days		Winter
12	Adar	29 days; 30 in leap year		Late winter-early spring
13	Adar II (only leap years)	29 days		Late winter-early spring

APPENDIX E: Answering Objections

Objection to Mat. 14:15, 23 Showing Two Evenings

This passage mentions one evening before Christ fed the five thousand, and a second evening after He did so.

OBJECTION: The translation in Mat. 14:15 could be rendered “evening was approaching” rather than “evening had come.” These verses would then not prove that evening can be before sunset.

*ANSWER: God’s Word doesn’t support this claim. The Greek word *ginomai* (Strong’s #1096) translated “had come” in these verses means, “become, come into existence, begin to be, to be born, to rise, arise, come on, appear, to come to pass, happen.” Thus the correct translation is “when evening appeared,” “when it became evening,” or, as the NKJV has it, “when it was evening.”*

Furthermore, Matthew used *ginomai* for the coming of both evenings in Mat. 14:15-23. Even more significantly, he used it to note the time of the Last Supper in Mat. 26:20: “When evening had come [*ginomai*], He sat down with the twelve.” To argue *ginomai* means “approaching” would mean that Christ and the disciples ate the Last Supper when evening was approaching — pushing the Last Supper back to the afternoon of the 13th!

Objection to Mat. 27:57 Showing Evening Can Be Before Sunset

In this passage, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pontius Pilate for Christ’s body “when it was evening,” but before sunset.

OBJECTION: This translation can also be rendered, “When evening was approaching.”

*ANSWER: The Greek word in this passage is also *ginomai* (Strong’s #1096), just as in the above passages, so this objection, too, has no basis.*

Objection to Deut. 23:11 Showing That Evening Can Be Before Sunset

This verse instructs an unclean man to wash his clothes at evening and come into the camp after the sun sets.

OBJECTION: The text of Deut. 23:11 could be rendered, “when evening approaches” instead of “when evening comes.”

ANSWER: This claim is just as wrong as the others above. The Hebrew word translated “comes” is *pana* (Strong’s #6437) and means “turn (either toward or away from.” *Young’s Literal Translation* correctly translates this phrase, “at the turning of the evening.”

Pana is used in Jer. 6:4, where it’s translated “goes away,” as in, “the day goes away.” It’s also used in Psa. 90:9, where it’s translated “passed away,” as in, “our days have passed away.”

Therefore, this verse should either be translated, “at the turn of evening,” or, “as evening passes away.” It can mean either the beginning of evening or the end of evening, but either way, it’s still evening and it’s still before sunset!

Objection Based on Ex. 12:6

Here, God told Israel to keep the Passover lambs “until the fourteenth day of [Nisan].”

OBJECTION: The use of the phrase “until the fourteenth” means Israel could not keep the Passover lambs past the beginning of the 14th, but had to slaughter them immediately at the beginning of the 14th.

ANSWER: “Until” is *ad* (Strong’s #5704). It’s used in Gen. 8:5, where “the waters decreased continually until [*ad*] the tenth month.” Does that mean the waters stopped receding as soon as the tenth month began, even though they still mostly covered the mountains? Of course not!

This same word is also used in Gen. 19:37-38, where Moab and Ben-Ammi are identified as the ancestors of, respectively, the Moabites and Ammonites “to [*ad*] this day.” Did they stop being the ancestors of their progeny after that day? Of course not!

So, too, Israel kept the Passover lambs past the beginning of the day, until the afternoon of the 14th. They were, however, instructed not to kill the Passover lambs before the 14th.