

# THE PASSOVER IN THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH TODAY

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## Overview

Over the years there have been a number of questions about the Passover. A few people seem to feel that the Church is keeping the Passover at the wrong time. Part of their problem stems from not realizing that today we do not keep the Old Testament Passover. That is, some have mistakenly assumed that we should look primarily at the Old Testament to see how we should keep Passover.

On the contrary, God's Church has always taught that the New Testament Passover is very different from the Old Testament Passover. We do not sacrifice a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the altar. The Passover lamb only foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ, but Christians today take of the memorials of Christ's death, the bread and wine.

The central passage which gives instructions on how New Testament Christians should celebrate the Passover is in I Corinthians 11. Here the apostle Paul makes it quite clear what we are to do. "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The apostle Paul leaves no doubt here: we should take the same symbols and at the same time as Jesus himself did. Nothing is said about taking these at the time of Jesus' death rather than when he actually ate them with the disciples. This is what Paul "received from the Lord" and what he "also delivered to" us. If it is asked when Jesus took these symbols with the disciples, again we do not have to guess or suppose. The gospel of John plainly shows this was one day before the Jews of his time ate their Passover (Jn. 18:28; 19:14).

There is no doubt about the correctness of what we do now. The Church has faithfully adhered to Christ's own instructions all these years.

Therefore, the question of the Old Testament Passover-- which has become so important to some--is really somewhat an academic one. As far as the New Testament Passover is concerned, we do not have to look into Exodus or Deuteronomy to tell us what to do. The Passover has been transformed. However, since it is an academic question, it is vital that our explanation of the events and chronology of the Exodus be sound.

Some recent study has indicated that our previous explanation of Old Testament events is not as airtight as it should be. Consequently, we have prepared this preliminary study paper on this subject.

Again, we emphasize that no change of doctrine or practice is involved. On the contrary, our present Passover and Feast observance is actually strengthened. For those of you who have to answer multitudinous questions about Passover, chronology, and exegesis every spring, we hope this preliminary study paper will prove helpful. We would be very appreciative of any comments.

Introduction

For the Worldwide Church of God the entirety of the Old and New Testaments is the Word of God. We are dedicated to believing and putting into practice every word of God for man. The Church is especially sensitive toward and attuned to the directives of Jesus Christ and his revelation to the apostolic writers in the New Testament. The Old Testament is not ignored or even slighted; on the contrary, the Old Testament is as much a part of the Christian Bible as the New. Yet the Old Testament is to be read and understood in the light of the New, and its instructions and practices may be revised and reinterpreted by the later revelation to the Church.

We know and have believed for years that Jesus himself changed the Passover symbols from the roasted lamb to the bread and wine. This information is not in the Old Testament; it is a later revelation. Therefore, the Church of God today keeps the New Testament Passover. In the 20th century we look first at the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus and the meaning of his death in God's plan of salvation. How did the Apostolic Church understand these events and how did it commemorate them each year? The gospels give a detailed account of the events culminating in the murder of Jesus.

Nevertheless, there is one--and only one--passage which discusses the specific Passover observance of the early Church. Many of the questions that have arisen over the years would have been avoided if the Old Testament had been put aside for the moment and this passage read with care. It tells us precisely how and when to keep the New Testament Passover as instituted by Christ. This is in I Corinthians 11:17-34.

I Corinthians 11

In this important chapter the apostle Paul tells the Corinthian church why they are keeping the Passover in an incorrect manner and how they should properly keep it. This model for the Church throughout history shows without doubt how we should carry out the meaning-filled memorial of Christ's death. Paul shows the correct understanding of the gospel accounts:

"When therefore you gather together, it is not the Lord's food [kuriakon deipnon] that you eat, for each person goes ahead with his own meal so that one is hungry and another drunk. Don't you have houses in which to eat and drink? . . . For I received from the Lord that which I pass on to you, namely the following: The Lord Jesus on the night of his betrayal took bread and, after blessing it, said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in my memory.' In the same way, after the eating (of the bread), he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you do it, in my memory.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you commemorate the death of the Lord until his coming." (Translations ours throughout unless otherwise indicated.)

Familiarity with this and other passages can sometimes make one read over the well-known words without noticing their implications. Paul first of all says that the tradition or instructions he gives are "from the Lord," from Christ himself. Notice that nothing is said about commemorating the Exodus or about taking the Old Testament Passover (even the term "Passover" is not mentioned here).

Secondly, Paul says nothing about the time of Jesus' death. Rather he puts the setting for his comments in "the night of his betrayal." He is telling the Corinthians what Jesus did and saying they should do the same. He is explaining what Jesus did on the last evening with his disciples and says for Christians to do the same thing that their Lord did. Nothing is said about doing it at a different time other than when Jesus himself did it. Those same symbols--taken at the same time of the year, month and day--represent the body and shed blood of Christ, a memorial of his death. But those symbols are taken exactly as and when Jesus did (see Appendix IV on the term "Lord's Supper").

We are not told to take these symbols at 3:00 p.m. on Nisan 14 when Jesus died. On the contrary, the examples, the implications and the specific wording of I Corinthians 11 all show that we should carry out this ceremony in the early evening at the beginning of Nisan 14--precisely as Jesus himself did and precisely as God's Church has done for decades.

#### The Last Supper

The events of the last few hours of Jesus' human life are generally quite clear once we recognize the Wednesday, Nisan 14 crucifixion. Trying to go back more than a few days brings up



difficulties, but the 24 hours preceding his death are accounted for almost hour by hour.

At some time during the day before his evening gathering, he commanded the disciples to prepare for it (Mt. 26:17-20; Mk. 14:12-17; Lk. 22:7-14). We are not told exactly when this was, but renting the room and doing the preparations to produce a fairly extensive meal for more than a dozen may have taken some time; they did not sit down to eat until it was already "evening" (Mt. 26:20; Mk. 14:17).

The meal, the footwashing, the institution of the symbols of bread and wine and Jesus' lengthy conversation with the disciples evidently took several hours. By the time he had walked to the Garden, prayed for some time and was finally arrested, it was probably well after midnight. His questioning by Caiaphas also took time, so that it was already "early in the morning" when Jesus was finally taken to Pilate (Jn. 18:28). But this same passage also notes that the Jews "did not enter into the praetorium so that they would not be defiled and could eat the Passover" (see also Jn. 19:14).

Here is another clear statement: the Jews had not yet eaten their Passover. Jesus had taken the Passover (pascha) in the early evening as a new day had begun. But since the Jews had not eaten the Passover, there is no other interpretation than that Jesus had his last meal with the disciples at the beginning of Nisan 14. We do not know of any other time that the Jews have kept the Passover than late on the 14th (see further in the paper). So there is no doubt that Jesus instituted the symbols of the bread and wine at the beginning of the 14th.

Thus, from the letter of Paul to the Corinthians and from the gospel of John, the current practice of the Church is categorically confirmed. The Church keeps the New Testament Passover (or Lord's Supper) at the beginning of Nisan 14 and does so according to the instructions and example of Jesus and the Apostolic Church.

Once we recognize that we keep the New Testament Passover and not the Old, the question of the time of the Old Testament Passover becomes something of an academic one. Whenever it was makes little difference to what we do today. It is very important to keep this in mind as we investigate the time of the Passover in the Old Testament. We want to be careful not to read the New Testament into the Old just as we have to avoid reading the Old into the New.

The time of the Old Testament is something of a technical question, involving consideration of certain historical facts as well as the Hebrew text of the original accounts. This means that we must be careful that our explanation is scholarly and technically correct. We have no need to apologize for our New Testament practice. But if we turn around and base this practice on an assumption that the Jews are wrong in their Passover observance, we had better be terribly certain of our information. After all, we put great store by the fact that the Jews have correctly preserved the Sabbath, the calendar and even the Old Testament scriptures themselves. We gain little by forcing an artificial harmony between Old and New Testaments; if we are wrong, we could cause a major disruption in our biblical exegesis and a loss of confidence in our biblical understanding.

#### Instructions for the Passover in Exodus

The Exodus account is all very familiar since we rehearse it once a year. Yet simply because of familiarity, there are certain points likely to be overlooked. Also in a few instances the KJV rendering is not always the clearest. Therefore, it is important to go through the account and notice certain points which may not always stand out.

When God first spoke to Moses in the Sinai desert and told him to go back to Egypt, he informed him of certain things which would happen. One of these concerned the spoiling of the Egyptians: "And I will give this people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians so that you do not go out empty. A woman will ask for objects of silver and gold and for clothing from her neighbor and the individual living in her house" (Ex. 3:21-22).

Similarly, several days before the last plague--the death of the firstborn--God told Moses to tell the people to ask for gold and silver from the Egyptians (Ex. 11:2). In fact Exodus 11 is a fairly detailed account of what would happen. Moses and the Israelites knew beforehand that the Egyptians would almost "drive" (Hebrew gārash) them out of the country because they would be in such a hurry for the Israelites to leave (v.2). The "midnight" (Hebrew hāṣōt hallailāh) passage of the death angel was foretold (v. 4). These instructions were also given prior to Nisan 10 (cf. Ex. 12:3).

Most of chapter 12 is taken up with instructions with which we are intimately familiar. So only certain points will be noted here, though we will come back to some later which will be passed over for the moment.

Verse 11 emphasizes that the Israelites were to eat the Passover meal completely dressed, with staff in hand and shoes on feet, and to eat it hurriedly. The implication is that they were to eat as if they were about to leave at any minute.

Unleavened bread was to be eaten seven days (v. 15). Verse 18 describes that period of time more specifically: "You shall eat unleavened bread in the first month, on the 14th day of the month in the evening (Hebrew bā<sup>c</sup>erev until the 21st day of the month in the evening". Thus, one began to eat unleavened bread in the evening at the end of the 14th and continued to do so until the evening of the end of the 21st day. Note here that the expression "the 14th day in the evening" refers to the end of the 14th, not the beginning.

As soon as the death angel passed at midnight, Pharaoh got up and "called to" (Heb. qārā' lē) Moses and Aaron. The Egyptians "were urgent" (Heb. hāzaq lēmahār) about sending the Israelites out (v. 33). Verse 35 reminds us of the fact that the Israelites had already asked for gold and silver from the Egyptians. Moses had told the people to ask for such spoils when he gave them instructions about the Passover (11:2). The Israelites had done as instructed (12:28). Thus, the translation of the passage, to conform to both grammar and context, is best given as follows: "And the descendants of Israel had already done as Moses had told them; and they had asked for objects of silver and gold and clothing from the Egyptians (see RSV, New English Bible and other modern translations).

Verse 42 is misleadingly translated in the KJV. A better rendering can be found in the New English Bible, the RSV and other modern translations. It should read something like the following: "It was a night of vigil for the Eternal to bring them out of the land of Egypt; this night is to be a night kept to the Eternal by all the descendants of Israel throughout their generations." (The Hebrew makes a play on words which cannot be rendered literally in English without confusion.)

#### Resume of Discussion

The facts so far given are the following:

1. Israel was told to ask spoils from the Egyptians days before the Passover.
2. Israel knew the death angel would pass at midnight, and that the Egyptians would then want to get them out of Egypt as soon as possible.

3. They were to eat the Passover as if ready to leave at any moment. That is, they were to keep a vigil as referred to in 12:42.

If this were all the information we had, we would conclude that Israel left Egypt on the same night as the Passover. Despite the logistics of getting such a huge group under way, this could have been done since they were already prepared and already knew the death angel would pass about midnight. They would have been already on the move long before sunup. (The implication is that they were all gathered into the city of Rameses and kept the Passover together there, since they began their journey from there.)

However, two passages have not yet been considered. One is Exodus 12:22 which states: "None of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning (Heb. bōqer)." Another is Deuteronomy 16:1: "For in the month of Aviv the Eternal your God brought you out of Egypt in the night." How do these fit in with passages already considered?

#### Israel Went Out at Night

Strictly speaking, of course, Israel did not actually leave Egypt for several days. Egyptian territory and influence seems to have been passed only after they crossed the Red Sea. So the "going out at night" means only that Israel began its journey by night.

Both the word for "night" (lailāh) and the word for "morning" (bōqer) are comparable to English usage. That is, both overlap somewhat. Lailāh is applied to any point between about sunset and about sunrise and is thus fairly well defined just as "night" is in English.

Boqer, though, is somewhat more troublesome. In English we can use the term "morning" for any time between midnight and noon. We have not found any passage which specifically begins boqer with the middle of the night. It often refers to the light period of the day from sunrise until about the middle of the day just as English "morning" does.

However, bōqer can also be used in reference to the latter portion of the night before sunrise. Several passages show this: "She lay down at his feet until morning (bōqer), then she got up before it was possible for one to recognize the person beside him" (Ruth 3:14). This shows the time was long before sunrise

while still very dark. Yet it was called bōger. I Samuel 20:10 also indicates a time before sunrise. Compare I Kings 3:21 as well. (Mark 1:35 speaks of Jesus rising early in the morning long before sunrise. While the Hebrew word naturally is not used, it shows the concept of "morning" including the time before sunrise as well as the time afterward.)

A further indication is found in the "watches" used for dividing up the night. There were three of these. The first third of the night fell into an unnamed watch, though this may have been called the "evening watch" (Lam. 2:19). The second was called the "middle watch" (Jdg. 7:10). The last part of the night fell into the "morning (habbōger) watch" (Ex. 14:24; I Sam. 11:11). This is a further indication that "morning" could be applied to the last part of the night.

It might be noted here that Exodus 11 and 12 emphasize that the death angel passed about midnight (11:4; 12:29). The Israelites already knew the death angel would come by about then. Once the angel passed, the danger was also past. Since Israel was told to eat in haste and to burn anything left until evidently "morning" (bōger), is not this a good indication, in the context, that bōger began just after midnight just as it does in our modern parlance?

There is no absolute proof for this. But it is significant that certain Jewish groups (including the Samaritans) later required everything to be eaten by midnight (see Pesahim 10:9; Zebahim 5:8). What was not consumed by then was burned. Is this what God meant when he commanded them to burn anything left until bōger and not to go out of their houses until bōger? This is certainly indicated by the context. In any case we have evidence that bōger could include a considerable period of time before sunrise. Thus, there is no contradiction or difficulty with the statements that Israel left while it was "morning" and yet also went out "in the night."

A second possible explanation is as follows: the Israelites could be said to go out at night because that is when Pharaoh's command came. This is the explanation given by such eminent Jewish commentators as Rashi and Ibn Ezra. Even according to it the Israelites did not have to wait until sunrise to begin getting under way. Since God commanded them to stay in the house only until "morning," not "sunrise." But even if they waited until shortly before sunrise to leave their houses, they could be said to go out in the night simply because that was when Pharaoh was forced into ordering their departure.

Each of these explanations has its problems but far less so than those which have the Exodus Passover occurring on the evening of the 13th/14th. In addition to scriptures already examined, here are some more supporting a 14th/15th Passover in the Old Testament.

#### Other Scriptures

Two more passages add weight to the argument that the original Passover was on the evening at the end of the 14th. One of these is Deuteronomy 16:4: "Leaven shall not be seen in all your borders for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh which you kill in the evening of the first day remain all night until morning."

The "first day" seems to refer to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as is indicated by the same exact expression in Leviticus 23:7. Yet if understood correctly the passage says the Passover was slaughtered in the evening of the first day and is, furthermore, a rather plain statement that the Passover was slaughtered on the evening at the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th.

However, there is a problem, namely, the fact that the Passover was to be killed on the 14th. The solution seems to be that the term "evening" could also refer to the evening at the beginning of the day (see below). This ambiguity might allow one to speak of "sacrificing" the Passover "on the first day at evening" even though it was normally thought of as being at the end of the 14th. That is, since the Passover in that time could still be slaughtered between sunset and dark, one could speak of its being at the beginning of the 15th since it was after sunset. However, in later times the temple ritual required a lengthier period of time. Since the Passover was normally designated for the 14th, it was pushed back into the afternoon and could not thereafter be said to take place at the beginning of the 15th. (Although this explanation is less than certain, the term "first day" is difficult to interpret as anything other than the 15th of Nisan.)



Secondly, Numbers 33:3 states, "They journeyed from Rameses in the first month on the 15th day of the first month, on the morrow after the Passover they went out." The expression "on the morrow after" (mimmohōrāt) when used in the Old Testament in reference to an event of a previous evening seems to mean "the next morning," that is, about 12 hours later rather than 36 hours later. Notice Genesis 19:33-34: "Their father drank wine that night, and the elder one went in and slept with her father . . . And on the morrow (mim-mohōrāt) the elder said to the younger, 'I slept with my father.'"

These points all confirm the conclusion that the evening of the Passover was the evening preceding the 15th, namely the evening at the end of the 14th.

#### "In the Evening/Between the Two Evenings"

It is well known that the Bible uses two expressions in regard to the time of the Passover. One is "in the evening" (bā<sup>c</sup>erev). The other is "between the two evenings" (bēn hā<sup>c</sup>arbāyīm).

As already noted the expression "in the evening" has a certain ambiguity about it. It can sometimes be used of the evening at the beginning of a day; however, that is often not the case. We have already noted that unleavened bread is to be eaten "the 14th day in the evening until the 21st day in the evening" (Ex. 12:18). The fast of the Day of Atonement which is on the 10th day, is to begin "in the 9th day of the month in the evening" (Lev. 23:27,32). Thus, there is a good chance, a priori, that "the 14th in the evening" means the evening at the end of the 14th rather than at the beginning.

In this connection it is significant that Joshua 5:10 uses a very similar Hebrew wording to Exodus 12:18, clearly equating the eating of the Passover with the evening beginning the first day of unleavened bread. The passage in Joshua states that the Israelites camped at Gilgal and "observed the Passover on the 14th day of the month in the evening." Since one begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 14th "in the evening" (at the end of the 14th--Ex. 12:18), is it not likely that the Passover offered on the 14th "in the evening" is also at the end of the 14th?



It might be asked at this point whether the Feast of Unleavened Bread is separate from the Passover. The answer is, Of course! They have separate symbolism and separate ceremonial aspects. Yet this does not rule out some contiguous relationship such as that of Passover forming the first stage of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and flowing into it.

Surely, the Passover is on the 14th and the Feast begins on the 15th (Lev. 23:5-6; Num. 28:16-17). They are indeed separate, but the Passover is at the end of the 14th and the Feast begins at the beginning of the 15th with the eating of the lamb. In other words, the Passover lamb was sacrificed at the end of the 14th while the Passover meal was eaten beginning sometime near or after sunset as the 15th began.

Therefore, it is no surprise to find that certain scriptures do in fact associate the Passover and the Feast very closely. The term "feast of the Passover" is used in Exodus 34:25. Ezekiel 45:21 states, "On the 14th day of the first month you shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days. Unleavened bread shall be eaten." Of course, by New Testament times the Passover and Feast of Unleavened are used interchangeably a great deal of the time (cf. Lk. 2:42; Jn. 13:1).

"Between the two evenings" is usually taken to mean between sundown and dark, a period of about an hour or so (see Appendix II). This may be correct as far as the original Passover instructions were concerned. At least some later Jewish groups interpreted the original instructions in this way, including the Karaites and Samaritans. However, such a narrow definition is possible only where a small number of animals are slain or where all can be slain at the same time as was the case with the original Passover.

Later Passovers were kept somewhat differently from the one in Egypt. The blood of the lambs had to be sprinkled on the altar (2 Chron. 30:16; 35:11). This placed a mandatory minimum of time on the operation which increased as the number of victims increased. It would simply have been impossible to slay the thousands of animals for the tens of thousands of pilgrims in Jerusalem, in the latter days of the second Temple, in the hour or so between sunset and dark. Thus, the time for slaying the victims had to be either extended later or put earlier. The priests chose to put it earlier, showing that they regarded the Passover as a ceremony to be performed on the 14th. While we do not have specific information from the time before Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem, we

may safely assume some extension of time was necessary then as well in those (rare!) years when large numbers participated (cf. 2 Chron. 35:7-9).

But exactly what did the term "between the two evenings" include? We know that the later Jews defined it as the period between about mid-afternoon and sundown (see Appendix I). Is this interpretation a permissible one? One passage certainly gives us good reason to think that the term "between the two evenings" includes a period before sunset. Exodus 29:38-39 states: "This is that which you shall offer upon the altar every day on a continual basis: two yearling rams, the one in the morning and the second between the two evenings" (also in Num. 28:3-8). These are apparently the only passages which give any precise information about "between the two evenings." They indicate that the daily offering consists of a morning offering and an offering before sunset when the new day began. Yet the second offering of that day was offered "between the two evenings," showing that the first evening took place before sunset.

If there was any other legitimate way to interpret the expression when considerations of time did not allow slaughter of the Passover lambs in the twilight period, we have no record of it. Exodus 29:38-39 certainly indicates that "between the two evenings" might include a period before sunset. In any case, the period of time so designated belonged to the preceding day, not the new day. We also have to consider the united practice of the Jews. So far as we know from all available historical records, every Jewish group has always referred "between the two evenings" and "in the evening" to the evening at the end of the 14th. This includes some rather scattered and even mutually hostile groups.

The Falashas of Ethiopia may go back as early as the time before the fall of Solomon's Temple. The Samaritans were already worshipping on Gerizim during the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 13:28-29). The Essenes were hostile to the Pharisees and the priesthood in Jerusalem. The Karaites rejected the Talmud and all the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees and priests were in charge of the temple service.

Some of these groups used a divergent calendar. Yet one and all--despite vast differences, including different ways of keeping Pentecost--they agreed on the time of Passover. There is not one hint in all Jewish history that the correct evening for keeping Passover was disputed. Pentecost was disputed. Many other practices were. Surely, one would

expect to find evidence of disagreement over Passover--if there was any such disagreement--but we have not so much as a hint of one.

In all the abundance of literature from many different, disagreeing and often mutually hostile Jewish or semi-Jewish groups--in all the rabbinic, essenic, intertestamental or medieval collection of commentaries, talmuds, mystical interpretations and legends on almost every subject under the sun--there is not the slightest indication of any argument or dissension on the Passover as far as keeping it at the end of the 14th is concerned.

This silence cannot be lightly dismissed. There is too much information to think that the omission is accidental. Our sources go back well into intertestamental times, nearly if not completely to the time of the Old Testament itself. The Samaritans take us back to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Falashas may go even further back. (For a further discussion of the extra-biblical sources, see Appendix I.)

One of our chief arguments that "time has not been lost" in regard to the Sabbath is the united practice of the Jews. In our discussions over Pentecost, it was thought very significant that all Jewish groups counted inclusively. It has been a major tenet of the Church to use the Jewish calendar to tell us when to keep the festivals. Therefore, if we declare the Jews wrong about the time of the Old Testament Passover, how can we possibly appeal to them for these other points which are so vital for Church belief? We would certainly find ourselves in a very awkward and contradictory position if challenged. So we must consider the major implications if we continue our old stance of thinking the Jews in error over this point.

One final point, a minor one, concerns the name "Passover" (Hebrew pesah) itself. It has sometimes been thought that the name came from the "passing over" of the death angel and that this could mean the entire festival has to be on the 14th. However, the exact origin of the name is disputed by scholars, and such etymological arguments can never carry a great weight in any discussion. Furthermore, Leviticus 23:5 states, "On the 14th of the first month, between the two evenings, is the Lord's Passover." This shows that whenever a precise time is given, the emphasis was on the slaughter of the lamb, not subsequent events such as eating. The only part of the ceremony specified for "the 14th between the two evenings," is the slaughter of the lamb. The eating and other

aspects of it did not have to come at that time. (See Appendix VII for a further discussion of this particular objection.)

Summary

1. The starting point for what the Church did and should do is 1 Corinthians 11. There is no doubt that we should take the symbols of the bread and wine at the same time and in the same manner as Jesus and his disciples did on that evening before his betrayal.

2. The gospel of John leaves no uncertainty about the specific date, the evening at the beginning of Nisan 14. The time of the New Testament Passover is clear; the decades-old practice of the Church is absolutely correct.

When attempting to determine the time of the Passover in the Old Testament, the following points are vital for a correct understanding:

3. Israel had explicit knowledge of the chain of events before the Passover. They had been told many days before to spoil the Egyptians and had done so. They knew when the death angel would come by. They were dressed, packed and ready to go. Their urgency to leave was symbolized in their hasty consumption of the Passover meal.

4. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron at midnight. The Egyptians were as urgent to get the Israelites out as the Israelites were to leave. A day's delay would have been unusual and there is no indication of one in Exodus. (Ex. 12:39 says explicitly that "they could not tarry.") They evidently got underway in a period between midnight and dawn which could be called both "morning" and "night," thus staying in their houses until "morning" while still leaving at "night."

5. They killed the Passover "between the two evenings" as commanded, but this was at the end of the 14th. They did not actually consume the Passover meal--at least, not all of it--until the 15th had begun. However, the slaying and preparation are commanded to be done "between the two evenings," not the eating. Thus, even though the Passover is correctly said to belong to the 14th, it is at the end of the 14th and certain aspects of it extend into the 15th.

6. The Israelites were to remember that "night of vigil" which is a clear reference to the Passover which they ate in a state of watchfulness (Ex. 12:42).

7. The Passover night plainly began the period of eating unleavened bread. They ate their lambs with unleavened bread then had no time to let bread rise since they were on their journey. The concept of a 24-hour gap of eating leavened bread between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is difficult to explain for the Old Testament.

8. One might wonder why they would have waited the entire daylight portion of the 14th and then finally left only some time after sundown on the 15th. They were already ready. They had already spoiled the Egyptians before the Passover. They had spent a sleepless night. The Egyptians wanted to rush them off. Why would they have delayed, even assuming they had to wait until sunrise before leaving their houses? They could still have been underway long before nightfall.

9. Numbers 33:3 says they were on the road from Rameses the next morning after the Passover, yet that is called the 15th.

10. Deuteronomy 16:4 is rather explicit that the Passover is offered on the evening immediately before the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread.

11. We have no record that the evening of the Passover was ever disputed. That is, all Jewish and quasi-Jewish groups kept the Passover on the evening of the 14th/15th. There is no evidence of a 13th/14th observance before the New Testament.

12. While Jesus clearly kept the Passover a day earlier than the Jews, he nowhere criticizes their observance. But since he had the power to change the Passover symbols, there is no reason why he could not also have changed the time.

We are the first to recognize that our discussion has left several problems, weak points, unsolved difficulties. While one would like to see proof and arguments so solid that criticism is impossible, this is practically unattainable, at least in historical matters. All we can do is face squarely all the complexities and difficulties of the problem and attempt to produce the most biblically based, logical and parsimonious solution. It is a question of weight of evidence. On the other hand, we must truly weigh evidence; we must truly examine all

theories, including the old ones, no matter how honored with tradition.

There are still some unanswered questions about counting Pentecost or administering divorce and remarriage. Yet this does not therefore suggest we should revert to the older doctrines. In the same way, the weight of evidence for the time of the Old Testament Passover is overwhelmingly in favor of a time at the end of the 14th, despite several unanswered questions and unsolved problems, at least in our opinion. To support the old way of explaining Old Testament Passover, on the other hand, one must come up with strong, detailed and technically sound arguments. We are not trying to defend some preconceived theory but only to find the biblical truth, whatever it may be. God's Church must continue to be committed to the truth of the Bible as God leads us through his Spirit.

#### Significance for the Church Today

By command and example, the New Testament mandates the New Testament Passover as a memorial of the death of Christ. The Old Testament observance of the Passover as a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice is no longer incumbent on Christians just as the whole sacrificial system which pointed to Christ is not necessary. Indeed, it is now impossible to keep the Old Testament Passover, since it required a functioning temple and priesthood. Nevertheless, the Old Testament Passover still conveys a great deal of spiritual significance, and New Testament Christians still kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread in apostolic times (1 Cor. 5:7), as scholars recognize, just as we today keep it and other annual festivals.

This recognition of the correct relationship between the Old and New Testaments regarding Passover deepens our understanding of Christ's sacrifice and of the whole spiritual meaning of this festival period. Whereas before we had to harmonize the Old and New Testaments with tortuous and unconvincing arguments, we now have only to follow the straightforward instructions of Jesus in the New Testament. Before, we had to justify our keeping of the "Night to Be Much Observed" by making an artificial separation between the night of the Passover and the night when Israel went out of Egypt. Now, we see that our traditional observance is not only proper but filled with far greater spiritual meaning.



Just after sundown as the 14th of Nisan begins, God's Church gathers in the local congregations to commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples. This is the Christian observance of the New Testament Passover. The following evening--the traditional "Night to Be Much Observed"--the membership gathers in individual homes for a joyous celebration which inaugurates the Days of Unleavened Bread. We now understand this observance, at the end of the 14th and going on into the beginning of the 15th, as a memorial of the first Passover in Egypt. As a Christian celebration today, this occasion symbolically encompasses the eating of the Passover lamb, the passage of the death angel, and the exodus of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. Thus, just as our present Passover observance on the beginning of the 14th is a commemoration of the New Testament institution of Christ's sacrifice, so our traditional "Night to Be Observed," at the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th, remembers the Old Testament Passover of the Exodus in all its tremendous symbolism for Christians.

Our traditional manner of observance of the New Testament Passover at the beginning of the 14th is absolutely correct. The customary gathering in small groups in individual homes on the next night indeed pictures not only the passage from Egypt and slavery but also the Old Testament Passover meal and the mighty hand of God in the destruction of the Egyptians. The solemn New Testament observance at the beginning of the 14th, the joyous celebration on the evening of the 14th and beginning of the 15th, and the whole following seven-day festival all form a synergistic union of Old and New Testaments, filled with profound significance and spiritual meaning.

The original Passover pictured the death of Christ as expiation for our sins. The Christian calls upon that sacrifice at the time of repentance, but then he leaves "Egypt" (sin) right away, just as Israel immediately got up and out of Egypt without lingering (even a single day). There is no delay; Jesus' sacrifice of himself on the cross removes the past sinful life, the death angel destroys the power of sin as symbolized by the Egyptians, and the new Christian makes haste to leave behind his sinful past and the hold sin once had over him. Of course, sin immediately pursues after him, not yet completely vanquished. But with the help of God it is not able to stop his flight or draw him back into past slavery.



Furthermore, the events of Jesus' last hours show divine wisdom. Jesus could not have eaten the Old Testament Passover with the Jews and also die at the same time. Therefore, he gathered the disciples together at a meal referred to as the "Passover" (see Appendix III for more information) which also took place on the 14th (but at the beginning rather than the end.) His institution of new symbols for New Testament Christians replaced the old roast lamb and its accouterments. Rather than look forward to an unfulfilled event, Christians would now commemorate and remember those events which made Jesus Christ our Savior.

The sacrifice of the Passover lamb obviously looked ahead to Christ and his atoning death. Christ is called our Passover (1Co. 5:7) and is, in fact, the ultimate magnification of the killing of the Passover lamb. It seems so immensely logical that Christ would have planned his own death to occur at precisely the same time as the killing of Passover lamb.

Consider the enormous significance of the timing of that monumental historical moment: What if, at precisely the same instant that the Roman soldier was plunging the spear into Jesus' side, spilling his blood and pouring out his life, the High Priest was likewise slitting the throat of the Passover lamb in the Temple of God--following which the veil in the Temple was ripped in two and a powerful earthquake struck (Matt. 27:5)!

Furthermore, consider the High Priest himself--the one who solemnly killed the Passover lamb and sprinkled its blood. He was the very same high priest who, the night before, had accused Jesus and condemned him to death. What an indescribably powerful message--the High Priest who condemned Jesus to death, is the very one who slaughters the Passover lamb at the same time as the Roman soldier butchers Jesus Christ our Savior. The very same high priest--symbolizing in the same individual, both all humanity, whose sins condemned Jesus to death, and God, who sacrificed Christ to atone for those sins! What enormous significance.

(See Appendix VI for Mr. Ted Armstrong's creative reconstruction of the events surrounding, and the tremendous symbolism involved in, the death of Jesus Christ which concided with the timing of the Old Testament Passover. These comments are excerpted from The Real Jesus.)

## APPENDIX I

## EXTRA BIBLICAL SOURCES ON THE PASSOVER

The body of this paper has discussed all the major relevant passages from both the Old and New Testaments. The statements of the Bible are the ultimate authority for what the Church does. However, this does not mean that extra-biblical evidence is of no concern. It may help confirm what is already clear from the Bible, it may clarify what is not completely clear, or it may suggest the proper procedure where the Bible seems to be silent. Non-biblical sources can also be very important for the proper cultural and literary context against which to understand the biblical records. Thus, there are a number of reasons why we should investigate historical records apart from the Bible.

All the following extra-biblical sources corroborate the fact that the Jews have shown complete unity and consistency in the time of keeping the Passover: on the latter part of Nisan 14, not at the beginning. While the information given here cannot be completely exhaustive, no source which has come to our attention deviates from the picture presented by the representative literature in this appendix.

Intertestamental RecordsJewish Colony at Elephantine (5th century B.C.)

Our earliest reference to the Passover outside the Old Testament seems to be a letter among the documents excavated at Elephantine in Egypt where a sizable Jewish colony flourished in the Persian period (perhaps the best convenient introduction is B. Porten, Archives from Elephantine). Among the documents is a fragmentary letter to the colony from one Hananiah (Nehemiah's relative?-Neh. 1:2, 7:2). The text as it survives does not have the Passover specifically mentioned, but there are several indications that that is its subject. The essential parts of the letter are as follows (translated from the restored Aramaic text given by Porten, p. 311): "Count four[teen days from Nisan 1 and keep the Passover] and from the 15th to the 21st of [Nisan, keep the Feast of Unleaven Bread]...and any type of leaven do no[t eat. Eat unleaven bread from the 14th of Nisan at] at the going down of the sun until the 21st of Nis[an at the going down of the sun.]"

The exact time of the Passover is, of course, not delineated, at least from the surviving fragments. It is clear that only the seven days of unleavened bread were

envisioned. It also shows that at this time (and in Aramaic) the term "evening" was still used of the evening at the end of the day.

Ezekiel the Poet (2nd Century B.C.)

Perhaps one of the most interesting Jewish writings in Greek is The Exodus, a tragedy in classical style based on the Book of Exodus. Only parts of it quoted in later writers have survived: it is very unfortunate that we do not have the whole play since it would be unique in the history of drama. One portion which has survived shows the time at which the Passover was killed perhaps two centuries before the time of Jesus (translated from the Greek text in A. Denis, Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca, pp. 212-3:

"You shall tell all the people, at the full moon of the month of which I speak [=first month], to smear the blood on the door lintel after sacrificing the Passover the preceding night....It [the lamb] shall be kept until the 14th shines forth, then having sacrificed them toward evening, all of them roasted with the insides thus you shall eat them."

The Book of Jubilees (2nd century B.C.)

This early Jewish writing describes the Passover in some detail, including a contemporary definition of the phrase "between the two evenings." The following quotation from chapter 49 is taken from R.H. Charles' translation in his Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English:

"Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded thee concerning the passover, that thou shouldst celebrate it in its season on the fourteenth of the first month, that thou shouldst kill it before it is evening, and that they should eat it by night on the evening of the fifteenth from the time of the setting of the sun....Let the children of Israel come and observe the passover on the day of its fixed time, on the fourteenth day of the first month, between the evenings, from the third part of the day to the third part of the night, for two portions of the day are given to the light, and a third part to the evening. This is that which the Lord commanded thee that thou shouldst observe it between the evenings. And it is not permissible to slay it during any period of the light, but during the period bordering on the evening, and let them eat it at the time of the evening until the third part of the night, and whatever is left over of all its flesh from the third part of the night and onwards, let them burn it with fire."

This shows that at least a certain part of Judaism approximately two centuries before Jesus believed that the Passover should be sacrificed in the time from about 2 p.m. to about 6 p.m. Then they were to eat it at the latest until 2 a.m. What was left at 2 a.m. had to be burned. This writing is also the first to mention the use of wine at the Passover: "eating the flesh of the paschal lamb, and drinking the wine....And the man who is free from uncleanness, and does not come to observe it....to eat and to drink...shall be cut off...."

Philo (early 1st century A.D.)

Philo's writings are very important for a better understanding of certain aspects of the New Testament. The reason is that the time of his writing is known: he is an older contemporary of Jesus (about 20 B.C. to about 45 A.D.). While he lived most of his life in Alexandria and was a leading figure in the Jewish community there, he visited Jerusalem on at least one occasion and was well versed in the Law. Thus, his description of the Passover celebration has a good chance of being the actual practice at the Temple during his own day. Here is what he states in De Spec. Leg. II, 145, 149 (translation is F. Colson's in the Loeb edition):

"After the New Moon comes the fourth feast, called the Crossing-feast, which the Hebrews in their native tongue call Pascha. In this festival many myriads of victims from noon till eventide are offered by the whole people....The day on which this national festivity occurs may very properly be noted. It is the 14th of the month...."

Philo says elsewhere that the Passover could not be offered before 3 p.m. ("the ninth hour"). See his Quaes. Ex. I, 9-11.

Later Jewish Sources

Josephus (late 1st century A.D.)

Josephus writes toward the end of the 1st century A.D. Although he was a young man while the Temple was still standing, the Antiquities was not written until several decades later during his old age. We cannot always be sure that he is remembering correctly--assuming he knew enough to remember. His sources are sometimes good and sometimes skimpy, but it is a mistake to assume he always knows what he is talking about; there is clear evidence that he sometimes did not.

He mentions the Passover on several occasions. The following selections are some of the more important ones. The translation is that of Thackeray from the Loeb edition:

"Accordingly, on the occasion of the feast called Passover, at which they sacrifice from the ninth to the eleventh hour, and a little fraternity, as it were, gather round each sacrifice, of not fewer than ten persons" (War 6.9.3. 423). This shows the Passover was slaughtered from 3 to 5 p.m. on Nisan 14. "...we keep for eight days a feast called the feast of unleavened bread" (Ant. 2.15.1 317). The exact connotation of this mention of eight days has been disputed. It could (1) be a reference to the celebration in the Diaspora where the first and last days were kept twice, (2) a simple error, or (3) counting of the 14th since leaven was put out on that day. The last is indicated by War 5.3.1.§99: "When the day of unleavened bread came round on the fourteenth of the month Xanthicus...."

### Rabbinic Literature

It has been customary for scholars to go to rabbinic literature for evidence of what was Jewish custom in New Testament times. Yet the earliest portion of rabbinic literature, the Mishnah, was not edited until 200 A.D. Other early pieces of literature (the Tosefta and the Tannaic Midrashim) were also edited only about this time or perhaps slightly later. The two Talmuds are essentially commentaries on the Mishnah which grew up over the next few centuries. The major source of later Judaism, the Babylonian Talmud, was not edited until the 6th century A.D. Thus, one cannot automatically project material from these later sources back into the time before 70 A.D. (see especially Jacob Neusner, The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70).

On the other hand, the literature shows at least what a later offshoot from Pharisaism thought about the correct time of Passover. This opinion also coincides with earlier sources already discussed. The major source is the Mishnah tractate Pesahim. According to it the evening sacrifice of the day was killed about 1:30 p.m., offered up at 2:30, and then the Passover sacrificed after this (5.1). If the 14th fell on a Friday, the evening sacrifice was offered up at 1:30 and the Passover slaughtering began after that. Other sources indicate that any time after midday was valid for the sacrifice of the Passover (Mikilta 5 on Ex. 12:6; p. Pes. 5.1, 31b; b. Pes. 58a). See Appendix II for further details on some of these sources.

### Independent Sources

We have several independent witnesses to the time for keeping the Passover. The sources so far given are basically from the Palestinian area and do not go back further than the 2nd century B.C. Yet we have evidence of groups which were opposed to the Jerusalem worship or were in some other way



independent of what the Jews of the intertestamental period did. They confirm the interpretation that the Passover should be killed at the end of the 14th rather than at the beginning.

### The Falashas

The Falashas are an Ethiopic group who practice a form of Judaism to the present day. They have been isolated from the rest of Judaism for many centuries. Their exact origin is uncertain though they claim descent from the offspring of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; they may indeed have originated before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. They certainly seem to have originated before the origin of rabbinic Judaism since they show no knowledge of the talmudic and later literature. Their sole sources of religion are the Old Testament and the Book of Jubilees. In any case their independence is an important witness to early Jewish practices.

Perhaps the most convenient summary of their beliefs with representative literature in translation can be found in W. Leslau, Falasha Anthology. The Falashas speak of the "Feast of the Passover" which they celebrate from the 15th through the 21st of the first month. They slay a sacrificial lamb on the evening at the end of the 14th. They eat no leaven throughout the entire seven day period.

### The Samaritans

While the exact origin of the Falashas is not certain, that of the Samaritans is fairly well documented. Their worship on Garizim goes back at least as early as the time of Nehemiah. Even though there was some contact between them and the Jewish community during the intertestamental period, mutual hostility tended to keep it to a minimum. Thus, their practice is also an independent witness to the keeping of the Passover as early as the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Their celebration of the Passover is described in detail by J. Jeremias in Das Passahfeier der Samaritaner. Some misinformed individuals have claimed that the Samaritans celebrate their Passover at the beginning of the 14th. This is totally wrong. As Jeremias shows, the Samaritans do not differ in the basic time of their celebration of the Passover. However, they continue to interpret the phrase "between the two evenings" as the time between sunset and dark. Being a small community today and many of them butchers by trade, they are able to kill, skin, and begin roasting the animals in the brief period of time between sunset and dark. They eat until midnight, after which anything left over is burned. (The misunderstanding about

their observance seems to result from the fact that their calendar sometimes differs from the Jewish by a day or two. Thus, they might celebrate their Passover a day earlier on occasion but still at the end of the 14th by their own reckoning.)

### The Karaites

The Karaites are a Jewish group which revolted against talmudic tradition and claimed a return to the Old Testament alone as the basis of their religion. Since many of their practices conform to what we know of Sadducean practice, it is possible there is a historical connection. However, this is not certain and has even been denied by some scholars. In any case their practice shows some independence from rabbinic Judaism and is thus of value. (The sect originated about the 7th century A.D., if there is no continuum with the ancient Sadducees.)

A useful source of information on the Karaites is L. Nemoj, Karaite Anthology. The following is an extract from his translation of an early Karaite source (pp. 199-200):

"The time of the Passover sacrifice is the first part of the first evening of these aforementioned seven days, i.e., the even of the fifteenth of Nisan. This time, which is regarded as belonging to the fourteenth of Nisan of the regular calendar, is called 'twilight'....Its beginning is the setting of the sun, and its end the disappearance of the last brightness of daylight, and this is the period of dusk which lingers for some time after the sinking of the last portion of the disk of the sun....This time is regarded as part of two days: of the common day, which is the fourteenth of Nisan, as mentioned above; and of the legal day, which is the fifteenth. The common day begins after the sinking of twilight and continues until its next sinking; this is the day as reckoned for the purpose of offering the sacrifice. The legal day begins with sunset and lasts until the next sunset."

### Summary of Jewish Practice

We have examined all the major sources for how the Jews have kept Passover down through history. Not a single one of them so much as suggest that the Passover was ever offered at the beginning of the 14th. They are all completely unified in seeing the Passover as belonging to the end of the 14th.



Occasionally, one may read in an older secondary source that the Galileans observed the Passover one day earlier than the rest of the Jews. That is simply false; there is no evidence for such. The idea seems to have arisen soon after the Reformation over a misinterpretation of a passage in the Mishnah by certain Christian writers who were not very familiar with the Jewish sources, but who were looking for a reason why Jesus might eat the Passover a day early. M. Pes. 5.5. states that the Jews of Judaea worked until midday on the 14th whereas those of Galilee did not do any work on the daylight portion of the 14th. But this has nothing to do with the time of Passover observance; there is no indication that the Galileans differed in this. As J. Jeremias writes, "Again and again we find dilettantes maintaining that at the time of Jesus the passover meal was eaten in the night of Nisan 13/14. . . .In fact, it is absolutely indubitable that from ancient times right down to the present the Jewish passover meal has never been celebrated at any other time than the night of Nisan 14/15" (The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, p. 16, n.3 and p. 38, n.1).

The only differences one can find are of two types:

1. Though the different groups mentioned above use essentially the same calendar, there are some differences. Therefore, the actual time when they observed the Passover does not always coincide. But the important point is that they all kept the Passover at the end of the 14th according to their own individual calendars.

2. The expression "between the two evenings" was variously interpreted. The Samaritans and Karaites took it as the time between sunset and dark, a period of about an hour. This was the most likely meaning of the term for the Israelites at the time of the Exodus.

Yet with the passage of time and the requirement that the Passover be slaughtered only at the central sanctuary (Deut. 16), it was simply impossible to kill all the Passover offerings during this brief period of time. Some sort of judgment had to be made. To kill the Passover later would extend it into the night (and into the 15th). On the other hand, to push the time back into the afternoon was not contrary to one meaning of the term "evening." For the priests who were responsible for the Temple to do this was perfectly legitimate, nay, even required.

As was pointed out in the discussion over Pentecost, the practice of the Sadducees generally coincides with the actual priestly practice. Pentecost was kept on a Sunday every year during the time of the Temple from all indications

in our sources. So far as is known, there is no record of how the Sadducees interpreted the term "between the two evenings." But when we put together the testimony of Philo and other intertestamental sources, the New Testament, Josephus, and rabbinic literature, we have a strong inference that the Passover was slain at the Temple beginning about 3 p.m. on the afternoon of the 14th.

What the priests did in the Temple was significant for our decision about Pentecost. The time universally attested to be the seventh day of the week by Jews is the day we keep as the Sabbath. The Jewish calendar serves as our calendar for the observance of the annual festivals. If we then turn around and accuse the Jews of changing the correct time of Passover, our arguments for these other matters lose all credibility.

It is not just a question of seeing what the Jews did in the 1st century. It is rather what all historical records known about Jewish practice tell us and the further fact that there is no divergence. When we put that together with the Old Testament itself, it is difficult to argue for any other possibility than that the Old Testament Passover was to be offered at the end of the 14th.

#### The Quartodecimans

While this is not the place for a full treatment of the Quartodecimans or the paschal controversy, they can be briefly mentioned for the sake of completeness here. There has been some discussion in recent years about the exact time when the Quartodecimans celebrated the Passover. One of the earliest sources indicated they kept it with the Jews, that is, at the end of the 14th (see B. Lohse, Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner, 41-3).

However, more recent studies since that of Lohse indicate that some Quartodecimans kept the Passover at the beginning of the 14th (e.g. C. Richardson, JTS 24 [1973] 74-84). The indication is that there was a division among the Quartodecimans, some observing the Passover at the same time as the Jews and others keeping it almost a day earlier at the beginning of the 14th. (Of course, the keeping of the Passover instead of Easter is an interesting study in itself. Evidently it was not uncommon until the 4th or 5th century.)

One interesting aspect of studying Quartodecimanism, and even the early Catholic fathers, is their terminology. The term "Passover" (to pascha) was standard in Greek sources for a considerable period, even in reference to Easter. The so-

called Epistle of Diognetus (dated about 200 A.D. or slightly later) mentions "the Passover of the Lord" (to kuriou pascha) with reference to Christian observance (12:9). In a letter opposing the heretic Paul of Samosata (just before 300 A.D., reference is made to the "great day of the Passover" (tē megalē tou pascha hēmera) by which Easter is apparently meant (Eusebius, Eccl. hist. 7.30.10). Melito, bishop of Sardis (died about 190 A.D.), wrote a homily on the Passover and was evidently himself a Quartodeciman. Both Polycarp and Polycrates speak of observing the Passover and use the same word as in the New Testament. This is only a sample (for many further references, see G. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, 1048-9).

The basic point is that using the term "Passover" for the New Testament practice is perfectly in harmony with the usage of the early Church. Even later speakers of Greek refer to Easter as pascha. The stubborn persistence of the term even among Catholics, as well as its use in early sources, is a good indication that it is well rooted in apostolic times. Either "Passover" or "Lord's Supper" (see Appendix IV) is legitimate. There is no reason to shy away from either designation.

## APPENDIX II

### "BETWEEN THE TWO EVENINGS"

Appendix I has discussed the major sources which show how the instructions about the Passover were interpreted at the earliest time we are able to determine. Most of these sources mention the meaning of ben ha<sup>c</sup>arbayim "between the two evenings" or allow a deduction of how the term was understood. This appendix will review the major sources--early, medieval, and modern on the term--but will only summarize those accounts already given in Appendix I; sources not discussed in Appendix I will be given a more detailed exposition.

#### Pre-Rabbinic Sources

##### Septuagint (3rd B.C.)

The Pentateuch is generally considered by Septuagint scholars to have been translated into Greek about 275 B.C. It is extremely valuable in that it often shows how the biblical text was understood almost three hundred years before Christ.

In Leviticus 23:5 the Septuagint text seems a literal translation of the Hebrew (ana meson ton hesperinon). However, in Exodus 12:6 and Numbers 9:3, 11, it is translated as "toward evening" (pros hesperan). This indicates that the Hebrew phrase was taken to mean the evening at the end of the day. (A similar expression, to deilinon "in the afternoon" or "towards evening," is used in Exodus 29:39, 41.)

Other Sources

We have already discussed the Book of Jubilees, Ezekiel the Poet, Philo, and Josephus in Appendix I. They all show the Passover being slaughtered on the afternoon of the 14th. Although the specific phrase ben hāCarbāyim is not discussed, they show that it was understood to include the period from early afternoon to about sundown.

Rabbinic LiteratureTannaitic Sources

The Mishnah places the slaughter of the Passover lambs between about 3 and 5 p.m. on the 14th, in harmony with a number of earlier sources. This indicates an interpretation of ben hāCarbāyim which includes much of the afternoon though the phrase is not explicitly discussed. However, literature basically contemporary with it does discuss the phrase in question.

The Mekhilta, a midrash on Exodus, states that the time of slaughter is any time after noon (5.113ff on Ex. 12:6; Lauterbach edition). The Siphra, a midrash on Leviticus agrees that "between the two evenings" includes the time after noon ('P YWM MSPNH YWM MSS SCWT WLMCLH, Emor, Perek 11, 100b; Weiss edition).

Targums

The exact date of the various targums is debated. They seem to include both early and late material and were not edited until several centuries A.D. However, they are basically rabbinic in character and should probably be listed before the Amoraic literature (the two talmuds).

The Targum Onkelos is generally the most literal rendering of the Hebrew text. For Exodus 12:6 it reads ben šimsayyā "between the suns" (Sperber edition). This is generally interpreted to mean the "afternoon," i.e., the period of time between the zenith of the sun's orbit and its setting (see, e.g., Dalman, Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch). The Targum (Pseudo-) Jonathan has a similar translation (BYNY SYMST'; Rieder edition). The recently discovered Neofiti manuscript has a similar reading with the same meaning (BYNY SMSWT'; from Makor photo-reproduction of the manuscript).

Talmuds

Both the Palestinian Talmud, edited in the 5th century, and the Babylonian Talmud, edited in the 6th century, show the

interpretation and practice in regard to keeping the Passover during the first Christian centuries. The following quotations are from the Soncino edition of the Babylonian Talmud; the square brackets are part of the translation:

"Because Scripture saith, The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning and the other lamb shalt thou offer between the two evenings: insert it between the two ("evenings"), [which gives/ two and a half hours before and two and a half hours after and one hour for its preparation" (b. Pes. 58a). A note to the translation explains, "Thus the 'two evenings' are from midday (= six) until eight and a half hours, and from nine and a half hours until nightfall (= twelve)." The same passage goes on to say "Because Scripture saith, 'between the evenings', [meaning/ from the time that the sun commences to decline in the west."

The Palestinian Talmud similarly comments that "between the two evenings" is a space of time of approximately six hours beginning at noon ('P BYN HCRBYM WN'MR K'N MSS SCWT WLMCLN, p. Pes. 5.1, 3ld; Krotoschin edition).

#### Medieval Commentators

The medieval commentators do not always follow tradition but sometimes show remarkable independence. However, the dean of medieval commentators, Rashi, fully supports the earlier opinions. The following translation is based on the Hebrew text in the Miqra'ot Gedolot:

"The time after noon is called 'between the two evenings,' during which the sun inclines toward its setting. The expression 'between the two evenings' seems to me to include every hour between the darkening of the day and the darkening of the night. The darkening of the day begins at the seventh hour (about 1 p.m.) when the shadows of the day stretch out (Jer. 6:4)."

However, another well-known commentator Ibn Ezra seems to disagree, as discussed in the next section.

Other Ancient Interpretations

As already mentioned in the body of the paper and in Appendix I, several groups interpret "between the two evenings" to be the period from about sunset to dark. The Samaritans and Karaites both interpreted the phrase in this sense. The medieval commentator Ibn Ezra also seems to have had that opinion as well. However, he did not disagree about the custom of slaughtering the Passover in the afternoon before sunset (see D. Hoffmann, Das Buch Leviticus, part II, 141-2, for a discussion).

Again, this interpretation was probably the original one for the Passover of the Exodus. However, when all the lambs had to be sacrificed at the temple, have their blood poured out and their fat burned on the altar, it was physically impossible to do everything in the hour and a half or less between sunset and dark. A decision was evidently made to push the slaughtering time earlier into the afternoon. This was a priestly decision and was the practice during the time of the Second Temple as borne out by all known sources (cited in this appendix and Appendix I).

Modern Scholars

Modern scholars must depend on the same original sources which we have outlined here and in Appendix I. Therefore, they have nothing available which is not also available to us. Furthermore, with the exception of a few "dilettantes" they all agree that the slaughter of the Passover "between the two evenings" refers to the slaughter at the end of the day.

J. B. Segal writes: "The term ba<sup>c</sup>erebh [in the evening] might have referred to either the evening at the beginning, or the evening at the end, of the fourteenth day. But the term ben ha<sup>c</sup>arbayim [between the two evenings] is used only of the evening at the end of a specified day which also begins the following day--here, then, the evening at the end of the fourteenth day' (The Hebrew Passover, 130).

G. Schiaparelli states: "Accordingly, on the evenings of a new moon the duration of twilight from the moment of the crescent's appearance is divided into two unequal parts, which the Jews called 'the two evenings,' or in Hebrew carbayim. The first evening formed an interval of about half an hour, during which, as it was still sufficiently light to be considered as a



continuation and part of the preceding day, the common occupations of the day could be attended to; that interval, in fact, which we call the 'twilight of the civil day.' The second evening lasted nearly an hour . . . . In the Pentateuch we find use made several times of the expression bēn hā<sup>c</sup>arbayim ('between the two evenings') to indicate the moment which separated the two periods described above, and marked for the Jews the beginning of the civil and religion day" (Astronomy in the Old Testament, 93).

To repeat the quotation of J. Jeremias given in Appendix I, "Again and again we find dilettantes maintaining that at the time of Jesus the passover meal was eaten in the night of Nisan 13/14 . . . . In fact, it is absolutely indubitable that from ancient times right down to the present the Jewish passover meal has never been celebrated at any other time than the night of Nisan 14/15" (The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, p. 16, no. 3 and p. 38, n. 1).

Any attempt to make the phrase "between the two evenings" refer to the beginning of the 14th is contrary to all ancient scholarship known and also goes against modern scholars who have discussed the subject.

### APPENDIX III

#### THE LAST SUPPER AS A PASSOVER

One of the major arguments used in the past to prove that the Jews were wrong about the Old Testament Passover was Jesus' own example. His last meal with his disciples is referred to as "the Passover" (Greek to pascha) in several passages (Mat. 26:17ff; Mark 14:12ff; Luke 22:7ff). Since Jesus clearly ate the Passover one day earlier than the rest of the Jews (John 18:28; 19:14), it has been assumed that this was definite proof of the correct time of the Old Testament Passover, that the Jews had somehow become mixed up, and that the Exodus account should be explained in the light of Jesus' example.

Unfortunately, this assumption was not carefully examined to see whether it was really valid or whether alternative explanations were not in fact more cogent. As already shown in the body of the paper, such an explanation is difficult to fit with the Old Testament since the Exodus account--if read without any preconceptions--shows Israel going out of Egypt the same night as they ate the Passover. This assumption also fails to reckon



with the implications of saying the Jews got mixed up; if so, why were they not also mixed up about the correct time of the Sabbath or the Hebrew calendar or the correct Old Testament? Therefore, let us note some major considerations about Jesus' actions.

1. Jesus Christ, as the Creator of the world and as the one who gave the Law to ancient Israel, had the power and authority to change the time of the Passover. To say that he did not would seem to border on blasphemy. If he did not have such power, how could he have changed the Passover symbols? Therefore, since he could not eat the Passover with his disciples and still die on the Passover, it is certainly possible that he ate the Old Testament Passover at the beginning of the 14th instead of at the end of the 14th. This anticipation, far from disproving the observance of the Jews, would only confirm the correct time of the Old Testament Passover since Jesus died at that very time.

2. The only difficulty of seeing an anticipatory Passover is the question of the Passover lamb. Would it have been possible to sacrifice a Passover lamb a day early? Would the priests have allowed it? Our sources do not say so one way or another, but it is a serious question. The Passover lamb was slain by the individual but the priests had to sprinkle the blood. Would the priests have done this for anyone, much less for the man they were plotting to kill, a day earlier than normal?

As another factor to consider in this connection, it is of some note that a lamb is nowhere mentioned in the Gospel accounts of the last supper. Of course, this could be only accidental but is not likely; the roast lamb would have given such an opportune analogy for some of Jesus' last words about his death. Since nothing is said, and only bread and wine and a central dish of some sort into which they dipped are mentioned, it is a strong inference that a lamb was not part of the meal.

Granted, several noted scholars have seen oblique references to the Passover seder or ceremony in the Gospel accounts (e.g., J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus; G. Dalman, Jesus-Jeshua). However, they all assume the later seder observance of Jews was also practiced at the time of Jesus. We cannot assume this since the earliest description of the Jewish Passover seder is in the Mishnah which was not edited until around 200 A.D. Recent studies have shown that many of the rabbinic practices actually grew up after the fall of Jerusalem and do not reflect the situation in the time of

Jesus (see especially Jacob Neusner, The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70).

Therefore, we must be extremely cautious about trying to read the later Jewish ceremony into the description of the last supper by the Gospel writers. It may indeed have been a full Passover with the roasted lamb. But as B. Gärtner writes, "The whole of the Temple ceremonial and its cult apparatus is passed by in silence. Would there have been such a silence, had there been a Paschal lamb on the table at the Last Supper? It would have been extraordinarily easy to have coupled a mass of theological thoughts and suggestions to the lamb--if there had been a lamb" (John 6 and the Jewish Passover, 50).

3. The designation "Passover" (Greek pascha) could still have been used even if the full Old Testament Passover with the lamb was not eaten. First, we have to recognize that Jews unable to come to Jerusalem still kept some sort of ceremony at Passover time just as Jews still do today. In the Diaspora they could not have eaten the lamb (just as Jews cannot today); even in Galilee they could not have eaten the lamb. Yet Jesus evidently spent at least one Passover in Galilee away from Jerusalem (see John 6, especially verses 1-5). Thus, the last supper could have been one which imitated the formal Passover but without the central item of the lamb. That such was normally observed by Jews away from Jerusalem seems certain (see Gärtner, op. cit.).

A second possibility is that the Gospel writers, most of whom wrote several decades after the Resurrection, could have used the term "Passover" in its New Testament sense. That is, at the last supper Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover symbols. The Gospel writers may have had this in mind since they were so used to the current observance of the Church in their own time. Naturally, the use of the term pascha with so many different connotations would create confusion. Yet this confusion already existed by this time since the term was used for (a) the Passover lamb alone, (b) the specific Passover meal with the accompanying ceremonies, and (c) the whole festival of Unleavened Bread (Luke 22:1). To use the term in one more sense was natural and clearly done by the early Church.

To summarize, there are several possible explanations for the use of the term "Passover" for Jesus' last meal with the disciples. At the present there does not seem to be enough information to say which is the correct one, but neither is it all that important to decide specifically. The important thing is that the time of the Old Testament Passover does not have to be

at the same time as the New. Both Old and New Testaments show that they were in fact at different times. Jesus instituted the one at the beginning of the 14th and died at the time of the other at the end of the 14th.

## APPENDIX IV

## THE TERM "LORD'S SUPPER"

In I Corinthians 11 Paul takes to task the Corinthians for wrong practices in keeping the Passover. Paul does not use the term "Passover" but rather speaks of their "gathering together." However, in verse 20 he rebukes them for eating their own meals rather than the kuriakon deipnon. It is difficult to give an exact English equivalent of this term because of Protestant connotations, yet the translation "Lord's supper" is probably the closest thing which can be given.

The plain sense of this passage is that the Corinthians should have been eating the Lord's supper instead of their own. That is, Paul is referring to the New Testament Passover as the "Lord's supper." Because of a desire to avoid Protestantism, an attempt has sometimes been made in the past to interpret the passage as if it condemned eating the Lord's supper. While done with all good intentions, that explanation is very artificial and simply ignores the obvious meaning of the Greek wording, as most modern translations indicate.

Paul indeed corrects the Corinthians for making the Passover a riotous occasion with gluttony and drunkenness. The reason is that "each person goes ahead with his own meal" instead of eating the "Lord's supper" which consists only of the symbols of the bread and wine. They should have been taking their meals in their houses. When they came together, the object was to take only the tiny portions of bread and wine which constituted the Lord's supper.

Thus, to use the term "Lord's supper" for the New Testament practice is completely correct. Yet "Passover" is also fully appropriate as shown in Appendix I. But when the term "Passover" is applied to current Church practice, we must always keep in mind that the New Testament Passover is being referred to. We do not keep the Old Testament Passover. Indeed, it would be impossible without the Temple.

Recognition that "Lord's supper" is a correct term further shows the correctness of what the Church of God has been

doing all these years. If Christians were to eat the bread and wine at the time of Christ's death (i.e., 3:00 p.m. on Nisan 14), they would hardly be eating the "Lord's supper." But since Christians are in fact to eat the "Lord's supper," the only appropriate time would be at the same time as Jesus our Lord himself ate it.

## APPENDIX V

## THE CEREMONY OF FOOT-WASHING

The question is sometimes asked whether Jesus' washing of the disciples feet was purely a symbolic thing not to be repeated or whether it should be an integral part of the annual Christian Passover or Lord's Supper. It is true that the foot-washing is not referred to by Paul in I Corinthians 11. This has been taken by some to mean that we should look to Jesus' actions for their meaning but not actually go through the ritual ourselves.

On the other hand, there are a number of things to consider. The congregation of Israel, the "Church" in the wilderness, had many different physical ceremonies and rituals to perform. Every day animals were slaughtered, loaves of bread were burned, and vintage wine was poured out onto the altar. One could think this very wasteful, yet God commanded it. (Of course, not all sacrifices were burned whole. Most were not but were consumed by the priests and/or the ones offering it.) Male babies had an operation on the eighth day which they did not remember in later years; grown male proselytes were not likely to forget it, though.

The New Testament brought an end to many of the physical ceremonies for Christians. Sacrifices find their meaning in the ultimate sacrifice of Christ; circumcision is of the mind, not the body. The symbolism is meaningful without any more physical reminder than the biblical record. Yet Christian living is not without its physical reminders--its ceremony--its regular ritual. The life of a Christian begins with a very physical dunking under the water. In certain climates and certain seasons baptism can even be hazardous to one's health! The Passover itself is a yearly ritual yet one filled with spiritual meaning and significance.

Therefore, one cannot dismiss foot-washing because of its physical nature. We are physical human beings, and the most spiritual of us still benefits from physical reminders at times.

As we take the bread and wine each year, we recognize again our relationship--our personal covenant--with God. We symbolically take of the life of our Lord and Savior himself. We try to prepare for this awesome ceremony by days and weeks of contact with God through prayer, study, and meditation on its meaning. We want to partake joyfully but also solemnly and humbly. We want to be in the right mental and spiritual frame of mind. What better way to complete this period of self-examination than by literally getting down on one's hand knees to wash the feet of another person, and in turn to show humility in another way by allowing someone to wash our own feet?

According to Matthew 28:20 Jesus told his disciples to teach others to observe what he had commanded them. Certainly, footwashing would be included. And we as Christians desiring to follow our Savior in every thought and deed should want to take John 13:14-15 literally and follow the clear examples of Jesus himself.

It is because of the deep spiritual overtones to such a physical ceremony that God's Church has traditionally carried out Jesus' example in a literal way. It sets the proper tone for the Passover as most of us can personally testify; the Passover observance would not be the same without it. Of course, the physical without the spiritual is nothing. Physically partaking of the bread and wine has no meaning if its serious spiritual implications are not understood; similarly, it helps in no way to wash someone's feet if there is no dedication to service through Christian love.

#### APPENDIX VI

#### EXCERPTS FROM THE REAL JESUS

By  
Garner Ted Armstrong

The moment Jesus died, a great earthquake rocked the land from one end to another; a deep subterranean noise rumbled like a thousand Niagaras, bricks and mortar began falling, people were knocked to the ground or swayed on their feet as they reached out for trees or walls to prevent them from toppling over.

Though not so great a quake as to lay waste the city, there was significant damage to any number of buildings. The shattering event was extremely frightening, especially on the

heels of the mysterious blackness that had crept over the land beginning about noon and caused thousands upon thousands to drop to their knees, believing it was "the Day of the Lord" as Hosea had prophesied!

"The end of the world, the end of the world!" some screamed and sobbed! John, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and Joseph and Salome were standing a distance away from the stake when the earthquake struck. They had actually seen the soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side, and had watched Him die.

Going back several minutes and shifting the scene to the center of Jerusalem, people could see the flickering torches which had been lit about noon to provide light in the temple court, where the thousands were going about the ritual of the slaughtering of the Pascal lambs.

Though they had to work by the light of hissing torches, flickering candles and glittering lanterns, the priests were determined to follow their prescribed rituals. The high priest, having been awake most of the night before planning Jesus' death and with Jesus' own testimony still ringing in his ears, had been terribly upset all morning. He couldn't keep his tormented mind and twisted emotions off that horrendously misleading and terribly embarrassing sign over the crucified Jesus which was still informing multiple thousands that Jesus of Nazareth WAS the King of the Jews!

But the High Priest finally went through the prescribed washings and changed into his purest linen vestments with shaking hands, all the while looking over his shoulder at the black, lowering skies, and frantically trying to maintain some semblance of calm for the sake of all of the people who were nervously chattering, milling about, glancing around in apprehension, looking upward, or even praying quietly from time to time.

After all the required pronouncements and blessings had been completed, and amidst the leading families who has been admitted to the temple court with their lambs. the high priest approached the very first of the Pascal lambs to be slaughtered, held by two of his assistants, a distance from the altar. Waiting in two lines were a group of priest with gold and silver bowls ready. The blood would be collected from the animal's throats, and passed hand over hand along the line of priests to be splashed at the base of the altar. The gleaming white marble columns lead toward the entry to the Holy Place where the shewbread and the altar with its lamp of seven brazen pipes stood.



Beyond it, the veil--which was opened only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)--was securely fastened. Behind the veil had once stood the ark of the Covenant; dully gleaming with its gold overlay, its two cherubim with wings outstretched almost touching over the mercy seat, with the sacred and prized jar of manna, along with the two tables of stone which Moses had put there so many centuries ago at Horeb. But this had been lost before the Exile, and the Holy of Holies now stood empty.

The formalities all finished, the high priest beckoned to all the people; and as a hush fell over the crowd, he raised the ceremonial knife high above his head.

It was then about three o'clock in the afternoon and the land has been engulfed in terrible darkness for almost three full hours.

The knife descended on the exposed throat of the lamb, and with a swift sure cut, the high priest slit the animal's throat. Just as the knife had accomplished its mission, a sudden dull, huge rumbling began to erupt from the bowels of the earth. The buildings and court of the temple began to slightly sway, some few people lost their balance as others clung to each other or grasped as a pillar or wall for support. The priest had to steady himself as he finished the sacrificing of the lamb. Screams, shrieks, cries and exclamations of dismay swept through the crowd and all over the city. Then an extraordinary sound was heard--as a large tearing noise from inside the Holy Place!

A servant, dispatched by the high priest, quickly ran to the entry, and face pale, came back to report, as the rumbling subsided and the first groups were catching the blood of the slaughtered animal in their ceremonial vessels, that "the veil that covered the Holy of Holies has been completely ripped from top to bottom!"

The high priest desperately tried to still the nagging voices of conscience plaguing his now tortured mind and with the most urgent beckoning toward his assistant and the other priest, he indicated that the ceremony, already begun, should swiftly continue!

Nothing could prevent the exact timeliness of this centuries-old celebration of the Passover, the killing of the first ceremonial lamb, and then the swift butchering of the hundreds and thousands of additional lambs as each clan or large household came into the temple court to sacrifice its own lambs

with the same ceremonies: the slitting of the throat, the passing of the blood, its dashing against the altar, the hanging of the lambs on pegs round about the walls or over strong men's shoulders while the viscera was dumped in a growing pile, the hides quickly stripped while the animal was still warm, and the fat thrown on a blazing pyre in offering.

What an incredible scene!

But the most incredible part of all was the ultimate spiritual significance that multiple millions of human beings would foreverafter understand was contained in those stupendous events. For little did the high priest realize that just as his ceremonial knife descended upon the exposed throat of the lamb, flashing with dull radiance in the flickering torchlight, so had a Roman soldier on a hill just outside Jerusalem quickly reversed the staff of his spear, shaken off the wet sponge with its bitter contents, and with a vicious laugh, thrust his spear into Christ's side!

Did Jesus of Nazareth die on the stake at the precise instant the sacrificial lamb died in the temple: Was Jesus Christ brutally slain at the exact moment of time when the very same high priest who had just plotted His death ritualistically slaughtered the unblemished lamb?

Paul wrote that "Christ our Passover" is sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7). The Gospel accounts state that Jesus Christ died at the ninth hour, which was three o'clock in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan.

The Jewish historian Josephus, who was born a few years after Jesus' death and lived throughout the last years of the temple in Jerusalem reports that the Passover lambs were sacrificed from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the same 14th of Nisan!

"Accordingly, on the occasion of the feast called Passover, at which they sacrifice from the ninth to the eleventh hour [3:00 to 5:00 p.m.], and a little fraternity, as it were, gather round each sacrifice, of not fewer than ten persons (War 6.9.3).

The indication from Josephus' descriptions seems to be that all the Passover lambs from all the people were sacrificed within that two hour time period. If this was indeed the case, the first unblemished lamb that had to be ceremonially sacrificed by the high priest had to have been scheduled for the beginning of the period, or precisely at 3:00 p.m. on the afternoon of Nisan 14th!

Independent confirmation of the approximate time of the Passover sacrifice comes from the Book of Jubilees (written in the second century B.C.) which gives a time between about 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.; and from early rabbinic literature (edited in the second century A.D.) which gives a time of some-time after 2:30 p.m.

If this temporal "coincidence" between the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is striking, its spiritual implications are absolutely overwhelming.

The unblemished lamb that was required to be sacrificed ever year by the high priest represented the recognition by Israel that death was the only way to absolve sin. This practice of sacrificing animals had been continuing from time immemorial. Yet it was really "not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin" (Heb. 10:4).

So God was now making a way to remove sin. God was raising the stakes of the sacrifice--infinitely!

Rather than offering the physical life of a lamb for the physical transgression of Israel, God the Father was now going to offer the life of His Son for the spiritual transgressions of all mankind! (See Hebrews 9 and 10).

The sacrifice of the lamb enabled human beings to live their physical lives forgiven from sin; the sacrifice of Jesus Christ would now enable human beings to attain a spiritual life--the promise of eternal inheritance--forgiven from sin (See Heb. 9:12-15).

God states that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Consequently, it would take a death to pay the penalty for the sins of each and every human being. But God planned to offer in our place Jesus Christ, whose life, as Creator of the universe, was worth more than the combined lives of all mankind from all time put together. Christ would only have to die once (Heb. 9:26; 10:10-12), and through that death every man would have the chance to be justified before God and live forever.

Now what about Caiaphas, the high priest that year? It was his responsibility to sacrifice the unblemished lamb as an offering for all Israel. And he was also the very same person who plotted, organized and expedited the crucifixion of Jesus.

What powerful spiritual concepts are contained in Caiaphas' dual role that fateful year. The high priest symbolized all Israel when he ritualistically slaughtered the lamb as a sin

offering to God. And this very same high priest just as surely symbolized all mankind when he accused and condemned Christ!

Then bringing the overwhelming spiritual plan of God to its climactic point of spiritual impact, this same high priest slits the throat of the sacrificial lamb just as the Roman soldier spears the side of the sacrificed Christ!

Previously, Caiaphas had reasoned that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people" (John 18:14). What he had said was absolutely true--but in a way, and for a reason, incredibly beyond his limited and parochial understanding.

Caiaphas thought that Jesus was causing so much commotion among the people that the Roman authorities might use such crowd fervor as an excuse for a major attack on the population, even a pogrom. Therefore, to save the entire Jewish population from such possible atrocities, Jesus would have to die as a sacrifice.

Ironically, the high priest was right. More right than anyone could have ever even imagined. For it was now God's time to fulfill His plan formulated before the foundation of the world (Heb. 9:26; Rev. 13:8). It was indeed absolutely essential that Jesus of Nazareth, Christ and Creator, would have to die as an sacrifice so that all humanity could have the opportunity to live forever!

Another spiritually startling revelation was that direct contact with God the Father was now for the first time available to all human beings. This was symbolized by the dramatic rip in the veil, which had previously concealed the Holy of Holies, at the precise instant of Jesus' death.

The spiritual significance of this tear in the sacred tapestry is enormous. The Holy of Holies represented God's Throne, and the access to it, under the Old Covenant, was restricted to one human being (the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement). Other than this one occurrence, access to the Holy of Holies or, in its spiritual meaning, access to the throne of God, was completely concealed from mankind (Heb. 9:7-8). But the death of Christ ripped the veil apart--the Holy of Holies was literally revealed and direct access to God was now literally possible in personal prayer through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

## APPENDIX VII

## THE NAME "PASSOVER"

It might be asked whether the death angel had to pass through the land and slay the Egyptians on the 14th because of the name "Passover." Such an argument is essentially based on etymology--the presumed origin of the term "Passover" (Hebrew pesaḥ).

It must be pointed out initially that any arguments based on etymology or the concept of a common "root" are suspect in any theological argument. They can be accepted only after very careful study and then only when accompanied by more substantial arguments, such as those of context and history. The "root fallacy"--the assumption that two words with the same Hebrew "root" must somehow mean the same thing--has been the undoing of many a theological argument or assumption as has been shown by the pivotal study of James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language. Thus, the real or apparent origin of the Hebrew word pesaḥ can have only small weight in the discussion of the time of the Old Testament Passover. To determine what weight it has, consider the follow points.

1. The etymology of the word pesaḥ is disputed. Although some scholars feel it is derived from the verb form pāsaḥ "to pass by, over", others disagree. The book of Exodus does not itself discuss the origin of the word. Even though chapter 12 uses both the verb and noun, this could be a simple play on words rather than a true etymology. Such word plays--selected for similarity in sound alone without any implication of etymological relationship--are found at various points in scripture (cf., e.g., Isaiah 5:7).

2. The Hebrew name of Passover is never associated with the actions of the death angel, although the word is used in several other senses (even in Ex. 12). Its basic definitions are (a) "act of sacrificing the lamb" (Ex. 12:27); (b) "the Passover lamb" (Ex. 12:21); (c) "the entire festival" (Ex. 34:25). Nowhere are the actions of the death angel called pesaḥ in the Old Testament.

3. As a corollary to the point just given, it might be added that certain events in Exodus were obviously not repeated in later Passovers. The blood was not placed on the doorposts anymore, nor were the people allowed to slaughter the Passover in their own homes. No specific aspect of the later

Passover commemorates the passage of the death angel. Thus, there is no reason to assume that the passing of the angel was the primary feature celebrated nor the one which gave the celebration its name. On the contrary, the term pesah was applied initially (Ex. 12:11) and thereafter to the lamb and/or the celebration of which the lamb was the center.

4. Whenever the time of Passover is specified in a narrow sense, the emphasis seems to be on the slaughter of the lamb, not the rest of the celebration. For example, Leviticus 23:5 states, "On the 14th of the first month, between the two evenings, is the Lord's Passover." The only thing to be done "between the two evenings" was the killing of the lamb (Exodus 12:6). The eating could go on long after that time. Yet Lev. 23:5 says that "the Lord's Passover" is specifically between the two evenings. This shows the emphasis on the slaughter only whenever the specific time is given. Nowhere is it stated that the Passover lamb must be eaten on the 14th. For that matter, nowhere is it stated that the death angel would pass by on the 14th.

It is interesting that the Passover seems to be the only festival ceremony which is specified for a particular time of day. Such specification seems necessary only when the day was about to end and another begin. The time of slaughter was given because it was to be done on the 14th but just before the 15th and Feast of Unleavened Bread was to begin.