

Dear Dr. Hoeh,

The sequence of logic that led to the Grabbe/Kuhn Passover Paper.

Since Jesus Christ, the True Passover Lamb, died at 3 pm on the afternoon of Nisan 14, which is the same time the Jews guided by the Temple rulers began killing their lambs, isn't there a chance that that was the right time to kill the lambs? (The right time for 31 A.D. for all the Jews.) But Jesus and his disciples had to keep something that year and so they kept something the previous evening, which has also come to be known as Passover, and come to be a Christian observance.

And since the death of Christ at 3 pm is effective in covering our past sins, surely the time of His death must have been correct, and being correct, then we should be able to read this 3 pm death into all previous Passover observances. Well, we will admit one change. When the killing of lambs was done at the Temple as a group ritual, naturally more time would be required, so the time was moved back to 3 pm from its "close to sunset" enactment which would have suited the needs of a family (or two family) affair.

Now having concluded that all this is correct we will read this into the Exodus account, where any honest reader will admit that there is some room for ambiguity in good many sentences.

The first step is to understand that Yankees and Southerners do not agree on the term "evening", and the Jews likewise have a number of definitions, and not only that they have the term "between the two evenings".

Having worked up a bit of enthusiasm for this new twist, the proponents begin to ride rough shod over one plain scripture after another. Every ambiguous scripture is read in favor of a killing of the lamb late on the 14th near sunset; every plain scripture is made to appear a bit ambiguous. It is a continual forcing of the language in order to see whether this new view might just be conceivable, possible, whether it might even be the ~~truth~~ truth. ~~No~~ Now so far a speculation is concerned I might still bear with this venture; we are gifted with creative minds and we like to see whether it might be put together in another way. But look at the carnage that is left behind:

- 1) It must be concluded that what Jesus and his disciples did the evening of the 14th was something quite unusual, "maybe they didn't even have a lamb", maybe it should be termed "Lord's Supper", maybe He was changing "Passover" back 21 hours or 24 hours for a new Christian ritual.
- 2) The fact that the Jews today stay indoors until midnight of the 14th is to be ignored. The fact that they inspect the house for crumbs on that beginning of the 14th and that they burn something by 10 (?) the next morning is ignored; obviously these could be vestigial structures of burning of the leftovers of the Passover Lamb and the fact that the Death Angel passed at night on the 14th.
- 3) The fact that Jesus gave His life into His betrayers hands at a time that was during that supper and still within the definition of "between the two evenings" is ignored. Satan enters into Judas at this time and it is Satan who thus betrays Him, though Judas has his part in going along. The fact that Judas (alias Satan) returns about midnight with the capability of putting Christ to death is ignored. The fact that a Passover Lamb is to be killed mercifully without hours and hours of mental and physical torture is ignored, the fact that the Lamb is to be killed by a sharp knife by the High Priest or his immediate representatives or appointees at these Temple sites???? Jesus certainly died at 3 pm at the hands of man, but not at the Temple site, nor at the hands of an appointed priest, but by a soldier, a Roman soldier, who surely had a bit of mercy in mind, and the time coincided with the time the Priests were to begin with their lambs, here was the Lamb they refused. (Now what they did that year in darkness is unknown but would make a good paper.)

4) The fact that the True Passover Lamb was taken into a house in Bethany as the 10th began, treated well by the household and accepted as a member of it, even to having its feet anointed, and the next day accepted by the people, by the Voice from heaven, and examined in minute detail by the Hellenistic Jews is ignored. And so is the fact that the priests by contrast selected Him ahead of the 10th for death, delayed His death by an examination at night, by scourging, by mental and physical torture, and by approving a method of death used by Gentiles and forbidden to Jews, a method that would have meant death by suffocation, not the swift dispatch with a sharp knife that Isaac faced. And yet this whole discussion begins with the assumption that surely the High Priest was right and the Jews are right.

5) The "between the two evenings" research ignores the plain obvious fact that the Jews translate that DUSK, DUSK, DUSK, DUSK, DUSK, DUSK, until my typewriter groans.

(a comment here; If we Christians had lived obedient lives, our acceptance of Christ's giving His Life during that supper would have been sufficient and applicable in the full sense of the word. But it is the evil of everyone involved in the whole proceedings, and the evil in their own lives, that made necessary the 21 hour delay, the torture and the improper death. The office of the High Priest made his actions binding and effective, yet they were wrong. But for the High Priest or us to say "we have not sinned" and that Jesus the True Passover Lamb got "what He had coming", this would border on the well, I don't have a word for it. The proper "gift of His Life" that I personally accept is that one on the beginning of the 14th; and that is the one we are commanded to observe; and it is the one the Quartodeciman controversy refers to. The other giving of His life at 3 pm, that the Jews took on themselves and their children.)

6) The difference between the two celebrations throughout the O.T. is ignored, and they remain two celebrations in the N.T.

7) The death of Egypt's firstborn took place on a certain night; to observe that night in sombre reflection for having been passed over is one thing; to have a joyous celebration on such a night is a totally different item and reflects a hardness of heart and a callousness that is without excuse. The pattern of Purim should be plain enough. The Jews celebrate the day on which they had REST, which is the day after they killed their enemies. The palace group delayed their Rest celebration to the 15th because they had been killing their enemies on the 13 and the 14th also.

8) The fact that Israel left Egypt in order, 2 million of them plus animals, not a fleeing mob, but "in the sight of the Egyptians" and in order, this is ignored.

9) It is assumed that all payment by Egyptians was ahead of the Death Angel, that the Egyptians (except Pharaoh alone) had given their all and Israel was packed and ready to travel. And then a Righteous God rewards those "wicked Egyptians" by killing their firstborn. This is so ridiculous I hate to type it. Egyptians have never rebelled against their ruler (Even Nassar who led them into defeat); how could they take the "law" into their own hands and drive out ever Israelite in a few hours of darkness over a death in the family and the houses of neighbors (the news of death all over the nation could not have spread in minutes, or even hours. Remember the Sylmar Quake.). But this is all ignored as two scholars took up the task of proving the Temple Jews correct. (It is like Erasmus determined to restore the pronunciation of the Koine Greek, which pronunciation the common people had lost; having begun on a false premise, he continued to paint himself into a corner till he himself lost the ability to speak Greek and all scholars since!) Scholarship is excellent, but not without some guidelines and restraint.

10) It is ignored that even as late as 190-15 Jews in Palestine still are found selecting a lamb on the 10th in daylight, taking it into the home, treating it well, then killing it at the beginning of the 14th, which 14th begins at sundown, and killing it on the 15th 14th is obviously just after sundown.

11) This Grabbe/Kuhn paper ignores the fact that there is evidence that the killing of the Passover Lamb was changed from the beginning of the 14th to the late afternoon of the 14th in order to do this as a group activity at the Temple; and it was still preserving the "one the 14th command" and done by the order of those in charge. Thus it was a valid death of both the physical lamb and the True Passover. Why, Dr. Hoeh even presented this evidence in a sermon. Yet the paper chose to ignore it in order to make a good case for the other view.

12) The paper ignores the fact that if you find up your kneading trough on your back (or back pack) it will still be 24 hours before you run out of leavened bread. And that there is a distinction between the meal at the beginning of the 14th (where unleavened bread is eaten by necessity of command) and the meal at the beginning of the 15th, a Feast (where unleavened bread is eaten because there is no other). This distinction shows ~~clearly~~ a day's lapse of time.

13) The Kuhn/Grabbe paper ignores information presented by the Fred Coulter paper that Israel ate that first Passover in their homes, in their houses in Goshen, then gathered at Ramses during the day part of the 14th, requiring hours, ~~hours~~ and then left from there. This point I had missed but makes good sense.

14) In the account of Samuel, we find the yearly sacrifice (certainly the Passover) and then the people returning to their homes on the daylight portion of that day, surely if this were Nisan 15 they would not be travelling but continuing a celebration.
1 Sam. 1:3,19,21) Also Deut 16:7 "turn in the morning and go to your tents" return home.

15) It ignores that fact that Israel left while the Egyptians buried their dead. He does not bury the dead within minutes or in the first few hours, or in the darkness of the hours right after midnight. Imagine Egyptians out digging graves right after midnight and with the full moon over head, and being plagued by the Israelites who say we have to leave we have to leave, you are pressuring us to leave.

16) ignore that the Jews to this day observe the beginning of the 14th with a meal with wine and the bare bone of a lamb on a plate, and surely no leaven for that they are sweeping up diligently. Who is it that is looking at Christ's bare bones, even today?

17) ignores that the disciples were in no way surprised about the decision to have the Passover on the 14th at the beginning. They simply prepared and ate the Passover.

18) ~~ignores~~ ignores the Talmud statement that "does not allow the Israelites to leave their homes that night but only when the sun comes up; and yet puzzles about 'leaving at night'."

Review for a moment the basic premise of the paper; "The Jews are right" therefore let's read this Exodus account as if the Passover Lamb was killed at the end of the 14th and that they ate it and left on the night of the 15th just after the Death Angel

There are more ~~it~~ but that is enough on that angle of it. Then look at the incredible damage done to the Worldwide Church of God by having preached this doctrine and by having it put out in Mr. G.T.A.'s book. The less capable academically never really understood that anything had changed. But the top ones either followed the thinking of Grabbe/Kuhn or they tried to hold both versions in mind, or came to the conclusion that "you can't really know" and half-way quit attending, or a few burn up their typewriter ribbons.

One more (18) The Lamb that gave His Life for us was a unblemished Lamb, that Sacrifice is the one we should accept as a free Gift; but the ~~hitting~~ beating and torture of that Lamb for the next 21 hours, that we should accept with our heads hanging down, for it is due to man's shortcomings and sins. We do not ~~celebrate~~ celebrate an 3 pm event, nor the 21 hours that precede it as the priests and Pharisees celebrated their hollow victory.

One group under Kneebone in Halifax has already switched to a beginning of Nisan 15 Passover observance. Untold damage has been done to the Church by the manner in which this venture, innocent though in its inception, was dumped on an unsuspecting and defenseless Church.

THE SOLUTION:

I frankly think that there is sufficient evidence on hand for all concerned to come to a unanimous decision on the matter. To allow the current situation to continue is continuing the damage to the Church in that it destroys the confidence in our leadership that we look to Pasadena for. I would strongly urge that Drs. Grabbe and Kuhn ~~to~~ retract that paper in some public fashion; and that all top men who were taken in by it to any extent also join in a pronouncement of some kind saying that ~~it~~ it was not a thorough study, had ~~serious~~ serious errors in scholarship, did not prove its point but merely gave ~~emphasis~~ the ~~Messiah-Nisan 15 Night Death -~~ ~~Angel~~ side of the argument.

And what is even more serious, it should not have been sprung on the Church, it should never have been publically discussed or preached, or put in Mr. S.P.A.'s book. That ~~is~~ was an honest mistake, but that once it gained momentum and one scholar after another got on the bandwagon, they all jumped on, except a few die-hards, whom it was easy ~~to~~ ignore.

Thus we hereby retract this paper and regret the haste in which we dumped it on a defenseless "bunch of sheep", whoa, I mean . . . well you know how it is.

The correct time for this would be as the Feast approaches. And it would be the best news that this Church has heard in many, many months!

Rather than me having to peck off a letter like this to Dr. Grabbe and Dr. Kuhn both, on top of all that I've written, what if you in some fashion took the honor of taking the lead among the 3 of you. Others may also be involved, I know Bob Ginskey is pretty convinced, and here Mr. Preston. But if you got up at each Feast site with the straight story, you would be the top speaker of the evening; and I'm not trying to play on your vanity in any way.

Sincerely,

W. Herrmann