

A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY OF THE
LAST SUPPER AND THE PASCHA:

With a Patristic and Rabbinic Interpretation of
the Gospel of St. John Chapter 18:28

By

Dr. Seraphim Steger

**St. Seraphim of Sarov & St. John of Kronstadt Orthodox
Church**

La Mesa, CA

Revised and Updated

2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface:	ii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: The Testimony of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings	14
Chapter III: The Testimony of the Church Fathers	26
Chapter IV: The Testimony of the Sanhedrin	80
Chapter V: The Testimony of the New Testament	83
Chapter VI: Summary of the Passover Laws of Korbanot	100
Chapter VII: Chronology of Pesach (Rabbinic)	107
Chapter VIII: Passover According to the Babylonian Talmud	109
Chapter IX: Jewish Practice of Celebrating the Chagigah	137
Chapter X: The Jewish Practice of Celebrating First-Fruits	163
Chapter XI: The Last Supper: Chaburah Meal, Seder, or Special Dinner?	177
Chapter XII: The Last Supper in the Contemporary Jewish Messianic Movement	194
Chapter XIII: Refutation of Edersheim's Other Arguments on the Chronology of the Passover 205	
Chapter XIV: Chronology of Pesach and Last Supper (Biblical, Patristic, and Rabbinic)	210
Chapter XV: Harmonization of the Gospels on Passover	214
Chapter XVI: Diatessaron-Based Harmony of the Gospels on Passover	218
Chapter XVII: Implications of a Patristic Chronology for Passover for the Church	225
Bibliography	245
Index	-PAGE-

Dr. Seraphim Steger

Preface:

There is actually very little if anything original in this thesis with the exception of the interpretation of St. John 18:28. And what is original is only an articulation of what has always been known and believed within the Church about Pascha and the Last Supper. However, what has always been known and believed within the Church of the first few centuries is startlingly different from what is popularly believed and commonly taught. Consequently, it is the purpose of this thesis to restore the ancient patristic understanding of Pascha and the chronology of the Last Supper. In essence, this thesis consists of a compilation of appropriate Scripture passages, Patristic quotations, and Rabbinic discussions centered around the celebration of Jewish Feast of the Passover in the late Second Temple period in Israel, with a focus on how that practice relates to the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus Christ and His disciples. Some of the oral law and some of practices from the Second Temple period lend greater and sometimes startling information and understanding of the celebration of the Pesach, the Jewish Passover, which gives direct support to the Orthodox understanding as articulated by the Patristic Fathers of the Church. In turn the Patristic interpretation of the feast has implications for us in the 21st century.

In years past, I had mistakenly believed that Jesus had celebrated a true Passover Seder on Thursday evening with His disciples and had been crucified on the following day, both of these occurring on the 15th of Nisan. As a former “Evangelical Christian” and gentile supporter of evangelical outreaches to the Jewish community, the concept of Jesus celebrating the Passover as a “good Jew” had a romantic aura about it. To be sure the Passover Seder as currently practiced among my Jewish friends lent ample support to this notion. In fact my first awakening to this idea was when I was invited to a “Christian” Passover Seder organized by a former Jew who had converted to Christianity. The types and antitypes present in the passover lamb (shank), the matzah, the bitter herbs, the breaking of the middle of 3 matzahs (with its wrapping up in a napkin called a “Unity” and being hidden away later to be discovered by one of the attending children -- suggesting the burial and resurrection of Christ), and the 4 cups of wine including the cup of blessing were more than enough to convince me of the truth of the matter. Later, as I became more involved in Jewish ministry and explaining the Gospel and who Jesus Christ was to my Jewish relatives, coworkers, and friends, I discovered the brilliance of Alfred Edersheim, a 19th century converted Jew who wrote a stunning account of the life of Christ in the context of Jewish life in the land of Israel as it existed in His day. The wealth of historical, cultural, and religious details that Edersheim gleaned from the rabbinic writings and incarnated into his account of Jesus’ life was simply astounding. Any doubts that I had had concerning the apparent discrepancies in the chronologies of the passion week of Christ (doubts that had arisen from reading Gleason Archer’s [Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties](#)) between the synoptic Gospels and St. John’s Gospels, literally vanished. I thoroughly enjoyed this intellectual voyeurism into Messianic Jewish thought, and frankly, if the Holy Spirit had not driven me towards Orthodoxy, I would have sought out a Messianic Jewish Christian Church -- having visited one in Jerusalem,

Dr. Seraphim Steger

and attended two in Southern California. I loved the music and the culture and the unique perspective that Jewish history added to my understanding of Holy Scripture. I even helped celebrate a “Christian” Passover Seder for our home Bible study group many years ago.

In the year I converted to new calendar Orthodoxy (1995), I met another convert, a former Lutheran minister, who had also been burdened by the chronology of Passover. I hastened to photocopy a few pages from Edersheim’s The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah on the express topic of the interpretation of St. John 18:28, i.e., that the passover sacrifice that the high priests and other officials of the Sanhedrin wanted to eat (and hence their need to avoid ritual defilement) was none other than the festival peace offering called the “chagigah.” When I happily gave this information to him, he said he was familiar with that, but he was thinking about it from the opposite point of view, that Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan as St. John’s Gospel (without Edersheim’s analysis) appeared to affirm. For another year I thought little more about it. Then I was reading a little book by the controversial greek orthodox lay theologian Apostolos Makrakis, An Orthodox-Protestant Dialogue, in which Makrakis boldly stated that Jesus had been crucified on the 14th and had not eaten the Passover supper. I was awestruck. Consequently, I began to delve deeper into the controversy and to view the Gospel accounts from that opposite point of view. Since I had to reverse many long held unorthodox views during my catechesis, I thought why not submit this hypothesis to scrutiny. After the initial research and writing which took the better part of 1995, I have left this thesis to collect dust for the past 17 years wondering if there was really any value in it.

A few years later I came to realize that the true orthodox were the traditional so-called “old calendar” orthodox, and not the new (modernist ecumenist) orthodox that I had first become associated with, so I followed my spiritual father Archimandrite Sergios (Black), abbot of St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery into the Traditional (Genuine) Orthodox Church. In 2012, I was auditing an online seminary course from the Holy Three Hierarchs Orthodox Theological Institute on the *History of the Church* taught by Bishop Sergios (Black) of the GOC. In one of our textbooks the first of a 5-volume orthodox **The Church in History, Volume 1: Formation and Struggles: The Birth of the Church AD 33-200, Part 1, The Birth of the Church 33-200**, by Veselin Kesich, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY 2007, in chapter 1 page 21, the author states, *“The evangelists agree that the Last Supper took place on Thursday evening, which is already Friday according to Jewish reckoning of the day from sunset to sunset. For the Synoptics it was the first day of Passover, and the meal that Jesus had with his disciples was a Passover meal. However, in the year of Jesus’ crucifixion, according to John, this Friday was not the Passover day, Nisan 15 in the Jewish calendar, but Nisan 14, the day of the slaughtering of paschal lambs. Hence the Last Super and the crucifixion would have taken place on the eve of Passover, When early on Friday the temple authorities brought Jesus to Pilate, they ‘did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover’ (John 18:28). It was ‘the Day of Preparation,’ and the Sabbath that followed ‘was a high day’ (John 19:14, 31). The Passover in the year which Jesus was crucified, on the basis of*

Dr. Seraphim Steger

these references, fell on a Saturday and not on a Friday. According to the lunar calendar used by the temple authorities, Passover was a movable feast..."

So there was some confusion here again, although Dr. Kasich correctly concurs with the interpretation of the chronology presented by St. John over the interpretation of those of Sts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Consequently, it seemed to me as if the timing would again be ripe for an in depth Orthodox review of the events of Pascha, i.e., dust off my thesis, review and update it, and to see what if any implications that the proper chronology would have for the Church, the Jewish people, and the heterodox of the 3rd millenium.

Seraphim, Jan 2012

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my wife Vivien, daughter Angel, and son Stephen for their patience and support over the years, as well as my spiritual father Bishop Sergios (Black) of Loch Lomond and Abbott of St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, Kelseyville, CA.

Stylistic Interpretation of Quoted Material:

Because of the length of various passages which have been quoted to show their general context, I have highlighted significant portions of the quotations by showing them in bold print +/- underlining. The quoted author's comments are always in brackets [] or parentheses (), while my editorial comments are always in braces {}.

Dr. Seraphim Steger

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Chapter I: Introduction

THESIS

With the increased numbers of Jews converting to evangelical Christianity in recent years, there has been a corresponding increase in interest in the Jewishness of Jesus, the Jewishness of the New Testament,¹ and the celebration of Jewish feasts!² Messianic Jewish-Christian Congregations as well as evangelical organizations targeting Jewish people, such as Chosen People Ministries and Jews for Jesus, frequently capitalize upon Passover Seders³ as tools to introduce Jewish people to their Messiah Yeshua Ha-Mashiach יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ (Jesus the Messiah). Their Messianic Passover Seders portray how Yeshua, being a Torah abiding Jew Himself, truly celebrated a Pesach (Passover) Seder with His talmidim (disciples) at the Last Supper.⁴ In other words, Yeshua's disciples prepared the Pesach lamb in the Temple on Thursday afternoon the 14th of Nisan. Then in the evening (Thursday 15th of Nisan), together with Yeshua, they roasted and ate the Passover lamb as part of that Seder in which the New Covenant was instituted. After supper, Yeshua was both betrayed and arrested on Thursday night, then tried and condemned on Friday morning, crucified and mocked to his death that Friday afternoon, and, finally, buried and anointed by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea before sundown on Friday the 15th of Nisan, i.e., before the end of Yom Tov (Lit. = the "good day"), the 1st day of the festival, a special sabbath.

Strongly advocating these chronologies of the thesis that Jesus' Last Supper was a Passover Seder are the masterful arguments of the 17th century English scholar and Cambridge University Hebraist John Lightfoot in his classic work: A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians (in 4 volumes) written in Latin between 1658 and 1674 and translated into English in 1684.⁵ This was the first commentary on the New Testament based on the corpus of Rabbinical writings.

¹ Stern DH, translator, Jewish New Testament, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. Jerusalem, Israel, 1989.

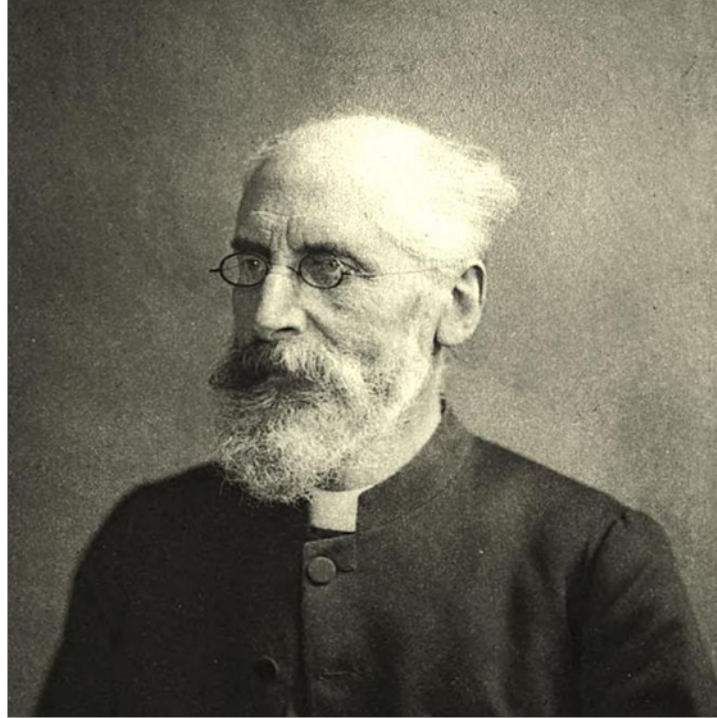
² Are these true celebrations of Old Testament Biblical holidays or are they instances of religious syncretism of current Jewish practices?

³ Seder = Lit. "order," referring to the traditional liturgical order of activities in the Passover dinner.

⁴ E.g., Fuchs D, Israel's Holy Days in Type and Prophecy, Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ, 1985.

⁵ Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, 1633 pp.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION



Alfred Edersheim 1825-1889

Educated at the University of Vienna starting in 1841, studied theology at New College, Edinburgh and at the University of Berlin. In 1875 he was ordained by the Church of England. In 1882 he moved to Oxford and became Select Preacher to the University 1884-85 and the Grinfield Lecturer on the Septuagint 1886-1889.

In supporting their interpretations of the Last Supper being a Pesach Seder, these two authors concentrate more on the chronology suggested by the Synoptic Gospels. Whereas Lightfoot nonchalantly discusses the Last Supper as if no one ever doubted it to be a Pesach Seder, Edersheim castigates those who think it otherwise: {Edersheim commenting on St. Luke: 22:7 ff. *“Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.’ ...13 So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.”* }

But St. Luke’s account of what actually happened, being in some points the most explicit, requires to be carefully studied, and that without

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

thought of any possible consequences in regard to the harmony of the Gospels. **It is almost impossible to imagine anything more evident, than that he wishes us to understand that Jesus was about to celebrate the ordinary Jewish Paschal supper.** “*And the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed.*” The designation is exactly that of the commencement of the Pascha, which, as we have seen, was the 14th Nisan, and the description that of the slaying of the Paschal Lamb. What follows in exact accordance with it: “*and He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the Pascha, that we may eat it.*” Then occur these three notices in the same account: “*And...they made ready the Pascha; ‘and when the hour was come, He reclined [as usual as the Paschal supper], and the Apostles with Him;’*” and, finally, these words of His: “*With desire I have desired to eat this Pascha with you.*” And with this fully agrees the language of the other two Synoptists, St Matt xxvi. 17-20, and St. Mark xiv. 12-17. **No ingenuity can explain away these facts.**⁹

Both Lightfoot and Edersheim continue to comment brilliantly and extensively on the sequence of events of the Passover Seder, the prayer and arrest in Gethemane, the following trial at the hands of the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas, the transfer of Christ to Pilate, Christ’s crucifixion and burial. Importantly, they both rise to their pinnacles of discussion regarding St. John’s enigmatic statement in 18:28: “*Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. **They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.***” First, Lightfoot argues that the “Passover” refers to the obligatory “chagigah” (or festival peace offering) and not to the paschal lamb:

“Ver. 28: ἀλλ’ ἵνα φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα. *But that they might eat the Passover.*] I. We have already shewn, in our notes upon Mark xiv. 12, that the eating of the Paschal lamb was never, upon any occasion whatever, transferred from the evening of the fourteenth day, drawing to the close of it; no, not by reason of the sabbath, or any uncleanness that had happened to the congregation; **so that there needs little argument to assure us that the Jews ate the lamb at the same time wherein Christ did.** Only let me add this: suppose they had entered Pilate’s house, and had defiled themselves by entering the house of a heathen, yet might not that defilement come under the predicament of **טבול יום**?¹⁰ If so, then

⁹ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book V, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 481.

¹⁰ Tebul Yom = bathed of the day

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

they might wash themselves in the evening, and be clean enough to eat the Paschal lamb, if it had to have been eaten on that evening: but they had eaten it the evening before.

“II. τὸ πάσχα , *the Passover*, therefore here doth not signify the Paschal lamb, but the Paschal *chagigah*: of which we will remark these two or three things...

“...3. The proper time of bringing the *Chagigah* was the fifteenth day of the month. *Aruch* in אר: “They ate, and drank, and rejoiced, and were bound to bring their sacrifice of *Chagigah* on the fifteenth day;” i.e., the first day of the feast, &c.

“There might be a time, indeed, when they brought their *Chagigah* on the fourteenth day; but this was not so usual; and then it was under certain conditions...

“For this and other reasons the Rabbins account the *Chagigah* of the fourteenth day to be many degrees less perfect than that of the fifteenth;...

“...1. the evangelist expresseth it after the common way of speaking, when he calls it the *Passover*. ...

“...2. The elders of the Sanhedrim prepare and oblige themselves to eat the *Chagigah* [the *Passover*] on that day, because the next day was the sabbath; and the *Chagigah* must not make void the sabbath.

“... חגיגה איִ ׀ רוחה את השבת׀ *The Chagigah doth not set aside the sabbath*. Hence that we quoted before, that the *Chagigah* was not to be brought upon the sabbath day, as also not in case of uncleanness: because however the *Chagigah* and defilement might set aside the *Passover*, yet it might not the sabbath.”¹¹

Now, Alfred Edersheim some 200 years later:

“Few expressions have given rise to more earnest controversy than this. On two things at least we can speak with certainty. Entrance into a heathen house did Levitically render impure for that day--that is, till the evening. The fact of such defilement is clearly attested both in the New Testament [Acts 10:28] and in the Mishnah, though its reasons might be various. [Ohol. xviii.7,¹² Tohar. vii.3¹³] A person who had so become

¹¹ Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, Vol. 3, Exercitations upon St John, Chapter. xviii. 28, pp. 420-423.

¹² Ohalot 8:8: “...*Dwelling places of gentiles [in the Land of Israel] are unclean. How long must [the*

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Leviticallly unclean was technically called Tebhul Yom ('bathed of the day'). the other point is, that, to have so become 'impure' for the day, would not have disqualified from eating the Paschal Lamb, since the meal was partaken of after the evening, and when a new day had begun. In fact, it is distinctly laid down [Pes. 92a --not so in general] that the 'bathed of the day,' that is, he who had become impure for the day and had bathed in the evening, did partake of the Paschal Supper, and an instance is related, [Jer. Pes. 36b lines 14-15 from bottom] when some soldiers who had guarded the gates of Jerusalem 'immersed,' and ate the Paschal Lamb.¹⁴ It follows that those Sanhedrists could not have abstained from entering the Palace of Pilate because by so doing they would have been disqualified for the Paschal supper.

“The point is of importance, because many writers have interpreted the expression ‘the Passover’ as referring to the Paschal Supper, and have argued that, according to the Fourth Gospel, our Lord did not on the previous evening partake of the Paschal Lamb, or else that in this respect the account of the Fourth Gospel does not accord with that of the Synoptists. But as, for the reason just stated, it is impossible to refer the expression “Passover” to the Paschal Supper, we have only to inquire whether the term is not also applied to other offerings. And here both the Old Testament [Deut xvi. 1-3; 2 Chron. xxxv. 1,2,6,18--"From flock and herd" can refer to sacrifices for the Community, not for individual] and Jewish writings [quotes other 2ndary sources] show, **that the term Pesach, or ‘Passover,’ was applied not only to the Paschal Lamb, but to all the Passover sacrifices, especially [consider the Community] to what was called the Chagigah, or festive offering**

gentiles] remain in them for them to require examination [to determine their status]? Forty days, even though there is no woman with him. And if a slave or an [Israelite] woman was watching over it, it does not require an examination.” in Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p.980. The reason for the uncleanness is because of the gentile practice of burying aborted fetuses in the house. The reason for the 40 days -- because that is the time necessary for the formation of a fetus in the womb.

¹³ Tohorot 7:3: *“He who leaves workers in his house -- ‘the house is unclean,’ the words of R. Meir. And sages say, ‘Unclean is only [the space] up to the place to which they can reach out their hands and touch.’”* in Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p.1050-1051.

¹⁴ Pesachim 8:8 (36b): *And it was taught thus: R. Eliezer b. Jacob says, “Soldiers were guards of the hinges [of the gates] in Jerusalem [and would become unclean from the uncleanness of those entering and leaving the city] and [they] immersed and ate their Passover offering in the evening.”* in Basker BM (translator), Schiffman LM (editor), The Talmud of the Land of Israel, 13, Yerushalmi Pesachim, University of Chicago Press, 1994, (36b, lines 34-48), p. 433.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

(from Chag, or Chagag, to bring the festive sacrifice usual at each of the three Great Feasts).’ According to the express rule (Chag. i.3) the **Chagigah was brought on the first festive Paschal Day**. It was offered immediately after the morning-service, and eaten on that day--probably some time before the evening, when, as we shall by-and-by see, another ceremony claimed public attention. **We can therefore quite understand that, not on the eve of the Passover, but on the first Paschal day, the Sanhedrists would avoid incurring a defilement** which, lasting till the evening, would not only have involved them in the inconvenience of the Levitical defilement on the first festive day, **but have actually prevented their offering on that day the Passover, festive sacrifice, or Chagigah**. For, we have these two express rules: **that a person could not in Levitical defilement offer the Chagigah; and that the chagigah could not be offered for a person by some one else who took his place** [Jer. Chag. 76a, lines 16-14 from bottom].¹⁵ these considerations and canons seem decisive as regards the views above expressed. **There would have been no reason to fear ‘defilement’ on the morning of the Paschal Sacrifice; but entrance into the Praetorium on the morning of the first Passover-day would have rendered it impossible for them to offer the Chagigah, which is also designated by the term Pesach.**”¹⁶

With documentation and insight like this, it is no wonder that both Lightfoot’s and Edersheim’s chronologies and portrayals of the Last Supper as a traditional Jewish Pesach Seder constitute a much-copied template for today’s Messianic Christian Passover Seders. And there is no question that the efforts of these Messianic Christians have had their intended success. Through these and other evangelical efforts, Orthodox Jews have

¹⁵ R. Bun bar Hiyya asked before R. Zeira, “**What is the law as to sending one’s festal-offering with a third party?**” He said to him, “Let us derive the answer from the following: Men afflicted with blisters or with a polypus are exempt from making an appearance, as it is said, ‘Thither shall you go...and thither shall you bring’ (Deut. 12:6). “An unclean person is exempt from having to bring an appearance-offering, for it is written, ‘When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord’ (Deut. 31:11). “He who is worthy to make an appearance with all Israel brings an appearance-offering, and he who is not worthy to make an appearance with all Israel does not bring an appearance offering.” **And may he send his festal-offering with a third party? Said R. Yosé, “That cited passage indicates that one may not send a festal-offering through a third party.”** in “Hagigah 1:1, XIV. A-F,” Neusner J (translator) Talmud of the Land of Israel, 20, Yerushalmi Hagigah and Moed Qatan, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1986, p. 15.

¹⁶ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book V, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 567-568.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

alarmingly proclaimed that “more Jews have come to Christ in the last 20 years than in the previous 20 centuries!”¹⁷

However, there is another side to this chronology. Although the opinions of Lightfoot and Edersheim appear consistent, relatively thorough, and quite logical on the surface, their analyses and conclusions concerning Pesach reflect a historical tradition quite different from that of the Church Fathers. In fact, they directly contradict the Holy Tradition of the Early Church!

Consider these comments addressed at the time of Pope Leo I (A.D. c.390-461) by the early post-Nicene Church in the context of the calculation of the date of Easter:

*“...Besides this **Cyril [of Alexandria]** showed, in a letter to the Pope, what was defective in the Latin calculation; and this demonstration was taken up again, some time after, by order of the Emperor, by Paschasinus, Bishop of Lilybaeum and Proterius of Alexandria, in a letter written by them to Pope Leo I. In consequence of these communications, Pope Leo often gave preference to the Alexandrian computation, instead of that of the Church of Rome. At the same time also was generally established, **the opinion so little entertained by the ancient authorities of the Church--one might say, so strongly in contradiction to their teaching--that Christ partook of the passover on the 14th of Nisan, that he died on the 15th (not on the 14th, as the ancients considered), that he lay in the grave on the 16th, and rose again on the 17th. In the letter we have just mentioned, Proterius of Alexandria openly admitted all these different points.**”¹⁸*

In other words, for the first 4 centuries of the Christian era, the Church taught that Jesus was crucified and died on the 14th of Nisan, the Eve of the Passover. In the early afternoon, at the time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple in preparation for the Passover Seder that evening. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, was shedding His blood on the cross so that the wrath of God would “passover” those who would trust in Him as Lord and Savior. Thus, the early Church did not consider that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. Instead, it believed

¹⁷ Rabbi Moise Leider, Chabad of La Jolla, in Lecture Series, What Every Jew Should Know About Missionaries, ”Session 1: The Obsession to Convert Jews, the Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism,” Nov. 8, 1989, (attended by author).

¹⁸ Percival HR, The Seven Ecumenical Councils, in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 14., Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.56. {This author could not acquire a copy of the actual letter of Cyril to Pope Leo I in any of the English language editions of Cyril’s collected works.}

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

that the Last Supper was a singularly important dinner, a mystical supper, that took place between the Jesus and His disciples one night prior to the Passover Seder. That night was the night when the Jews traditionally selected the barley for the “omer” [Lit: “sheaf” which would later be presented as a meal offering of First-Fruits on the 16th of Nisan]. It was also the night when the Jews traditionally lit candles and searched the house for the removal of leaven. This was one complete day before the Yom Tov, the “good day”, the first day of the feast of Passover. In other words, Jesus didn’t eat the passover lamb, but in the words of the Church Fathers, He was the Passover Lamb! Additionally, on Resurrection Sunday morning, by the words of those same Church Fathers, He was the First-Fruits of those risen from the dead. If, instead, we abided by Lightfoot’s and Edersheim’s chronology, Jesus would typologically be our Festival Chagigah slain for our celebration of the passover -- a simple peace offering. According to Edersheim’s chronology and conclusions,¹⁹ it follows that Jesus would no longer have been our First-Fruits to God.

Consequently, if we believe that “*that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,*” (2 Pet 1:20) then the testimony of the early Church is critical if not paramount to our doctrine if not to our very salvation. Indeed, the Apostle Paul has exhorted us “*to stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.*” (2 Thes 2:15). If the Bible alone were sufficient in and of itself to provide the truth, all would understand it the same way. But the truth is, the various confessions and denominations within “Christendom” don’t view things similarly.²⁰ Moreover, virtually every Christian heresy that has arisen has been proposed on a “Biblical” basis.

Thus, this author asserts, by returning exclusively to the writings of the Jews without considering the Holy Tradition and Fathers of the Church, Lightfoot and Edersheim have brilliantly misinterpreted the Scriptural chronology of the last events of Jesus’ life. Based upon their reading of the Scriptures and the Rabbis, as well as their analysis of the prominent commentators of their day, they both retrospectively ascertained that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder -- that Jesus truly ate the Jewish Passover meal with His disciples early Thursday evening (15th of Nisan); that He was arrested, tried, and then later crucified on Friday afternoon (15th of Nisan) as the festal

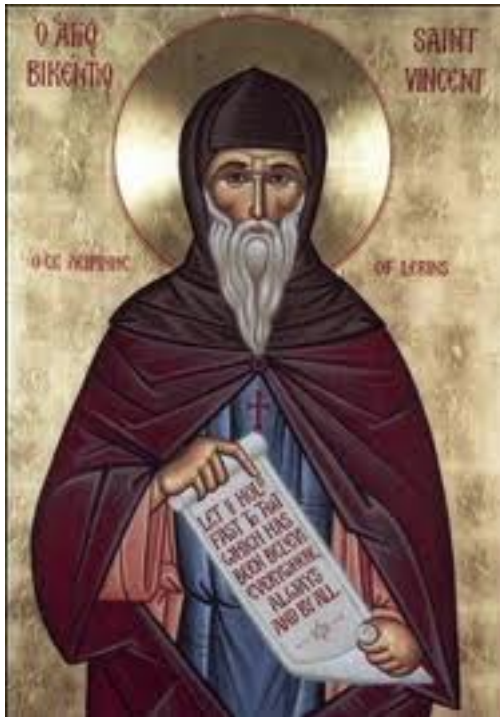
¹⁹ “First, we have, as the commencement of the new harvest, the Lord Jesus Himself, risen from the dead, the ‘firstfruits’ -- the first sheaf waved before the Lord on the second Paschal day, just as Christ actually burst the bonds of death at that very time.” Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As they Were At the Time of Christ, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p. 385. However, according to Edersheim in The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Friday was the 1st Paschal day, and Saturday the 2nd. Hence, his Jesus rose on the 3rd Paschal day -- one day after first-fruits!

²⁰ Stylianopoulos T, The New Testament: An Orthodox Perspective. Vol One, Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1997.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Chagigah.; that He was buried late on Friday afternoon between the 15th and 16th of Nisan -- the 16th being the Sabbath; and that He arose early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, the 17th of Nisan, one day after the festival of First-Fruits! Although their arguments may sound convincing, and certainly the days of the week that they give are correct, according to the testimony of the early Church their dates are wrong. Their erudite scholarship and analysis are contradictory to the received tradition and inconsistent with the Church's theology. They should have prospectively tracked the Holy Tradition from the 1st century forward. The Rabbinic Testimony which they studied extensively and marshaled formidably to support their claims, when subjected to further scrutiny actually contradicts their claims and overwhelmingly supports the claims of the early Church's chronology. Perhaps they should have heeded the advice of Vincentius in his Commonitory of A.D. 434.

St. Vincent of Lérins, died c. AD 445



Vincentius, a monk of Lérins, formulated general rules for helping those in his day to distinguish Catholic truth from heresy. His rules were based only in part on the authority of Holy Scripture, because he noted that men differed in their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, his rules were supplemented by “an appeal to that sense

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

of Holy Scripture which is supported by universality, antiquity, and consent: by universality, when it is the faith of the whole Church; by antiquity, when it is that which has been held from the earliest times; by consent, when it has been the acknowledged belief of all, or of almost all (for there is some disagreement among them, but their testimony is extremely one-sided), whose office and character gave authority to their determinations. Or ‘*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.*’”²¹

*“I have often then inquired earnestly and attentively of very many men eminent for sanctity and learning, how and by what sure and so to speak **universal rule I may be able to distinguish the truth of Catholic faith from the falsehood of heretical pravity;** and I have always, and in almost every instance, received an answer to this effect: That whether I or any one else should wish to detect the frauds and avoid the snares of heretics as they rise, and to continue sound and complete in the Catholic faith, we must, the Lord helping, **fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law, and then, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.***

*“But here some one perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, **what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church’s interpretation?** For this reason,—because, owing to the depth of the Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters. For Novatian expounds it one way, Sabellius another, Donatus another, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, another, Photinus, Apollinaris, Priscillian, another, Iovinian, Pelagius, Celestius, another, lastly, Nestorius another. Therefore, it is very necessary, on account of so great intricacies of such various error, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.*

“Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense ‘Catholic,’ which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends

²¹ Essentially, “Everywhere, Always, and by All.” Vincent of Lerins, The Commonitory, Heurtly CA (translator), in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 11, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 128.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.” ²²

Essentially Vincentius was appealing to the historical Tradition of the Church, the mind of the Church, to interpret scripture.

*...Tradition was not, according to St. Vincent, an independent instance, nor was it a complementary source of faith. “Ecclesiastical understanding” could not add anything to the Scripture. But it was the only means to ascertain and to disclose the true meaning of Scripture. Tradition was, in fact, the authentic interpretation of Scripture. And in this sense it was co-extensive with Scripture. Tradition was actually “Scripture rightly understood.” And Scripture was for St. Vincent the only, primary and ultimate, canon of Christian truth.*²³

Consequently, it is the contention of this dissertation, that *Scripture rightly understood* affirms that Jesus Christ was crucified on the Friday, the 14th of Nisan, the Eve of Passover; and that the Last Supper was not a Passover Seder. Yes, Jesus attended Passover Seders His entire life.²⁴ However, the Last Supper was not a Passover Seder! Rather, it was a mystical supper between a “Rabbi” and His pupils, the 12 disciples, and took place one day before the Paschal feast, i.e., on the evening of 13-14 Nisan, not 14-15 Nisan.

²² Vincent of Lerins, The Commonitory, Heurtly CA (translator), in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 11, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 132.

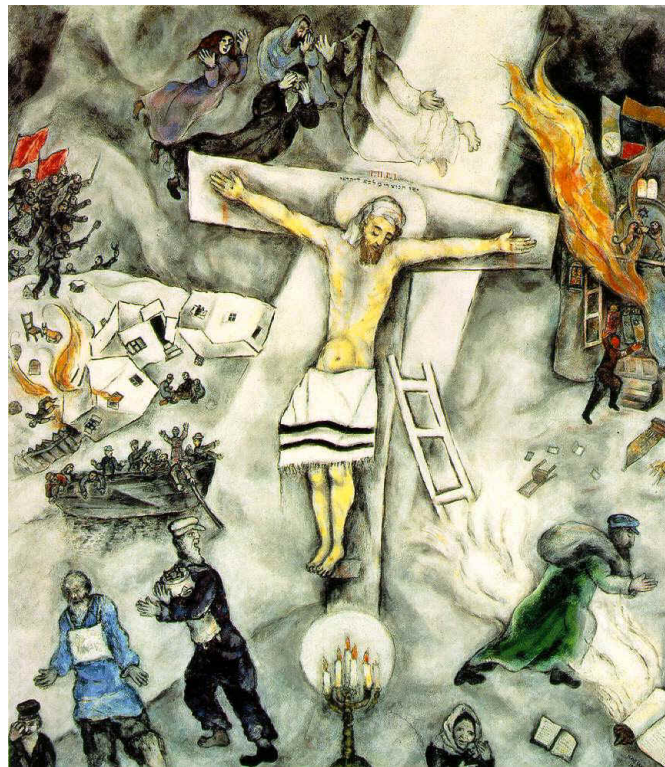
²³ Florovsky G, “The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church,” Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, (Vol 1., Collected Works of Georges Florovsky), Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, MA, 1972, pp.74-75.

²⁴ Luke 2:41-2 “Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.”

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The approach used for proving this thesis is as follows: 1). review the Pesach, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Festival of First-Fruits from the Scriptures of the Old Covenant (primarily the Torah) and from the New Covenant (primarily the Gospels); 2). prospectively review the testimony of the Church Fathers (pro and con) and of the Rabbinic schools; 3). lay out a chronology of the Passover as suggested by them supporting the thesis that Jesus was crucified on the Eve of Passover when the traditional Jewish Passover Seder was to take place, and was subsequently laid in the tomb; 4). summarize the Biblical laws of offerings in the Torah; 5). have a detailed look at the Rabbinic testimony about the Passover, chagigah, and First-Fruits showing where there is support for the Patristic chronology; 6). exegete and interpret John 18:28 in a manner which is in full accordance with the Biblical, Patristic, and Rabbinic evidence previously reviewed, 7). refine a chronology of the Passover based on all the above arriving at a harmony of the gospels consistent with the Biblical, Patristic and Rabbinic evidence; 8). and lastly consider the implications of this interpretation for us in the 21st century.”

“White Crucifixion” by Marc Chagall



CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

Chapter II: The Testimony of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings



The following section quotes several extended Biblical passages which bear significantly on the Egyptian Passover and its subsequent remembrance by the children of Israel in the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Although very familiar to students of the Holy Scriptures, it is worthwhile to review them and emphasize a few small and often overlooked details. Bold lettering and underlining are at the author's discretion for highlighting certain aspects of Passover which have importance for the discussions which follow in subsequent chapters. Some bible quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version and many from the Orthodox Jewish Art Scroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications, Inc., Brooklyn, NY, where Hebrew language/terms are useful.

From the TORAH, the 5 Books of Moses

The Egyptian Passover and the Command to Celebrate It in Remembrance:

Exodus Chapter 12 documents the historical Egyptian Passover, in which the Lord, after subduing the Egyptians with 10 destructive plaques, delivered the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. The celebration and remembrance of this event was indelibly impressed on the memory of Israel and is re-experienced year after year in their celebration of the Passover Seder.

Exod. 12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2 This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

*are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. 4 If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. 7 They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. 10 You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. **It is the passover of the LORD.** 12 **For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.** 13 **The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.***

{Comment: On the night of their original deliverance from slavery and oppression in Egypt, the Israelites were to gather in family groups, slaughter a 1 year old male lamb or goat at twilight on the 14th of Nisan, eat it that night roasted with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, and paint the lamb's blood over the doorposts and lintel of their dwellings. If they were obedient, the LORD would *pass over* them and not strike them as He would the Egyptians and their gods. This section in Exodus forms the heart of the passover history, and forms the basis for the later yearly celebration of the Pesach/Passover required by the LORD. Most of the rabbinic discussions in the Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud revolve around it. It is also the typological and homiletic heart of the Passover for the Church.}

*Exod. 12:14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. **You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.** 15 **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel.** 16 **On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly, and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you.** 17 **You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your***

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

generations as a perpetual ordinance. 18 In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread. 19 For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

{Comment: This passage introduces the idea of the “chag” or “festival” (חג = hag or chag) in the form of verb from which the rabbis derived the necessity of bringing of the “chagigah” or “festival peace offerings” during the course of the feast: אֲתוּ חַג לַיהוָה וְחִגְגְתֶּם (Literally: *And you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD.*) Further instructions regarding the removal of leaven and eating of unleavened bread are given here which form the basis for extensive rabbinic discussions. For the New Testament Church, Jesus (Matt 16:6) allegorically warned about the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees which corrupts the pure teachings of the Torah. St. Paul (1 Cor 5:6) equated leaven to sin -- thus *leaven* is the “type” and *sin* the “antitype.”}

Exod. 12:21 Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. 23 For the LORD will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. 24 You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. 25 When you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. 26 And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this observance?’ 27 you shall say, ‘It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed down and worshipped.

{Comment: Note that none of the Israelites were to go outside of their houses during the night, lest the destroyer perhaps strike them down as he would the Egyptians. Furthermore, for the children of Israel, Passover was to be celebrated perpetually--possibly including not going out of their houses that night. Now having received their marching orders, the following verses show that the Israelites obeyed every word!}

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

Exod. 12:28 The Israelites went and did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

Exod. 12:29 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. 30 Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. 31 Then he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, "Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD, as you said. 32 Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And bring a blessing on me too!"

Exod. 12:33 The Egyptians urged the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, "We shall all be dead." 34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their cloaks on their shoulders. 35 The Israelites had done as Moses told them; they had asked the Egyptians for jewelry of silver and gold, and for clothing, 36 and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And so they plundered the Egyptians.

Exod. 12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. 38 A mixed crowd also went up with them, and livestock in great numbers, both flocks and herds. 39 They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt; it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

Exod. 12:40 The time that the Israelites had lived in Egypt was four hundred thirty years. 41 At the end of four hundred thirty years, on that very day, all the companies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42 That was for the LORD a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. That same night is a vigil to be kept for the LORD by all the Israelites throughout their generations.

*Exod. 12:43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: **This is the ordinance for the passover:** no foreigner shall eat of it, 44 but any slave who has been purchased may eat of it after he has been circumcised; 45 no bound or hired servant may eat of it. 46 **It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the animal outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.** 47 **The whole congregation of Israel shall celebrate it.** 48 If an alien who resides with you wants to celebrate the passover to the LORD, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall*

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

be regarded as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it; 49 there shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.

Exod. 12:50 All the Israelites did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 That very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, company by company.

{Comment: Those who were obedient survived the plague of the first born. Whether or not they believed in the LORD, if they were obedient they lived!}

Feast Peace Offerings of Celebration: The Heave Offering of the Shelmai Chagigah and Role of the Kohanim

The peace offerings were extremely important sacrifices for the Passover celebration in the days of the Temples. Because Lightfoot and Edersheim highly emphasize the peace offering known as the chagigah in their speculations, it will be essential to be intimately familiar with this particular form of peace offering.

*Lev. 7:28 HASHEM²⁵ spoke to Moses, saying: 29 Speak to the children of Israel, saying: **when one brings his feast peace-offering²⁶ for HASHEM, he shall deliver his offering for HASHEM from his feast peace-offering. 30 With his own hands shall he bring the fire-offerings of HASHEM: the fat atop the breast shall he bring; the breast in order to wave as a wave-service before HASHEM. 31 The Kohen²⁷ shall cause the fat to go up in smoke on the Altar; and the breast is for Aaron and his sons. 32 You shall give the right thigh as a raised-up gift²⁸ to the Kohen, from your feast peace-offerings. 33 Anyone from among the sons of Aaron who may offer the blood of the peace-offering and the fat -- the right thigh shall be his as a portion. 34 For the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up have I taken from the children of Israel, from their feast peace-offering, and I have given them to Aaron the Kohen and his sons as an eternal stipend from the Children of Israel...***²⁹

²⁵ HASHEM is a common Jewish way of rendering LORD, i.e., יהוה.

²⁶ זֶבַח שְׁלָמִי zeh-vach sh'la-mav, Lit: "the sacrifice of his peace-offering" -- This verse is the Biblical basis for the rabbinic shelmai chagigah, i.e., the feast peace offering.

²⁷ Kohen = Lit. "priest." The pleural is Kohanim

²⁸ תְּרוּמָה terumah = a "heave offering," in this case from an animal

²⁹ Scherman N, Goldwurm H (translators) Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 121-123.

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

*Lev. 10:12 Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Issamar, his remaining sons...14 And the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising up are you to eat in a pure place, you and your sons and daughters with you; for they have been given as your portion and the portion of your sons from the feast peace-offerings of the Children of Israel. 15 They are to bring the thigh of the raising-up and the breast of the waving upon the fire-offering fats to wave as a waving before HASHEM; and it shall be for you and your sons with you for an eternal decree, as HASHEM has commanded.”*³⁰

{Comment: In summary, the meat of the festal peace offering was shared by the children of Israel and the priests, the Kohanim. The priest received the breast and the right thigh of the peace offering as his rightful portions. Both he and his family could eat it in a clean place. As we shall see, the rabbis have much to say about the chagigahs and the heave offerings.}

Ritual Bathing of the Priests is Required for Cleansing from Contamination so They Will be Able to Eat Their Share from the Holy Offerings.

*Lev. 22:1: “HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they shall withdraw from the holies of the Children of Israel -- that which they sanctify to Me -- so as not to desecrate My holy Name, I am HASHEM. 3 Say to them: throughout your generations, any man from among any of your offspring who shall come near the holies that the Children of Israel may sanctify to HASHEM with his contamination upon him -- that person shall be cut off from before Me, I am HASHEM. 4 Any man from the offspring of Aaron who is a metzora or a zav shall not eat from the holies³¹ until he becomes purified; and one who touches anyone contaminated by a corpse, or a man from whom there is a seminal emission; 5 or a man who touches any creeping thing through which he can become contaminated, or a human through whom he can become contaminated, whatever his contamination. 6 The person who touches it shall be contaminated until evening; he shall not eat from the holies unless he has immersed his body in the water. 7 After the sun has set he shall become purified; thereafter he may eat from the holies, for it is his food.”*³²

³⁰ Scherman N and Goldwurm H (translators) Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 157-159.

³¹ חֲדָשִׁים ha-kadashim = Lit: “the holies” = sacred flesh of certain offerings

³² Scherman N and Goldwurm H (translators) Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 379-381.

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

{Comment: The priests were required to be levitically clean before eating. When contaminated, ritual bathing was a prescribed mode of cleansing for certain types of uncleanness. If a priest were to draw near to the God of Israel in impurity, he would be cut off from His people--a very severe punishment.}

Celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Remembrance of the Passover

Lev. 23:4 These are the appointed festivals of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall celebrate at the time appointed for them. 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the LORD, 6 and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to the LORD; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations. 8 For seven days you shall present the LORD's offerings by fire; on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation: you shall not work at your occupations.

{Comment: Leviticus Chapter 23 outlines all the Festal celebrations for Israel. For the first time in Scripture, the first day of the feast is said to be a holy day, a type of sabbath in which no work was to be done.}

The Second Passover To Be Celebrated In the Second Month By Those Who Were Unclean Or Away on a Journey During the First Passover

Num. 9:1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2 Let the Israelites keep the passover at its appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its regulations you shall keep it. 4 So Moses told the Israelites that they should keep the passover. 5 They kept the passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai. Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did. 6 Now there were certain people who were unclean through touching a corpse, so that they could not keep the passover on that day. They came before Moses and Aaron on that day, 7 and said to him, "Although we are unclean through touching a corpse, why must we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering at its appointed time among the Israelites?" 8 Moses spoke to them, "Wait, so that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

9 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 10 Speak to the Israelites, saying: Anyone of you or your descendants who is unclean through touching a corpse, or is

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

*away on a journey, shall still keep the passover to the LORD. 11 In the second month on the fourteenth day, at twilight, they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute for the passover they shall keep it. 13 **But anyone who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet refrains from keeping the passover, shall be cut off from the people for not presenting the LORD's offering at its appointed time; such a one shall bear the consequences for the sin.** 14 Any alien residing among you who wishes to keep the passover to the LORD shall do so according to the statute of the passover and according to its regulation; you shall have one statute for both the resident alien and the native.*

{Comment: The Passover was a mandatory celebration for all of Israel. However, if one were unclean through touching a dead person, since one was contaminated for 7 days, he could not properly celebrate the Passover. This is clearly outlined in the Torah:

*Num. 19:11-13 **Whoever touches the corpse of any human being shall be contaminated for seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day become pure; but if he will not purify himself on the third day, then on the seventh day he will not become pure. 13 Whoever touches the dead body of a human being who will have died and will not have purified himself -- **if he shall have contaminated the Tabernacle of HASHEM, that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of sprinkling has not been thrown upon him, he shall remain contaminated; his contamination is still upon him.*****³³

Furthermore, if someone had become contaminated through a dead human, he would need to be sprinkled with the water of sprinkling made with the ashes of the Red Heifer. If he neglected to purify himself with the latter, even though he immersed himself in a mikveh (ritual bath), he would remain in his state of contamination. Were he to enter the Temple and contaminate the Temple, woe to him! He would be cut off from all Israel -- and hence from HASHEM and salvation itself. Consequently, the LORD decreed that those who were contaminated through a corpse must not celebrate the first Passover, but should celebrate a later Passover in the second month.}

The Tamid = the Perpetual Daily Offering, Still Required During Passover With Its Meal and Drink Offerings.

³³ Scherman N, Zlotowitz M, The (Stone Edition) Chumash: the Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings, ArtScroll Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1994, p. 841.

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

Num. 28:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Command the Israelites, and say to them: My offering, the food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor, you shall take care to offer to me at its appointed time. 3 And you shall say to them, This is the offering by fire that you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs a year old without blemish, daily, as a regular offering.³⁴ 4 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight 5 also one-tenth of an ephah of choice flour for a grain offering, mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil. 6 It is a regular burnt offering, ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD. 7 Its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the sanctuary you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD. 8 The other lamb you shall offer at twilight with a grain offering and a drink offering like the one in the morning; you shall offer it as an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

{Comment: The timing of the slaying and offering of the tamid is important for understanding the correct timing of the slaying of the passover lambs in the Temple. Unlike the bones of the Paschal lamb, however, the bones of the tamid were broken. It is important to note that the tamid is a perpetual offering -- offered day and night, day after day, year after year.}

The Sabbath Offering Still Required During Passover

Num. 28:9 On the sabbath day: two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering — 10 this is the burnt offering for every sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

{Comment: The Sabbath, being a day of greater holiness, was enjoined with the requirement for additional sacrifices beyond the tamid.}

The Passover Offerings for the Community

Num. 28:16 On the fourteenth day of the first month there shall be a passover offering to the LORD. 17 And on the fifteenth day of this month is a festival; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall not work at your occupations. 19 You shall offer an offering by fire, a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without blemish. 20 Their grain offering shall be of choice flour mixed

³⁴ תָּמִיד tamid = a “continual perpetual offering”

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

*with oil: three-tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; 21 one-tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs; 22 also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. 23 **You shall offer these in addition to the burnt offering of the morning, which belongs to the regular burnt offering.** 24 In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD; it shall be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25 And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations.*

{Comment: Community animal offerings were required during Passover in addition to the personal offerings. In the community offerings of the 2 bulls, a ram, and the 7 male lambs, one recognizes offerings that come from both the herd and the flock. Edersheim takes this concept of “herd or flock” and then applies the appellative “the passover” to the individual chagigahs thereby overlooking the communal chagigahs (See page 6). Rabbinic commentary in the Talmud amplifies not only the personal chagigah, but all these communal offerings as being from the herd and the flock. Meal (and drink) offerings were required to accompany these. Note that as in Leviticus 23, the first day of the passover festival was to be a special day, a holy convocation without work, i.e., a festival sabbath day, the “Yom Tov.” Another special sabbath fell on the seventh day of the festival.}

Moses Review of the Torah Just Prior to His Death and the Jews Entry Into the Promised Land

*Deut. 16:1 **Observe the month of Abib by keeping the passover for the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night.** 2 **You shall offer the passover sacrifice for the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his name.** 3 **You must not eat with it anything leavened. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it —the bread of affliction —because you came out of the land of Egypt in great haste, so that all the days of your life you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt.** 4 **No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; and none of the meat of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall remain until morning.** 5 **You are not permitted to offer the passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you.** 6 **But at the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name, only there shall you offer the passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, the time of day when you departed from Egypt.** 7 **You shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose; the next morning you may go back to your tents.** 8 **For six days you shall continue to eat***

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly for the LORD your God, when you shall do no work.

{Comment: Moses reviewed the law for the Israelites before they entered the promised land. They were told to celebrate the passover sacrifice in the *month of Abib*³⁵ and only in the place that the LORD chose as a dwelling place for his name -- Jerusalem. Since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, no Jewish passover sacrifice has been performed. The Passover Seders of the Askenazi Jews today do not include the eating of lamb unlike those of the North African and Sefardic Jews.³⁶ Instead a lamb shank is placed on everyone's plate in remembrance of the Pesach lamb. [In contrast, the traditionally despised Samaritans, though few in number, continue to sacrifice their Passover lambs on Mount Gerizim in Israel and consume lamb for the Passover.³⁷}]

From the KETUBIM,³⁸ the WRITINGS:

The Second Passover Celebrated in Uncleanness by Israel Under King Hezekiah

2Chr. 30:15 They slaughtered the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and they sanctified themselves and brought burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. 16 They took their accustomed posts according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests dashed the blood that they received from the hands of the Levites. 17 For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had to slaughter the passover lamb for everyone who was not clean, to make it holy to the LORD. 18 For a multitude of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the passover otherwise than as prescribed. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good LORD pardon all 19 who set their hearts to seek God, the LORD the God of their ancestors, even though not in accordance with the sanctuary's rules of cleanness." 20 The LORD heard Hezekiah, and healed the

³⁵ Abib is the original Biblical name for the first month of the year (see Exodus 13:4, 23:15, 34:18, and here Deut 16:1. It was later changed to Nisan during the Babylonian Exile (see Neh 2:1 and Esth 3:7). Abib

(pronounced "aviv") = אֲבִיב means "fresh young ears of barley" and ties Passover to the agricultural cycle in Israel. It is the month in which the barley ripens. Passover chronologically falls at the time of the full moon, i.e., the middle of first month in which the barley is fully ripe by the time of the full moon.

Nisan = נִסָּן is a loan word from Babylonian -- it is the name of the Babylonian god of "spring."

³⁶ Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 125.

³⁷ Moore PN, The End of History: Messianic Conspiracy, The Conspiratory, Inc., Atlanta, GA, 1996, pp.221-222.

³⁸ Ketubim = Lit. "writings," the third section of the Jewish Scriptures (Law, Prophets, and Writings)

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE TORAH, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITINGS

people. 21 The people of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the festival of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, accompanied by loud instruments for the LORD. 22 Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good skill in the service of the LORD. So the people ate the food of the festival for seven days, sacrificing offerings of well-being³⁹ and giving thanks to the LORD the God of their ancestors.

{Comment: Here is an instance where the 2nd Passover was celebrated; the lambs were sacrificed in cleanness by the priests yet were eaten in uncleanness by the Congregation of Israel. This is the Biblical basis for extensive rabbinic commentary in the Talmud regarding eligibility for eating the Pesach lamb, the Chagigah, the Terumah (heave offering), and the Kodashim (holy things).}

³⁹ Lit: Offerings of peace.

Chapter III: The Testimony of the Church Fathers

In this section, we will let the Fathers of the Church and other early “christian” writers speak for themselves. Their opinions are often clearly stated and very specific. Their consensus (with the exception of 1 or 2 dissenting votes) is that Jesus did not eat the Jewish Passover, He was the Passover. The Last Supper was not a Passover Seder but took place 1 day earlier. In some cases the Last Supper is called the Pascha, but this usually refers to the “Christian Passover” celebrated by the Church and contrasted with the Jewish Passover Seder celebrated according to the Torah. Those who believe that Jesus ate the Jewish Passover according to the Law are considered by some of the Fathers to be ignorant, to be schismatics, or to be heretics. The Fathers are introduced in chronological order. {All bold and underlined script is the author’s and is for the purpose of highlighting what the author deems most important and worthy of the greatest attention in the quoted passages.}



CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Justin the Philosopher & Martyr A.D. 110-165



A gentile philosopher, turned Christian and apologist, Justin sealed his testimony of Christ with his life in Rome. In his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin gives a brief statement regarding the Passover:

*And the blood of the passover, sprinkled on each man's doorposts and lintel, delivered those who were saved in Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed. **For the passover was Christ**, who was afterwards sacrificed, as also Isaiah said, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.' And it is written, **that on the day of the passover you seized Him, and that also during the passover you crucified Him.** And as the*

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*blood of the passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed.*⁴⁰

{Comment: This Apostolic Father's somewhat ambiguous statement could be interpreted in more than one way and has been erroneously used to support the view of Lightfoot's and Edersheim's chronology. Yet, since Justin says *the passover was Christ*, and that the blood of Christ delivers those who believed just as did the blood of the passover lamb save those Egypt, one should interpret Justin's statement as follows: at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan in the evening He was *seized* (i.e., on the date of the passover sacrifice), and that *afterwards* and *also* on the next morning and afternoon (also the 14th of Nisan) *during the passover*, i.e., the time the pesach lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple, the Jews crucified Him. Then Justin's argument would make sense to a Jew-- and he was talking to a Jew, Trypho the Jew. Since Trypho did not press the issue any further, Justin did not further explain his chronology.}

⁴⁰ Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 254.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons A.D. c.130-c.208



This great bishop of Lyons and early Western Apostolic Father, Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor and spoke both Latin and Greek. Irenaeus knew Polycarp, the disciple of John the Theologian. He was a great defender of the faith against heresies, especially Gnosticism. In his Against Heresies, he initially appears to cast a vote for the pro-Lightfoot, pro-Edersheim chronology on this issue when he discusses the three instances of Jesus celebrating the passover during His earthly ministry:

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*'He came to Bethany six days before the passover,' and going up from Bethany to Jerusalem, He there ate the passover and suffered on the day following.*⁴¹

{Comment: Irenaeus appears very direct and to the point in this passage -- Jesus ate the passover, and suffered on the day following! But appearances can be deceiving. The Early Church as a whole, did not accept the Lightfoot/Edersheim chronology. If we think Irenaeus did, then we are mistaken. In the context of this particular passage, Irenaeus was not arguing for or against a particular date for the passover and crucifixion. Rather, he was attacking the heretical Gnostic scheme of "Æons." Secondly, as a pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna, he had celebrated the Pasch in the same manner as did Polycarp, who had observed the celebration with his teacher St. John (the Theologian and author of the Fourth Gospel). I.e., the Christians of Asia Minor followed the Jewish chronology and celebrated the "Christian Passover" by observing a solemn fast on the 14th of Nisan (the day of Christ's crucifixion) then ending the fast at twilight -- not by eating the Jewish paschal lamb, but by the celebration of the Eucharist and a love-feast. It was the "festival of redemption" completed by the death of Christ and already anticipated the resurrection [-- which necessitates that the crucifixion was already complete by the evening of the 14th of Nisan]! In other words, Irenaeus considered the Last Supper to be a "Christian Passover" as practiced in the early Christian era, not a Jewish Passover Seder according to the Law. The Last Supper was Christ's special meal with His disciples on the day before the official Jewish Passover. Unfortunately, the confusion results from the celebration of the "Christian Passover" by the Church on the date of the Passover Seder of the Jews (post-crucifixion) rather than on the date of the Last Supper (pre-crucifixion). What is called the "passover" by Irenaeus is Jesus' mystical breaking of the bread and offering of the cup of wine to His disciples foreshadowing His crucifixion, death, and His inauguration of the new covenant. This Asiatic Johannine practice of the Eastern Churches was later termed the "Quartadecimarian" observance.⁴² Although more ancient a practice and a practice fixed to the historic calendar date but varying as to the day of the week, the Quartadecimarian practice eventually gave way to the Roman practice in

⁴¹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies Book II, xxii, 3, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 391.

⁴² The Judaizing practice of the Quartodecimarians which always celebrated Easter on the fourteenth of Nisan, became a heresy after the Council of Nicæa. Yet that practice continued in many parts of the East. "In the time of Epiphanius, about A.D. 400, there were many Quartodecimarians, who, as he says, were **orthodox, indeed, in doctrine, but in ritual were addicted to Jewish fables, and steadfastly held the principle: 'Cursed is every one who does not keep his passover on the fourteenth of Nisan.'**" Epiphanius, Hær. 1.c.1. as quoted in Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311 - 600, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 405-406.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

which the crucifixion was commemorated on Friday and the resurrection on Sunday.⁴³ Could Irenaeus have confused this “Christian Passover” observance with the Jewish Seder -- thus equating the “Christian Passover” with the Last Supper, rather than with the celebration of the “festival of redemption” resulting from the atoning death of Christ? Not really! How could the Christian Pascal Fast end and celebration of the Feast of Redemption begin before the crucifixion had taken place? How could part of the Early Asiatic Church feast before experiencing (in commemoration) the crucifixion -- especially when the whole Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church has fasted every Friday for over 19 centuries! The proof of Irenaeus’ position is readily supplied in a later passage in the same book Against the Heresies! }

*...And it would be endless to recount [the occasions] upon which the Son of God is shown forth by Moses. **Of the day of His passion, too, he was not ignorant; but foretold Him, after a figurative manner, by the name given to the passover; and at that very festival, which had been proclaimed such a long time previously by Moses, did our Lord suffer, thus fulfilling the passover. And he did not describe the day only, but the place also, and the time of day at which the sufferings ceased, and the sign of the setting of the sun, saying: “Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any other of thy cities which the LORD God gives thee; but in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose that His name be called on there, thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, towards the setting of the sun.”***⁴⁴

{Comment: Here Irenaeus definitely tells us his understanding of the chronology of the crucifixion and passover. He states that Moses not only predicted the day, but also the time and place of death of the Lamb of God through the typologic passover lamb -- a figure of the Lamb to come! The harmony of this passage with the former is now readily apparent now that we understand what the word “passover” meant to Irenaeus:

Everything seems to indicate that Irenaeus followed the Johannine chronology and put the death of Christ on 14 Nisan; for this would fulfill the immolation of the lamb which took place on that day, and to which the quotation from Deuteronomy 16:5-6 refers. In this case, his phrase, “eating the Pascha and suffering on the following day” (Against the

⁴³ Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100 - 325, Wm. B. Eardmanns Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 206-219.

⁴⁴ Irenaeus Against Heresies Book IV, x, 1, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 473.

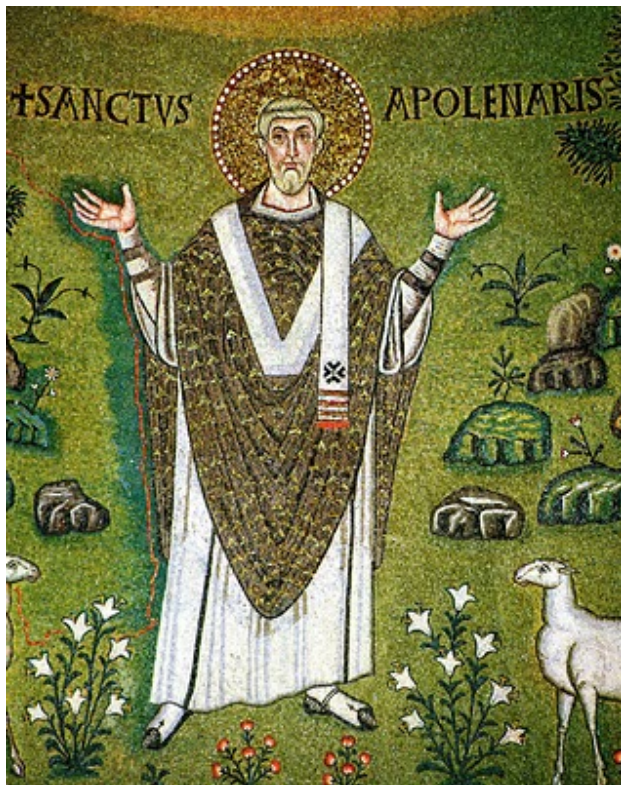
CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Heresies 2, 22, 3) would indicate that he puts the Last Supper on the night of 13-14 Nisan and also recognizes it as a Pesach meal.^{45}}

⁴⁵ Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 145.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Claudius Appolinaris, [known active period A.D. 160-180]



Appolinaris was bishop of Hierapolis on the Maeander (Asian Minor), and was probably known to St. Polycarp and influenced by his example and doctrine. From his book concerning the Passover he writes:

There are, then some who through ignorance raise disputes about these things (though their conduct is pardonable: for ignorance is no subject for blame -- it rather needs further instruction), and say that on the fourteenth day the Lord ate the lamb with the disciples, and that on the great day of the feast of unleavened bread He Himself suffered; and they quote Matthew as speaking in accordance with their view.

Wherefore their opinion is contrary to the law, and the Gospels seem to be at variance with them...

The fourteenth day, the true Passover of the Lord; the great sacrifice, the Son of God instead of the lamb, who was bound, who bound the strong, and who was judged, thought Judge of living and

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

dead, and who was delivered into the hands of sinners to be crucified, who was lifted up on the horns of the unicorn, and who was pierced in His holy side, who poured forth from His side the two purifying elements, water and blood, word and spirit, and who was buried on the day of the passover, the stone being place upon the tomb. ⁴⁶

{Comment: Appolinaris, our first unequivocally affirmative patristic witness, cuts to the quick by decrying as unlawful and ignorant the opinion of those who say that Jesus ate the Passover lamb with His disciples and then suffered *on the great day of the feast* (Yom Tov). Even more enlightening is his rebuke of those, who in error, based their opinions on the Gospel of Matthew as *speaking in accordance with their view*. Appolinaris' reading of the Gospels is at variance with them, as are virtually all the readings of the Church Fathers which follow.}

⁴⁶ Claudius Appolinaris, in Pratten BP (translator), "Remains of the Second and Third Centuries," in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 772-773. Source of this extract is the preface to the Chronicon Paschale. Since the Chronicon Paschale is a anonymous Byzantine fragmentary chronological work covering the years A.D. 284-628, the preface is specific to the edition used by the author. The only English language edition Whitby M & Whitby M, Chronicon Paschale 284-628 A.D., Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, England, 1989, does not contain this material.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Melito of Sardis, A. D. c.1?? - 177.



St. Melito was the bishop of Sardis, the capital of Lydia. Although a supporter of the Quartodecimanian practice, he was a model of orthodoxy and defended the faith against pagans and before the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Brilliant and prolific, an eloquent genius, Melito compiled the first list of the canon of Old Testament Scriptures. He also composed a richly theologic Easter Homily which has recently been discovered as a completely intact papyrus. He is known primarily through the Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (writing in regard to the Quartodecimanian controversy):

But the bishops of Asia led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom handed down to them {quartodeciman}. He himself, in a letter

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which had come down to him:

*“We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among those are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. Why need I mention the bishop and martyr Sagaris who fell asleep in Laodicea, or the blessed Papirius, or **Melito, the eunuch who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis, awaiting the episcopate from heaven, when he shall rise from the dead? All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith...**”⁴⁷*

{Comment: Melito was a brilliant, faithful, and spiritual celibate bishop who observed the celebration of the passover in the Quartodecimanian fashion that he had inherited through the Apostle John and the blessed Polycarp among others. Although most of his writings are extant only in fragments, his Paschal Homily “On the Pascha” is a masterful complete and sublime composition. In it he reveals his preferred chronology -- that Jesus was being laid in the tomb when the Jews were laying down on their soft couches according to tradition to celebrate the Passover Seder:

*79 So then, you set these things aside,
and rushed to the slaying of the Lord.
You prepared for him sharp nails and false witnesses
and ropes and scourges
and vinegar and gall
and sword and forceful restraint as against a murderous robber.
For you brought both scourges for his body
and a thorn for his head;
and you bound his good hands
which formed you from earth;*

⁴⁷ Eusebius, The Church History of Eusebius, McGiffert AC (translator), in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 242.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*and that good mouth of his which fed you with life
you fed gall*
And you killed your Lord at the great feast.

80 *And you were making merry,
while he was starving;
you had wine to drink and bread to eat,
he had vinegar and gall;
your face was bright,
his was downcast;
you were triumphant,
he was afflicted;
you were making music,
he was being judged;
you were giving the beat,
he was hung nailed up;
you were dancing,
he was being buried;
you were reclining on a soft couch,
he in a grave and coffin.*⁴⁸

Comment: The *great feast* in paragraph 79 is ambiguous and could mean either the entire feast of unleavened bread or the passover seder. However, the intimation in paragraph 80 is much stronger -- Jesus was lying in a cold dark tomb while the Jews were reclining on soft couches (a direct reference to the tradition practice of reclining in the seder -- see page 126) festively celebrating their deliverance from affliction by eating bread and drinking wine, dancing and singing, while He bore affliction for those who deserved the punishment. }

⁴⁸ Hall SG, Melito of Sardis on Pascha, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1979.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 140-220



Originally named Titus Flavius Clemens, he was first a pagan philosopher. After his conversion to Christianity he sought out the best teachers and became the Church's first religious philosopher. A brilliant scholar, he later became the head of the illustrious Catechetical School in Alexandria. Origen was one of his pupils.

“Accordingly, in the years gone by, Jesus went to eat the passover sacrificed by the Jews, keeping the feast. but when he had preached He who was the Passover, the Lamb of God, led as a sheep to the slaughter, presently taught His disciples the mystery of the type on the thirteenth day, on which also they inquired, ‘Where wilt Thou that we prepare for

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Thee to eat the passover?’ It was on this day, then that both the consecration of the unleavened bread and the preparation for the feast took place. Whence John naturally describes the disciples as already previously prepared to have their feet washed by the Lord. And on the following day our Saviour suffered, He who was the Passover, propitiously sacrificed by the Jews...

“Suitably, therefore, to the fourteenth day, on which He also suffered, in the morning, the chief priests and the scribes, who brought Him to Pilate, did not enter the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might freely eat the passover in the evening. With this precise determination of the days both the whole Scriptures agree, and the Gospels harmonize. The resurrection also attests it. He certainly rose on the third day, which fell on the first day of the weeks of harvest, on which the law prescribed that the priest should offer up the sheaf.”⁴⁹

{Comment: Clement of Alexandria, our second definitive patristic witness, is exceedingly precise on the dates for the Last Supper. He specifically states that the disciples came to Jesus on the 13th of Nisan inquiring of Him where He wished to have the Passover prepared. He was sacrificed by the Jews on the following day. So that the supper took place that evening, at the transition between the 13th and 14th of Nisan. Furthermore, he specifies the 14th of Nisan as the morning when the Chief Priests and scribes brought Jesus before Pilate so that they might eat of the Passover that evening without defilement. Lastly, he introduces the concept that Jesus arose on the day when the priest should offer up the *sheaf*, the meal offering of the barley corn otherwise known as First-Fruits (see page 174ff).}

⁴⁹ Clement of Alexandria, in Coxe AC (translator), “Fragments,” in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 581.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Tertullian, A.D. c.155-225.



Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was born in Carthage and educated in Rome. He was the first of the great Western Latin speaking churchmen. Converted to Christianity in A.D. 193, he returned to his native Carthage to serve the Church. Sometime after A.D. 199 he became captivated with the Montanist heresy, particularly because of its moral austerity, and later became a Montanist presbyter. He was a prolific writer and remained a zealous advocate of the faith he professed.

*...For that you would do thus at the beginning of the first month of your new (years) even Moses prophesied, when **he was foretelling that all the community of the sons of Israel was to immolate at eventide a lamb, and were to eat this solemn sacrifice of this day (that is, of the passover of unleavened bread) with bitterness;**” and added that “it was the passover of the Lord,” that is, the passion of Christ. Which prediction was thus also fulfilled, that “**on the first day of unleavened bread**” you slew Christ; and (that the prophecies might be fulfilled) the day hastened to make an “**eventide,**” -- that is, to cause darkness, which was made at mid-day; and thus “your festive days God converted into grief, and your canticles into*

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

lamentations.” For after the passion of Christ there overtook you even captivity and dispersion predicted before through the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰

{Comment: In his above work (An Answer to the Jews) Tertullian is evidently following the chronology of St. John as have almost all the Fathers of the Church --but with a unique twist! He shows that Christ was crucified on the same day as the sons of Israel were told by Moses to immolate a lamb -- *the first day of unleavened bread* (see page 16). Since the Egyptian Passover lambs were to be slain at eventide, but Jesus was hung on the cross at the 6th hour, the darkness which spread over the land was creation’s response to fulfill the ancient Mosaic prophesy by hastening to make an “eventide.”}

*In like manner does **He also know the very time it behoved Him to suffer, since the law prefigures His passion.** Accordingly, of all the festal days of the Jews He chose the passover. In this Moses had declared that there was a sacred mystery: “It is the Lord’s passover.” How earnestly, therefore, does He manifest the bent of His soul: “**With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.**” What a destroyer of the law was this, who actually longed to keep the passover! Could it be that He was so fond of Jewish lamb? But was it not because He had to be “led like a lamb to the slaughter; and because as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so was He not to open His mouth,” that He so profoundly wished to accomplish the symbol of His own redeeming blood?⁵¹*

{Comment: In his arguments against the Gnostic heretic Marcion, Tertullian states that the law (i.e., the sacrifice of the paschal lamb according Mosaic Law) prefigures Jesus’ passion on the cross. Jesus not only desired to eat the pesach lamb with his disciples, He longed to keep it -- not because of any fondness for Jewish lamb, but because He wanted to accomplish the symbol, the mystery -- the breaking of the bread (His body) and the cup (the New Covenant in His blood). Although not specifically chronologic, Tertullian’s inference that Jesus suffered on the cross just as the passover lambs were being slain, conforms to the patristic chronology. Secondly, the reason for Jesus’ great longing for the Passover was to inaugurate the New Covenant, the one sealed in His own blood, not just to have one more Seder with His disciples and friends.}

⁵⁰ Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews, Chapter X, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.167.

⁵¹ Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, Chapter XL, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.417-418.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Hippolytus, A.D. 170-236.



He was a member of the presbyterium in Rome, very conservative and erudite, who wrote in Greek.

“Now Hippolytus, a martyr for piety, who was bishop of the place called Portus, near Rome, in his book *Against all Heresies*, wrote in these terms:--

‘I perceive, then, that the matter is one of contention. For he speaks thus: Christ kept the supper, then, on that day, and then suffered; whence it is needful that I, too, should keep it in the same manner as the Lord did. But he has fallen into error by not perceiving that at the time when Christ suffered He did not eat the passover of the law. For He was

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

the passover that had been of old proclaimed, and that was fulfilled on that determinate day...'

“And again the same (authority), in the first book of his treatise on the Holy Supper {*On the Pascha?* }, speaks thus:

*‘Now that neither in the first nor in the last there was anything false is evident; for he who said of old, “**I will not any more eat the passover,**” probably partook of the supper before the passover. But the passover He did not eat, but He suffered; for it was not the time for Him to eat .’”⁵²*

{Comment: Hippolytus emphatically states that Jesus did not eat the passover which was obligated by the Mosaic Law on all males in Israel, but was Himself the true Passover on that specific day. Thus far, the churches in Rome, Lyons, Asia Minor, and Alexandria are all in agreement with the same chronology!}

⁵² Hippolytus fragments from On the Pascha preserved by the author of the Chronicon Paschale, ex ed. Cangii, p.6 as quoted in Coxe AC (translator), Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 241. Source of this fragment is the introduction or preface to the Chronicon Paschale (ex.ed. Cangii). Since the Chronicon Paschale is an anonymous Byzantine fragmentary chronological work covering the years A.D. 284-628, the page is specific to the edition of Cangii used by the author Coxe. The only English language edition, Whitby M & Whitby M, Chronicon Paschale 284-628 A.D., Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, England, 1989, does not contain this material.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Pseudo-Cyprian, Computus for the Pascha, 2, A.D. 243.

This anonymous work of unknown origin attempts to correct Hippolytus' Demonstration of the Times of the Pascha (perhaps the same as *On the Pascha* above) with quotations from Scripture. The chronology at first seems to follow the Lightfoot/Edersheim scheme, but then the argument becomes rather confused.

Therefore God commanded the whole assembly of the sons of Israel through Moses in the new month, which is "the beginning of months, the first of the months of the year" (Exod 12:2), to wear certain clothes when they ate the Pascha on the fourteenth of the moon, doubtless with the purpose of manifesting his divinity to us who believe in Christ and of demonstrating, already from the beginning of the world, the murderous act of those who in Egypt at eventide (Exodus 12:6), that is, in the last age of the world, came out "with swords and clubs" (Matt 26:47, 55; Mark 14:43, 48), girt and shod (cf. Exod 12:11), against the immaculate lamb (cf Exod 12:5) of god "on the first day of the Unleavened Bread" (Matt 26:17, Mark 14:12) at eventide (cf. Matt 26:20, Mark 14:17), and did to him everything that had been foretold by the Prophets. And therefore we, who celebrate the Pascha, no longer symbolically, as they did, but in truth, to commemorate the passion of the son of God, ought to search out carefully, with all the forces of our faith, nothing other than the new month -- which one it is, and when it begins and ends. And then we shall find that the Pascha cannot be observed by the Jews themselves before or after the fourteenth of the moon.⁵³

{Comment: The author of this work compares the clothes worn by the Israelites in Egypt on the night of the Egyptian Passover with the those of the lawless mob who arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethemane -- apparently, with regard to the *eventide*, which he considers it to be a foreshadowing of *the end of the age*. The implication being that the rather ambiguous chronology is not the main point at all. When the author really gets down to days and times, he concludes that the Jews can only celebrate the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth and that Jesus was arrested at eventide on the first day of Unleavened Bread. That the latter can easily be considered the evening of the 13-14th of Nisan (see page 16 and [Josephus] page 89). However, what Pseudo-Cyprian meant by his writings remains uncertain.}

⁵³ Pseudo-Cyprian, Computus for the Pascha, 2, in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 93, 194.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Sextus Julius Africanus, A.D. 200-245.

Julius was the first Christian chronographer and universal historian, having been schooled in Alexandria, Egypt. Writing in reference to the crucifixion he states:

*As to His works severally, and His cures effected upon body and soul, and the mysteries of His doctrine, and the resurrection from the dead, these have been most authoritatively set forth by His disciples and apostles before us. On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, call, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the **Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day** according to the moon, **and the passion of our Saviour falls on the day before the passover** ; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction; how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun?* ⁵⁴

{Comment: Continuing the Alexandrian School of chronology, Julius states that the Hebrews celebrated the passover on the 14th -- i.e., they slaughtered their pesach offerings in the afternoon of the 14th, but the eating of the lamb occurred after sunset at the start of the 15th of Nisan. Our Lord and Savior's crucifixion, however, fell *on the day before the passover*. Thus, the Passover meal was eaten on the day following the passion of our Saviour -- a complete day after Jesus' partook of the Last Supper with His disciples.}

⁵⁴ Julius Africanus , Five Books of the Chronography, (Extent Fragments), Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, 6, xviii, p. 136.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 260-311.



St. Peter became Bishop of Alexandria in A.D. 300, and lived during the terrible persecutions of Diocletian. He was beheaded by order of Maximian in A.D. 311. Bishop Peter was known for his piety, his knowledge of the Scriptures, and his wise administration -- sealing them all with his martyrdom. His testimony is perhaps the clearest, strongest, and most conclusive of all the Patristic writers. In fact, were his writings on the Passover widely known in the contemporary evangelical world, there would be little need for this paper.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*That therefore up to the period of the Lord's Passion, and at the time of the last destruction of Jerusalem, which happened under Vespasian, the Roman emperor, the people of Israel, rightly observing the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, celebrated on it the Passover of the law, has been briefly demonstrated. Therefore, when the holy prophets, and all, as I have said, who righteously and justly walked in the law of the Lord, together with the entire people, celebrated a typical and shadowy Passover, the Creator and Lord of every visible and invisible creature, the only-begotten Son, and the Word co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and of the same substance with them, according to His divine nature, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, being in the end of the world born according to the flesh of our holy and glorious lady, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin, and being seen upon earth, and having true and real converse as man with men, who were of the same substance with Him, **according to His human nature, Himself also, with the people, in the years before His public ministry and during his public ministry, did celebrate the legal and shadowy Passover, eating the typical lamb.** For "I came not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill them," the Saviour Himself said in the Gospel.*

But after His public ministry He did not eat of the lamb, but Himself suffered as the true Lamb in the Paschal feast, as John, the divine and evangelist, teaches us in the Gospel written by him, where he thus speaks: "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover." And after a few things more. "When Pilate therefore hear that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. **And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the third hour,**⁵⁵ as the correct books render it, and the copy itself that was written by the hand of the evangelist, which by the divine grace, has been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus, and is there adored by the faithful. And again the same evangelist says: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that Sabbath-day was a high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." **On that**

⁵⁵ Current texts of St. John's Gospel read "about the sixth hour." No textual variants to John are noted in the UBS 4th edition of the Greek New Testament, corresponding to Nestle-Aland 26th edition. Peter, however, in a lapse of memory could be referring to Mark's Gospel here, since Mark's Gospel refers to the 3rd hour.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Passover in the evening, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, being made the victim to those who were about to partake by faith of the mystery concerning Him, according to what is written by the blessed Paul: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;” and not as some, who, carried along by ignorance, confidently affirm that after He had eaten the Passover, He was betrayed; which we neither hear from the holy evangelists, nor has any of the blessed apostles handed it down to us. At the time, therefore, in which our Lord and God Jesus Christ suffered for us, according to the flesh, He did not eat of the legal Passover; but as I have said, He Himself, as the true Lamb, was sacrificed for us in the feast of the typical Passover, on the day of the preparation, the fourteenth of the first lunar month. The typical Passover, therefore, then ceased, the true Passover being present: “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” as has been before said and as that chosen vessel, the apostle Paul teaches.*⁵⁶

{Comment: Peter of Alexandria is perhaps the strongest witness of all the Church Fathers. Not only does he deny that Jesus ate the Passover, but rather was the true Passover Lamb sacrificed on the 14th of Nisan, but additionally, accused those of ignorance who professed otherwise. In good orthodox fashion, to seal his arguments, he calls both the written gospel and the oral apostolic traditions to the witness stand -- both reflecting the Holy Tradition of the Church. That none of the Apostles has handed down a tradition of Jesus eating the Pesach lamb is incontrovertible evidence for Peter of Jesus Himself being the Passover, and He not eating the Passover!}

⁵⁶ Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in Apud Galland, Ex Chronico Paschal, (fragments), as quoted in Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 282.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Eusebius of Caesarea, A.D. 260-339.



This Greek Christian writer was born in Palestine and educated at Caesarea, where he later became Bishop. Theologically he sympathized with the Arians, although he eventually sided with the Orthodox at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea. He is considered the greatest historian of the early church. In his work “On the Paschal Solemnity” Eusebius affirms that the Thursday night Last Supper was not the Seder of the Jews, but rather He kept a passover with His disciples the night before the Jewish Passover:

9. Nor did the Savior observe the Pascha with the Jews at the time of his passion. He did not keep his own Pascha with his disciples at the time when the Jews were sacrificing the sheep; for they did this on the Parasceve, (the day) on which the Savior suffered. That is why “they did not enter the pretorium,” but “Pilate went out to them” (St. John 18:28-29). Rather, he reclined (at table) with his disciples a whole day before, on Thursday, and while he was eating with them he said, “With

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

desire I desired to eat this Pascha with you” (Luke 22:15). You see how it was not with the Jews that the Savior ate the Pascha. Because this was something new and strange, against the custom and practice of the Jews, he had to insist saying, “With desire I desired to eat this Pascha with you before I suffer.” For the primitive, or rather antiquated, customary foods which he used to eat with the Jews were not the objects of his desire; it was the new mystery of his new covenant, which he gave to his disciples, that he actually desired...

*10. But before he suffered he did eat the Pascha and celebrate the feast -- with his disciples, not with the Jews. After he had feasted in the evening, the high priests, in alliance with the traitor “laid hands on” him (Matt 26:50); for they were not eating the Pascha in the evening or they would have left him alone...But on the very day of the passion they ate the Pascha to their souls’ destruction, having demanded the Savior’s blood, not for but against themselves (cf. Matt 27:25). But our Savior kept the feast which he desired, reclining with his disciples, not then but on the previous day.*⁵⁷

{Comment: Eusebius is superb in his analysis of the Paschal chronology stating that Jesus reclined a day before the Jewish Pascha with His disciples, that the institution of the New Covenant was something new and strange and important to Him and that the foods of the Pascha were of little importance to him. **More importantly, Eusebius notes that the Chief Priests would not have abandoned their own Pesach Seders to arrest Jesus, but instead chose the earlier part of the day of the Pesach sacrifice to have Jesus crucified.** Admittedly, he states that Jesus *did eat the Pascha and celebrate the feast -- with his disciples*. But here the *Pascha* means the bread and the cup of the Last Supper. It was a sacramental dinner with His disciples, but could not have been a true Jewish Paschal Seder according to Mosaic Law and Rabbinic practice as will be demonstrated in a later chapter. Instead, the Last Supper was an anticipatory sacramental “Christian Passover.”}

⁵⁷ Eusebius of Caesarea, “On the Paschal Solemnity,” in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 69.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Aphraates (Mar Jacob) A.D. c. 270-345.



A Persian, who wrote in the Syriac language, he was also known as Mar Jacob the Persian Sage.

6. Our Savior ate the Pascha with his disciples in the hallowed night of the fourteenth, and he performed the sign of the Pascha in truth for his disciples. For, after Judas departed from them, “he took bread and blessed and gave it to his disciples and said” to them, “this is my body; take, eat of it, all (of you).” Likewise over the wine he blessed and said to them, ‘This is my blood, the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Do likewise in memory of me’ when you gather” (cf. Matt 26:26,28; Luke 22:19-20). Our Lord said these things before he was arrested.

And our Lord rose from where he had performed the Pascha and given his body to be eaten and his blood to be drunk and went with his disciples to the place where he was arrested. Now one whose body is eaten and whose blood is drunk is counted among the dead. With his own hands our Lord gave his body to be eaten, and before being crucified he gave his blood to be drunk. And he was taken in the night of the fourteenth, and his trial lasted until the sixth hour, and at the time of the sixth hour they sentenced him and lifted him up in crucifixion. When they were judging him, he said nothing and answered not a word to his judges: he was of course able to speak and answer, but it is impossible for one who is counted among the dead to speak.

And from the sixth to the ninth hour there was a darkness, and he gave over his spirit to his Father at the ninth hour. And he was among the dead in the night in which the fifteenth dawned, the night of

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

the Sabbath, and for the whole day, as well as for three hours on the Parasceve. And in the night in which the first of the week dawned, at the time when he had given his body and blood to his disciples, he rose from the dead...

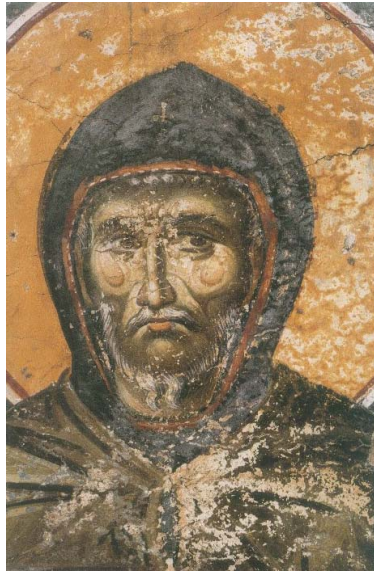
8. Indeed the Pascha of the Jews is the fourteenth day, its night and its day; but our great day of the passion is the day of the Parasceve, the fifteenth day, its night and its day. After the Pascha Israel eats unleavened bread for seven days, until the twenty-first of the month (cf. Exod 12:18); we too observe the Unleavened Bread -- as the feast of our Savior. They eat the unleavened in bitterness; but our Savior rejected this cup of bitterness and took away all the bitterness of the nations when "he tasted and would not drink" (Matt 27:34). The Jews call to mind their sins from year to year; but we remember the crucifixion and insults of our Savior. On the Pascha they escaped the slavery of Pharaoh; on the day of the crucifixion we were delivered from the service of Satan.⁵⁸

{Comment: Aphraates continues the long patristic witness of Jesus' crucifixion being on the 14th of Nisan. Jesus was *among the dead in the night in which the fifteenth dawned, the night of the Sabbath, and for the whole day, as well as for three hours on the Parasceve*. Or more properly, Jesus was among the dead for three hours on the day of Preparation, (from the 9th hour) the 14th of Nisan till dusk, plus all of the next day the 15th. Here Aphraates, like Irenaeus (see page 29), calls the Last Supper the "Pascha," i.e., the "Passover." In the last paragraph of his explanation he gives details of the Asiatic celebration of the "Christian Passover" (*our great day*) on the *Parasceve* as contrasted with the Jewish Passover. The former is truly a celebration of the redemption that we have in Christ Jesus and begins at dusk at the beginning of the 15th of Nisan when the Pascal fast ends and celebration of redemption in anticipation of the resurrection begins -- again reflecting the Eastern Church's Quartodecimanian practice. Remember, it was only after the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 that Constantine attempted to unify the celebration of the Paschal season after the Roman practice.}

⁵⁸ Aphraates, Demonstration 12: On the Pascha, 6-8, as quoted in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 84-85.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Ephrem the Syrian, A.D. 306-373.



Ephrem is perhaps the best known father of the Syriac Church. He is a universally recognized in the Church as a monumental scholar, theologian, hymnographer, and poet. Both his as well as Aphraates' corroboration of the 14th as the day of the crucifixion adds the testimony of the Syriac Church to those of the Roman, Alexandrian, and Asian Churches.

In his Commentary on Exodus, St. Ephrem poignantly notes that Jesus was slain on the 14th of Nisan. It couldn't be more clearly noted.

*And so, on the tenth [of Nisan] [when the lamb was confined, our Lord was conceived. And on the fourteenth, when] [the lamb] was slaughtered, its type was crucified.*⁵⁹

In his Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron he likewise confirms that Christ was crucified on the same day that the pharisees slew their lambs of their salvation--again a clear reference to the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan.

“They seized him and led him to the door. They gave him into the hands of Pilate, but they themselves did not enter into the tribunal, so as

⁵⁹ Ephrem the Syrian, , “Commentary on Exodus,” in Mathews EG, Amar JP, (translators), Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose Works, (The Fathers of the Church Series Vol. 91), Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1994, p. 247.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*not to be defiled, and to be able to eat the lamb in purity.’ O pharisees! You have heard [it said], ‘This is the Lamb of God, this is he who’ through his sacrifice, ‘takes away the sins of the world.’ Was it therefore, necessary that, **on the day when the lamb of your salvation was sacrificed, that too should have been [the day on which] the Lamb of our salvation was [likewise] sacrificed?’**⁶⁰*

{Comment: Here Ephrem’s explanation of Tatian’s Diatessaron (a Harmony of the 4 Gospels composed in the late second century), suggests that Tatian considered the “passover” in St. John 18:28 to be the lamb (from the flock) of their salvation and not a chagigah from the herd of the 15th of Nisan as Edersheim has proposed (see page 6).}

In contrast, in one of his Hymns on the Crucifixion Ephrem seems to favor the 15th of Nisan as the date of crucifixion:

1. On the fourteenth was slain the paschal lamb -- toward evening, as it is written.

It was written beforehand (a testimony for him) that he would prophesy even his time.

The time of the true lamb’s slaying shows us how fulfilled (he was):

on the fifteenth he was slain -- on the day on which both sun and moon were full.

2. Blessed art thou also, final evening!

For in thee the evening of Egypt was fulfilled.

In thy time our Lord ate the little Pascha and became himself the great Pascha

Pascha was mingled with Pascha, feast joined to feast;

*a temporary Pascha, and another that abides; type and fulfillment.*⁶¹

{Comment: In this hymn Ephrem’s introductory verse indicates the 14th, towards evening, as the correct date and time for slaying of the paschal lambs during the Egyptian passover. The passover sacrifices were to be a type and a prophecy of the slaying of the

⁶⁰ McCarthy C, (translator), Supplement 2: St. Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1993, p. 300.

⁶¹ Ephraem the Syrian, Hymns on the Crucifixion, 3, 1-2, in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993, p. 87.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

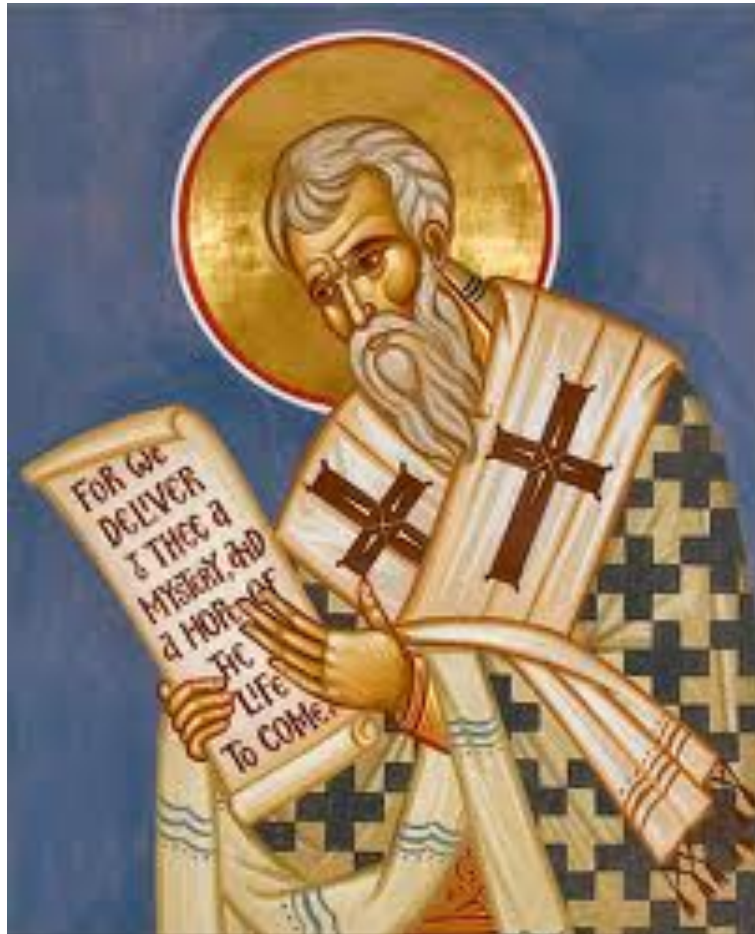
great Paschal Lamb, and indicate the latter's time of slaying, i.e., *his time*. So we anticipate the slaying of the passover lambs and the true Lamb of God to be on the same date, toward evening on the 14th. However, that is not what Ephrem's text apparently states. Rather, the Lamb of God was slain on the 15th -- "*on the fifteenth he was slain.*" St. Ephrem implies that Jesus ate the Paschal lamb on the evening of the 14th but fulfilled the prophetic utterance with respect to His being slain on the 15th! If that is the case, then that "*final evening*" in the second stanza has to correspond with either the evening of the 14th or the 15th. If the 14th, then the *final evening* is that in which the Lord ate the little Pascha. But how could He do that and also become the great Pascha corresponding in typology to the exodus from Egypt at the same time (though not yet slain)? Is Ephrem confused? If the 15th is the *final evening* the obverse obtains!?! Is this hymn poorly translated or perhaps based a corrupted text? A substitution of *the fourteenth* for *the fifteenth* would clear this muddled hymn up, chronologically in the 1st stanza, and typologically in the 2nd. But unfortunately, that is not what the above text of Cantalamessa's translations states. In reviewing Cantalamessa's referenced source text (Syriac with German translation by E. Beck based on Syriac manuscript **B** #14 627 from the British Museum),⁶² one notes that the German translation by Beck is essentially the same as the English quoted above in regard to the dates: "...*Am fünfzehnten wurde es geschlachtet, am Tag, -- an dem die beiden Gestirne voll waren.*" I.e., "...*On the 15th it was slain, the day on which both of the stars were full.*" Significantly, in translating and editing the text, Beck also noted the chronologic disparity and inserted a footnote to reflect his dissatisfaction with this phrase: "*So der Text! Ist « vierzehnten » zu korrigieren?*" I.e., "So the text reads! Is « (the) 14th » (needed here) to correct?" [Note: the Syriac text underlying the German translation definitely reflects the two dates being different.⁶³] If this truly is copyist error, then this first stanza makes perfect sense with the "14th" inserted in place of the "15th" as does the second stanza when interpreted typologically. If there is no copyist error, then we are left with an illogical and chronologically irreconcilable hymn. If the latter pertains, then the incongruity between 14 and 15 of Nisan remains, as does the time of the "two stars" (the full sun and full moon), and the time of the eating of the little Pascha and of the becoming of the great Pascha. All must then be regarded as Ephrem's attempt to poetically express what indeed is an irreconcilable mystery interpreted poetically and typologically! Without a manuscript that reflects an alternative text one is at an impasse.}

⁶² Ephraem des Syrsers, Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Paschalhymnen (De Azymis, De Crucifixione, De Resurrectione, Beck E (editor), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 249, Scriptorum Syri Tome 109, Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, Louvain, 1964, p. 40 (German).

⁶³ Ephraem des Syrsers, Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Paschalhymnen (De Azymis, De Crucifixione, De Resurrectione, Beck E (editor), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 248, Scriptorum Syri Tome 108, Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, Louvain, 1964, p. 49 (Syriac).

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Cyril of Jerusalem A. D. c. 315 - 387.



St. Cyril was a presbyter and later bishop of Jerusalem. Caught up in the midst of the Arian heresies, he was three times deposed from his episcopal chair for his defense of orthodoxy. He attended the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in A.D. 381. He is best known for his 25 baptismal Catechetical Lectures (extant in the original Greek) which are invaluable for understanding the practice of and the meaning which the Early Church gave to the principal sacraments. Since catechesis culminated in baptism at Pascha in the early church, it is not unexpected that Cyril would indoctrinate his pupils with teaching on the Passover:

Christ, then, was crucified for us; He was judged in the night, when it was cold, and therefore, a fire of coals was laid. He was crucified

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

at the third hour; and “from the sixth hour there was darkness until the ninth hour”; but from the ninth hour there was light again. Are these details written down: Let us inquire. Zacharia says: “And it shall come to pass in that day, and there shall be no light, but cold and frost through one day, (the cold on account of which Peter warmed himself,) and that day shall be known to the Lord.” (What? Did He not know the other days? There are many days, but “this is the day [of the Lord’s patience] the Lord has made.”) “And that day shall be known to the Lord, and not day nor night.” What dark saying does the prophet utter? That day is neither day nor night. What then shall be call it: The Gospel interprets it, telling of the event. I was not day, for the sun did not shine without interruption from the rising to setting, but from the sixth hour to the ninth there was darkness. the darkness was interposed; but God called the darkness night. Therefore it was neither day nor night; for it was neither all light, so as to be called day, nor all darkness, so as to be called night; but after the ninth hour the sun shone forth. This also the prophet foretells; for after saying “not day nor night,” he adds: “And in the time of the evening there shall be light.” Do you see the exactness of the prophets? Do you see the truth of the events foretold?

*Do you seek at what hour exactly the sun failed: Was it the fifth hour or the eight or the tenth? Give the exact hour, O prophet, to the unheeding Jews; when did the sun set? **The prophet Amos says: “On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun set at “midday” (for there was darkness from the sixth hour) “and cover the earth with darkness in broad daylight.”** What season is this, O prophet, and what sort of day? “**I will turn your feasts into mourning” (for it was in the Azymes that this event took place, and at the feast of the Pasch); then he says: “I will make them mourn as for an only son, and bring their day to a bitter end.”** For the day of Azymes and at the time of the feast the women mourned and wept, and the Apostles who had hidden themselves were overwhelmed with anguish. How wonderful the prophecy!”* ⁶⁴

{Comment: St. Cyril is wonderfully inventive in his use of Old Testament Scripture. Using Amos’ prophetic judgment against the northern kingdom of Israel:

*Amos 8:9 On that day, says the Lord GOD,
I will make the sun go down at noon,
and darken the earth in broad daylight.*

⁶⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, “Catechesis XIII,” 24-25, in McCauley LP (translator), The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Vol. 2, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1979, pp. 20-21.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*Amos 8:10 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
and all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on all loins,
and baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for an only son,
and the end of it like a bitter day.*

Cyril projects the interpretation far beyond the Assyrian captivity to the time of Christ's crucifixion noting the noonday sun turned to darkness (from the 6th to the 9th hour), the joy of the Feast of Unleavened bread and the Passover Seder was turned to lamentation for the Jesus' Apostles and women followers at seeing the Passover Lamb slain, and, finally, instead of eating the maror (bitter herbs) with salt water after the custom of the Jews, that evening they ate the bitter herbs of anguish -- weeping and mourning for Jesus as for an only son. What a powerful scriptural allusion to the chronology of the Pascha has Cyril presented! Even creation groaned as the Son of God was revealed to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

With Cyril and with Eusebius of Caesarea the Patriarchal See of Jerusalem has been added to all the other Patriarchal sees espousing Jesus' death on the 14th of Nisan, prior to the celebration of the Jewish Seder according to the Law!}

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Epiphanius of Salamis in Cyprus, A.D. c.315-403.



This well-educated son of poor Jewish parents embraced Christianity at age 16, becoming, after St. Paul, the only example among the ancient fathers of a learned Jewish convert. Trained in the monastic life by Hilarion, he was a zealous laborer for monasticism in Palestine and a staunch supporter of orthodoxy. He was considered by his contemporaries as a saint and a patriarch of orthodoxy. Fluent in 5 languages including Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian, Greek, and some Latin, he wrote extensively on heresies and their antidotes. The historian Philip Schaff writes that he was “a man of earnest monastic piety, and of sincere but illiberal zeal for orthodoxy. His good nature easily allowed him to be used as an instrument for the passions of others, and his zeal was not according to knowledge...lacking in knowledge of the world and of men, in sound judgment, and in critical discernment. He was possessed of a boundless credulity, now almost proverbial, causing innumerable errors and contradictions in his writings.”⁶⁵ He is an interesting character to be sure, full of anecdotal information, but not always to be trusted! Nonetheless, his opinions (right or wrong) on the date of Passover were clearly expressed in his writings.

In his Panarion [“Medicine Chest”] which contains the spiritual “antidotes” for the poisons of some 80 heresies -- several of them Jewish Messianic sects, Epiphanius

⁶⁵ Schaff P, History of the Christian Church: Vol III: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity A.D. 311-600, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 405-406.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

clearly states that Jesus ate the Jewish Passover lamb and unleavened bread in a passage in which he is refuting the beliefs of the Ebionites and of their altering of Holy Scripture:

22,1 *But how can their stupidity about eating meat not be exposed out of hand? In the first place, **the Lord ate the Jewish Passover. Now the Jewish Passover was a sheep and unleavened bread** -- the flesh of a sheep roasted with fire and eaten, (2) as his disciples say to him, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee that thou mayest eat the Passover?" And the Lord himself says, "Go ye into the city, and ye shall find a man bearing a pitcher of water and ye shall follow withersoever he goeth, and say ye to the goodman of the house, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall keep the Passover with my disciples? And he shall show you an upper room furnished; there make ready."*

22,3 *But the Lord himself says in turn, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." And he said, "this Passover," not simply "Passover," so that no one would practice it in accordance with his own notion. Passover, as I said, was roast meat and the rest. (4) but of their own will these people have lost sight of the consequence of the truth, and have altered the wording -- which is evident to everyone from the sayings associated with it -- and made the disciples say, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?" and the Lord, if you please, says, "Have I desired meat with desire, to eat this Passover with you?"*

22,5 *but how can their tampering go undetected, when the consequence cries out that the "mu" and "eta" are additions? Instead of saying ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα they added the μή as an afterthought. Christ actually said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." But they misled themselves by writing in meat and making a false entry, and saying, "Have I desired with desire to eat this Passover with you?" But it is plainly demonstrated that he both kept the Passover, and as I said, ate meat.⁶⁶*

{Comment: In this chapter and especially by what follows the above quotation one readily discerns that Epiphanius was arguing against the Ebionite practice of not eating meat and the justification for their position based on their distortion of certain passages in Holy Scripture. Epiphanius counters their heretical practice by "demonstrating" that Jesus ate meat (i.e., the Jewish Passover lamb) as did St. Peter and that their Scriptural justification was erroneous, an invention of their own tampering. Hence, the discussion here is not specifically regarding the true day or date of the Last Supper, but rather a

⁶⁶ Epiphanius, "30. Against Ebionites," in Williams F (translator) The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1-46), E.J. Brill, New York, 1987, pp. 137-138.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

polemic against not eating meat. Nonetheless, Epiphanius clearly believes that Jesus ate the Jewish Passover lamb and the unleavened bread at the Last Supper.}

In a later section of the Panarion where Epiphanius was refuting Marcion -- the most earnest, dangerous, and zealous of the Gnostics, he again insists that Jesus ate the Jewish Passover:

Scholien 61: "And he said unto Peter and the rest, Go and prepare that we may eat the Passover."

Elenchus 61: Marcion, the text contains a cloud of arrows against you in one Testimony...The ancient Passover was nothing but the slaughter of a lamb and the eating of meat, and the partaking of flesh with unleavened bread. And who but the truth itself -- as I said -- has kept you from suppressing your refutation altogether? To keep the Passover as prescribed in the Law, the Lord Jesus has eaten these meat-dishes that you abhor, with his disciples.

*And do not tell me that, in saying, "I desire to eat the Passover with you," he was naming in advance the mystery he intended to celebrate. To shame you completely the truth does not put the mystery at the beginning, or you might deny the truth. It says, "After supper he took certain things and said, this is such and such," and left no room for tampering. **For it made plain that he proceeded with the mystery after eating the Jewish Passover, that is, "after supper."***⁶⁷

{Comment: Epiphanius is quite clear again. Jesus ate the unleavened bread and the meat-dishes of the *Jewish Passover* and then *proceeded with the mystery*, the institution of the Eucharist. The eating of meat is again a focus of his arguments against Marcion. Obviously if Jesus celebrated a Jewish Passover Seder according to the Mosaic Law or Rabbinic tradition He would have to have eaten His paschal lamb! Such an irrefutable proof demands the premise that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. Then the argument is iron clad. But was Epiphanius' premise tainted by his Jewish upbringing (which no doubt included his personal celebration of the Jewish Passover Seder)? For, if he was intimately familiar with Scripture and the Jewish cultural practices in the Diaspora, although not necessarily familiar with the historic Second Temple practices as recorded in the Mishnah and later in the Talmud Bavli, and then read the Synoptic Gospels, would he not probably consider the Last Supper to be a Passover Seder -- just as our Messianic Christians of today do? I believe this to be the most likely origin of his chronology.}

⁶⁷ Epiphanius, "42. Against Marcionites," in Williams F (translator) The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1-46), E.J. Brill, New York, 1987, pp. 309-310.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

In another absolutely brilliant work, “An Homily on the Burial of the Divine Body of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on Joseph of Arimathaea, and on the Lord’s Descent Into Hades which, After His Saving Passion, Wondrously Ensued on the Holy and Great Saturday,” Epiphanius reverses himself and suggests the alternative chronology, that Jesus was slain on the cross at the same time as the passover lambs were bound and slaughtered in the Temple:

But hearken now to the sublime tale of Christ’s suffering! Harken and offer praise, hearken and glorify, hearken and preach the wondrous works of God: how the Law retires; how grace blossoms forth; how the types pass away; how the shadows vanish; how the Sun fills the whole world; how the Old [Covenant] has grown old; how the New is established; how things of ancient times have perished; how things new have flourished. There were two peoples on Sion at the time of Christ’s Passion, that of the Jews and that of the nations; and two kings Pilate and Herod; and two high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. And this was so that simultaneously there be two Paschas, the one terminating and Christ’s just beginning. On that evening two sacrifices were performed, since two salvations, I mean of the living and of the dead, were accomplished. The Jew bound a lamb and sacrificed it by slaughter; but he from the nations [sacrificed] God in the flesh. The former gazed upon the shadow; the latter ran to God, the Sun. The Jews bound Christ and sent Him away; but they from the nations eagerly received Him. The first offered as sacrifice an animal victim; the second the body of God. The Jews commemorated their passing over from Egypt, whilst they from the nations heralded their deliverance from error.⁶⁸

{Comment: If *on that evening* two sacrifices were performed, one by the Jews and one by Pilate, then Jesus was slain at approximately the same time as the paschal lambs, hence, He could not have eaten the Passover, but was the true Passover!}

⁶⁸ Epiphanius, “An Homily on the Burial of the Divine Body of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on Joseph of Arimathaea, and on the Lord’s Descent Into Hades which, After His Saving Passion, Wondrously Ensued on the Holy and Great Saturday,” in Lamentations of Matins of Holy and Great Saturday, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, MA, 1986, p. 35.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Jerome, A.D. 337 - 419/420.



Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus, the great translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, was born in Dalmatia, educated in Rome in rhetoric, baptized in A.D. 367, entered the monastic life, and traveled to the East to learn Greek in Antioch, and Hebrew from the Jews in Syria and Bethlehem. A profoundly intellectual individual, his Latin was learned and eloquent, his knowledge of Greek was relatively good, and he was the best scholar of Hebrew that the Church had for centuries -- far better than Epiphanius. "His principle in studying was, in his own words: 'To read the ancients, to test everything, to hold fast the good, and never to depart from the catholic faith.'"⁶⁹ His translation of the Bible from the original languages of Greek and Hebrew into Latin proved fortuitous as the knowledge of the original languages soon faded into oblivion in the Roman West. "It is certain that the Masoretic text [Hebrew text] which he used is of later date than that which can be reconstituted from the Septuagint and the first Latin translations."⁷⁰ Yet, because Jewish scholars in his day refused to acknowledge the authority of the Septuagint for scriptural debate, he translated directly from their Hebrew text. In addition to translating the Scriptures, he authored many works including commentaries on the entire

⁶⁹ Schaff P, History of the Christian Church: Vol. III: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311 - 600, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 968.

⁷⁰ Clément O, The Roots of Christian Mysticism, New City, London, 1995, p. 348.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Bible. In the following Homily on the Exodus for the Vigil of Easter one can sense Jerome's understanding of Paschal chronology:

*Today, the People of Israel, truly man-seeing-God (that is the meaning of Israel), receive the command to depart from Egypt. Today the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world is slain for the salvation of all. Today, the doorposts of the houses, our foreheads are being painted with His blood. Today, the Egyptians are destroyed, and God's people are liberated from the slavery of Pharaoh. Today, the first-born of the Egyptians are struck down, and not only the children of the Israelites, but even brute beasts are saved. To men, indeed, and to beasts of burden alike the Lord brings salvation. **Let us prepare ourselves for the sacrifice of the Lamb, and obtain the victim, not when the light is faint and the moon is a crescent, not when it begins to wax or wane, but on the fourteenth day, when the light of the moon is most perfect and full, when its rays are undimmed and its circumference filled out...***⁷¹

{Comment: Jerome parallels the Egyptian passover with Christ's sacrifice and indicates the fourteenth day as the day when the victim is to be obtained -- before the eating of the roasted lamb with bitter herbs and staff in hand. As the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites homes, so the blood of Christ is painted on our foreheads so that the angel of death will passover us as the first-born of the Egyptians is struck down. All proclaims a chronology of Christ's death on the 14th of Nisan before the Passover Seder.}

⁷¹ Jerome, "Homily 91: On the Exodus: The Vigil of Easter," in Ewald ML, The Homilies of St. Jerome, Vol 2: Homilies 60-96, Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1965.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. John Chrysostom, A.D. 344-407.



A native of Antioch, this “golden-mouthed” monk, priest, and patriarch of Constantinople, is still considered one of the foremost interpreters of the Scriptures in the Eastern Church. Commenting on Matthew 26:17-19:

“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pascha? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Pascha at thy house with My disciples.”

*“By the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, he means the day before that feast; for they are accustomed always to reckon the day from the evening, and he makes mention of this in which in the evening the passover must be killed; for on the **fifth day of the week they came unto Him**. And this one calls the day before the feast of unleavened bread, speaking of the time when they came to Him, and another saith on this wise, “Then came the day of unleavened bread when the passover must be killed;” by the word “came,” meaning this, it was night, it was at the doors, making mention plainly of that evening. For they began with the evening, wherefore, also each adds, when the passover was killed.”⁷²*

{Comment: In other words, Chrysostom states the disciples came to Jesus on Thursday during the daytime asking Him where He wanted to eat the Pascha. The day that the paschal lamb had to be slain (from Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7) began that evening at sunset, with the paschal lambs being slain the next afternoon after the tamid⁷³ offering.}

Then on St. John 18:28:

*“And observe the ridiculous conduct of the Jews. They who had seized the innocent, and taken up arms, **do not enter into the hall of judgment, lest they should be polluted.**’ And tell me, what kind of pollution was it to set foot in a judgment-hall, where wrong-doers suffer justice? They who paid tithes of mint and anise, did not think they were polluted when bent on killing unjustly, but thought that they polluted themselves by even treading in a court of justice. ‘And why did they not kill Him, instead of bringing Him to Pilate?’ In the first place, the greater part of their rule and authority had been cut away, when their affairs were placed under the power of the Romans; and besides, they feared lest they should afterwards be accused and punished by Him. But what is, **‘That they might eat the Passover?’ for He had done this on the first day of unleavened bread.**” Either he calls the whole feast “the Passover,” or means, that they were then keeping the Passover, while He delivered it to His followers one day sooner, reserving His own Sacrifice for the*

⁷² Chrysostom J, Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Homily LXXXI, Prevost G, (translator), in Schaff P, editor, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 10, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.485.

⁷³ Tamid = The continual or daily burnt-offering, sacrificed every morning and evening.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

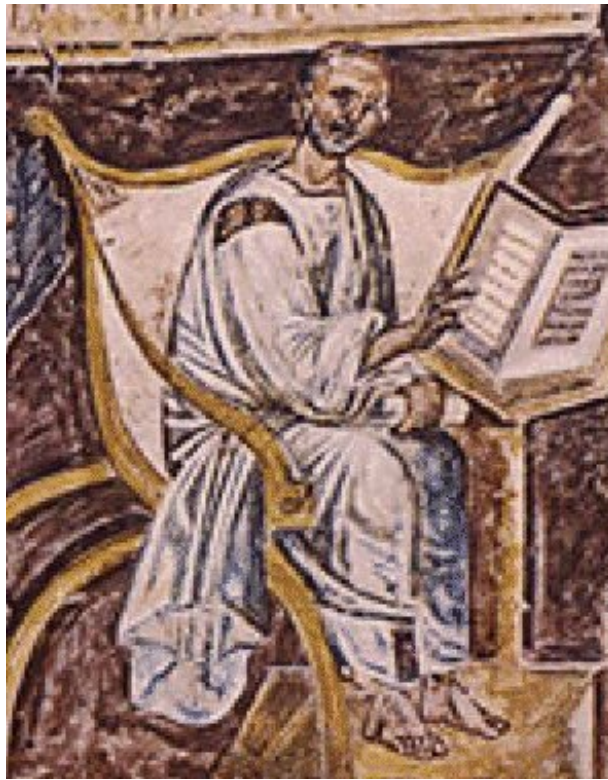
Preparation-day, when also of old the Passover was celebrated. But they, though they had taken up arms, which was unlawful, and were shedding blood, are scrupulous about the place and bring forth Pilate to them.”⁷⁴

{Comment: Unfortunately, Chrysostom does not elaborate on why the chief priests, officers, etc., thought they might be defiled by entering Herod’s praetorium. Here, Chrysostom presents us with two alternative interpretations of what the phrase *the Passover* could mean. The second alternative definitely favored Jesus eating a “passover” with his followers *one day sooner* than the true passover of the Jews, *on the first day of unleavened bread*, on Thursday evening, the 14th of Nisan. In the other case it is difficult to ferret out exactly what Chrysostom mean and what the implications would be.}

⁷⁴ Chrysostom J, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, Homily LXXXIII, in Schaff, P, (translator & editor), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 14, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.310.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Aurelius Augustinus (Blessed Augustine of Hippo), A.D. 354-430.



The most influential “Father” for the Western Church, he was born in North Africa. Originally a highly gifted orator and later a follower of the Manicheans, he converted to Christianity in adulthood through reading the Life of Anthony by Athanasius the Great, through listening to the sermons of St. Ambrose of Milan, through reading the Letters of St. Paul, and most especially through the prayers of his devout mother. He was a prolific writer, but non-Orthodox in several important doctrinal stances, thus responsible for heresy in the Roman Catholic Church.

*“And it was morning; and they themselves,” that is, those who brought Jesus, “went not into the judgment hall,” to wit, into that part of the house which Pilate occupied, supposing it to be Caiaphas’ house. **And then in explanation of the reason why they went not into the judgment hall, he says, “lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.”** For it was the commencement of the days of unleavened bread: on which they accounted it defilement to enter the abode of one of*

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

*another nation. Impious blindness! Would they, forsooth, be defiled by a stranger's abode, and not be defiled by their own wickedness? They were afraid of being defiled by the pretorium of a foreign judge, and had no fear of defilement from the blood of an innocent brother: not to say more than this meanwhile, which was enough to fix guilt on the conscience of the wicked. For the additional fact, that it was the Lord who was led to death by their impiety, and the giver of life that was on the way to be slain, may be charged, not to their conscience, but to their ignorance.*⁷⁵

{Comment: St. Augustin declares that it was *at the commencement*, i.e., the beginning of the days of unleavened bread that Jesus was brought before Pilate. Thus, Augustin is in agreement with the overwhelming majority of Church Fathers that Jesus' trial before Pilate was at the beginning of the days of unleavened bread, i.e., on the morning of the 14th of Nisan -- interpreting *passover* as the immolated lamb slain in the Temple later that day and eaten that evening after twilight.}

⁷⁵ St. Augustin, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, Tractate CXIV, Chapter XVIII 28-32, Gibb J, (translator), in Schaff, P, (editor), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 7, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.421.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Cyril of Alexandria, A.D. 376-444 (see page 8).



A profound theologian of the Egyptian Church, Cyril was a prolific writer and the Patriarch of Alexandria for 30 years. He is best known for his defense of Orthodoxy against Nestorius. In the following Homily on the Gospel of Luke, Cyril sides with those who believe Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan, in agreement with his Alexandrian predecessors Clement and Bishop Peter. So it must have been a “Christian Passover” rather than the Jewish Passover according to the Torah that Cyril refers to later on in his Homily when he says that *Christ ate it with them*:

*...But when “the fullness of time was come,” as Paul says, in which the Only-begotten Word of God was about to submit unto the emptying of Himself, and to endure the birth in the flesh of a woman, and subjection also unto the law, according to the measure that was fitting for human nature, then **He was also sacrificed for us, as the lamb without blame and true on the fourteenth day of the first month.** And this feast-time was called “Pascha,” a word belonging to the Hebrew language, and signifying the passing over; for so they explain it, and say that this is its meaning...*

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

When, then, the disciples had prepared the pascha, Christ ate it with them, being longsuffering towards the traitor, and deigning to admit him to the table from His infinite loving kindness; for he was already a traitor, because Satan was lodging within him. And what did Christ also say to the holy apostles? "I have desired a desire to eat this pascha with you." Let us examine the deep purport of this expression; let us search out the meaning concealed therein, and what it is which the Savior intends.

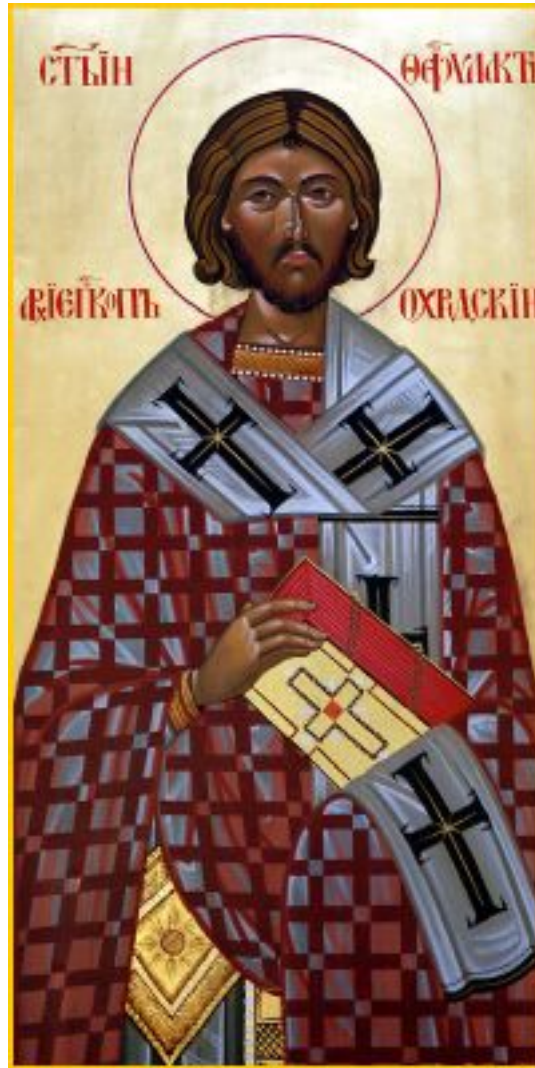
Since, therefore I have already said that the covetous disciple was seeking an opportunity to betray Him; and that he might not deliver Him to His murderers before the feast of the pascha, the Savior did not declare either the house or the person with whom He would celebrate the feast. To explain, therefore, to them the cause of His unwillingness openly to tell them with whom He would lodge, He says, "I have desired a desire to eat with you this pascha;" apparently meaning, I have used all diligence to enable me to escape the wickedness of the traitor, that I might not endure My passion before the time.

*"But I will not eat of this pascha until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And in this again Christ utters a profound and mysterious truth, of which He Himself, however, reveals to us the meaning. For it is His custom to give the name of the "kingdom of heaven" to justification by faith, to the cleansing that is by holy baptism and the participation of the Holy Spirit, and to the offering of spiritual service, now rendered possible by the entering in of the gospel laws. But these things are the means of our being made partakers of the promises, and of our reigning together with Christ; therefore, He says, I will no more draw near unto such a pascha as this, one namely that consisted in the typical eating--for a lamb of the flock was slain to be the type of the true Lamb--"until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God;" that is, until the time has appeared in which the kingdom of heaven is preached. For this is fulfilled in us, **who honor the worship that is superior to the law, even the true pascha; nor is it a lamb of the flock which sanctifies those who are in Christ, but Himself rather, being made a holy sacrifice for us, by the offering of the bloodless oblations, and the mystical giving of thanks, in which we are blessed and quickened with life. For He became for us "the living bread that came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.**⁷⁶*

⁷⁶ St. Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria, "Homily 141," Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke, Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983, p. 566-567.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Blessed Theophylact, A.D. 1050?-1108?



A Byzantine deacon and priest in Constantinople, a renowned preacher of the gospel and master of rhetoric, and later Archbishop of Bulgaria, he wrote a complete series of commentaries on the New Testament, the Explanation of the New Testament, at the request of the princess Maria, wife of Emperor Alexius I Comnenus. So based in the Church Fathers were these commentaries, that they are considered to represent the expression and consensus of the mind of the Orthodox Church, particularly Chrysostom. In the following excerpt Theophylact clearly expresses the opinion that the Passover

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Seder should have been eaten on Friday night, after the crucifixion. Commenting on Matthew Chapter 26:

“17-19: Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pascha? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Pascha at thy house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus has appointed them; and they made ready the Pascha.”

*He says, “The first day of the feast of the unleavened bread,” meaning “the day before the feast of the unleavened bread’, as we would say it. They intended to eat the Pascha on Friday evening, which was called “the feast of the unleavened bread”. The Lord, therefore, **sends the disciples on Thursday, which the evangelist calls “the first day of the feast of the unleavened bread”, being the day before the Friday on the evening of which they would eat the unleavened bread.** The disciples then approach and ask, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pascha?” For neither they, nor He, had their own house. He sends them to a man whom they did not know and who did not know them, just as He had done before entering Jerusalem when He sent them to find the ass, showing them that He is able by His words alone to persuade even those who do now know Him at all to accept Him. **He wanted to keep the Pascha, lest He appear opposed to the law.** He calls His slaying His “time”, so that we may learn that He was not slain unknowingly or unwillingly. **And to the words, “I will keep the Pascha at thy house”, He adds “with My disciples”, so that there would be sufficient preparation for the large number of those who intended to eat.**”⁷⁷*

“20-22: Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?”

From this some believe that the Lord did not eat the Pascha that year. For they say that only while standing was the Paschal lamb to be eaten. Yet Christ sat down; hence it could not have been the Pascha which He ate. But we might say that first He ate the Pascha standing, and then He sat down and gave them His own Mystery and Sacrament. For having first kept the Pascha in type, He then kept it in truth.

⁷⁷ Blessed Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Krieger, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1992, p. 226-227.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

{Comment: Theophylact presents very interesting and then striking commentary in these above passages. First, he notes that *they intended to eat the Pascha on Friday evening*. That would be the official Jewish Passover Seder according to the Mosaic Law. Jesus, however, sent His disciples out on Thursday, *the first day of the feast of the unleavened bread* to prepare for the Friday night passover even though He would be slain prior to the Seder itself. The reason: *Jesus wanted to keep the Pascha lest He appear opposed to the law*. So far, no problem with chronology. Theophylact appears totally consistent. However, in the commentary on the next few verses, he startles us with saying that *Jesus ate the Pascha standing* -- that *He first kept the Pascha in type*, and then *kept it in truth*. The only explanation for this is that Theophylact must have believed that Jesus truly celebrated a Paschal dinner in the traditional Jewish manner on the night of the Last Supper, one day before the rest of Israel. That represents a misunderstanding on his part of the intricate ritual sacrifice of the passover lambs in the Temple on the eve of Passover. One could in no way truly and legally celebrate in full a Passover Seder except at dusk at the beginning of the 15th of Nisan (primarily because of the ritual surrounding the sacrifice of the paschal lambs -- some of which is specific to the paschal lamb itself). Consequently, we must fix our attention instead on his typology: Jesus celebrated the *Pascha in type* in His introduction of the New Covenant through the mysteries of the breaking of the bread and the cup, then *kept it in truth* as the Paschal Lamb the following day -- at the same time the paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple.}

On Matthew Chapter 27 Theophylact reassuringly assigns the crucifixion to the 14th of Nisan:

“45-49: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him.”

*The darkness which occurred was not according to the natural order of events, as when a solar eclipse occurs in nature. For there is never a solar eclipse on the fourteenth day of the lunar cycle; rather solar eclipses occur when there is a so-called “new-moon”. **The day of the***

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

crucifixion was certainly the fourteenth day of the lunar cycle, as that is when the Jews celebrate the Passover. ⁷⁸

Further reassuring us in his following remarks on Mark Chapter 14, Theophylact, mirroring his comments on Matthew above, dogmatically reiterates Thursday being the first day of unleavened bread, and that the unleavened bread (of the Jewish Seder) was eaten on Friday:

2-15: And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Pascha, His disciples said to Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Pascha? And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say yet to the master of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Pascha with My disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

“The first day of unleavened bread” means Thursday, the day before the feast of unleavened bread. For the unleavened bread was eaten on Friday... ⁷⁹

As we come to Theophylact’s Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke we are surprised by a distinct change in his chronology -- that the paschal lamb would be slain on Thursday evening, not Friday evening. Is this some sort of schizophrenia on his part? Or does it again represent his misunderstanding of sacerdotal practices in the Temple? Commenting on St. Luke Chapter 22:

7-13: Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Pascha must be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Pascha, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the master of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the

⁷⁸ Blessed Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1992, p. 247.

⁷⁹ Blessed Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1993, p. 119.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

guestchamber, where I shall eat the Pascha with My disciples.” And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Pascha.

*“Many have said that ‘Pascha,’ in Hebrew ‘Phasek,’ means the passage out of Egypt; the saints have interpreted it to mean in general everything that is performed during the feast of Pascha. **Now we must explain ‘the day of unleavened bread.’ It means Thursday, on the evening of which they intended to slay the paschal lamb.** The Lord, therefore, perhaps on the morning of Thursday, sends out His disciples Peter and John the one who loved and the other who was beloved... Let us who are Christians also eat the Passover supper. But we must do so noetically, by spiritually understanding the ‘day of unleavened bread.’ What is that day? It is when all our life is lived [in Christ] in the light of the Spirit, not mixed with any of the old and corrupting leaven of our former disobedience that was in Adam. Only when we live in this manner may we feast on the Mysteries of Jesus...⁸⁰*

{Comment: Here, in Luke, Theophylact seems to contradict the chronologies he specifically proposed in Matthew and Mark -- i.e., that they would slay the paschal lamb that Thursday evening rather than Friday evening. Theophylact appears confused, not understanding the traditional chronology and the sacerdotal practice of the passover. But unlike his remarks on Matthew and Mark his commentary on Luke is not focused on chronology. Rather, for his audience, the princess Maria, Theophylact is focused on allegorical and typological instruction -- the removal of the old leaven of disobedience and replacing it with life in the newness of the Holy Spirit. Yet, there is a little more to the story when we integrate St. Luke’s Gospel with St. John’s as we shall see!!!}

Lastly we come to Theophylact’s Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. John where we get the real sense of the Blessed Theophylact’s belief on the chronology. Commenting on St. John 18:28-32:

*And so when these proceedings, and the long night had drawn to an end and morning had dawned, they took Christ to Pilate. **“They themselves went not into the praetorium, lest they should be defiled.”** What foolishness! They thought they would be defiled simply by entering a Roman court, but not for murdering an innocent man. **What does it mean,***

⁸⁰ Blessed Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1997, p. 280-281.

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

“that they might eat the pascha?” According to Mark’s account, the Lord had already eaten the paschal meal “on the first day of unleavened bread” [Mk. 14:12]. “Pascha” sometimes refers to the entire seven-day feast. Here it refers to the paschal lamb and supper which the Jews would eat that Friday evening [on the eve of the high day of the feast]. The Lord allowed His disciples to eat the paschal meal a day early, reserving Friday as the day on which He Himself--the true Paschal Lamb--would be slaughtered, and the types of the old Pascha fulfilled.

{Comment: Here Theophylact reveals himself completely. He believes Jesus allowed His disciples to slay and *eat the paschal meal a day early*. Now if we go back to St. Luke’s passage we see Theophylact’s statement “*Now we must explain ‘the day of unleavened bread.’ It means Thursday, on the evening of which they intended to slay the paschal lamb*” in a totally new light. Although Friday was the night in which all the Jews would slay their lambs, “*they*” themselves of their own will intended to slay a lamb and consider it the paschal lamb a day earlier. This sounds good chronologically and unifies all of Theophylact as not believing that the Last Supper was a Jewish Passover Seder but a Passover-like meal one day early. Unfortunately as good as this sounds, it is not in accordance with the Jewish Law regarding the Passover. A lamb the day before would not be a Passover lamb--just a lamb.}

SUMMARY:

If we compile all the various writers chronologically into a table that compares their differing views we obtain the following:

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Table 1: Listing of Patristic Authorities and Their Respective Opinions on Whether or Not the Last Supper was a Passover Seder

Last Supper Definitely Not the Seder According to the Jewish Law, Crucifixion on 14th	Infers Not Seder, Crucifixion on the 14th	Ambiguous	Last Supper Was Seder on 14th, Crucifixion on the 15th
Appolinaris Clement of Alexandria St. Hippolytus Julius Africanus St. Peter of Alexandria Eusebius of Caesarea Aphraates St. Ephrem (2) St. Cyril of Jerusalem Jerome St. John Chrysostom St. Cyril of Alexandria Theophylact (4)	St. Justin Martyr St. Irenaeus St. Melito Sardis Tertullian St. Epiphanius (1) Augustine	Pseudo-Cyprian	St. Epiphanius (2) St. Ephrem (1?)

As can be seen in the table above, the overwhelmingly predominant opinion among the Patristic Fathers of the Church and christian writers whose writings are accessible in English translation is that the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, didn't eat the Jewish Passover according to the Mosaic Law, but was the Passover Lamb, slain on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan. He suffered His passion on the cross at the same time as the Passover lambs were being slain in the Temple. Thus, they testify and infer that the Last Supper occurred 24 hours before the usual Jewish Passover Seder. Some of these authorities called the Last Supper a passover supper, but did not identify it as the true passover. Of those Church Fathers who specifically address the chronology as a distinct issue, all were united with the majority opinion. The possible pro-Jewish Passover seder proponents, St. Epiphanius and St. Ephrem, never dealt with the chronology as a specific issue. Rather, the former was more interested in proving that Jesus ate meat in order to refute the beliefs and practices of the Ebionites and Marcionites. Even so, in other writings, he reversed himself, e.g., his homily on the "Burial of the Divine Body of our Lord..." and suggested that Jesus was the Passover Lamb slaughtered at the same time as

CHAPTER III: THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

the passover lambs. The latter, St. Ephrem, also appears divided in his opinions. His affirming hermenutical prose writings on Exodus and the Diatessaron should carry more weight than the dissenting poetic Hymn of Crucifixion. Yet, the latter cannot be totally ignored. Lastly, the highly respected Archbishop Theophylact, although he seemed to waiver in his Commentaries on the Gospels between the two poles with those on Matthew and Mark against a true Jewish Passover seder and that on Luke for it, his Commentary on the Gospel of John totally clarifies his position as standing with the majority. Certainly, infallibility of interpretation of the Scriptures rests in no one except the Logos, the Word of God, Christ Himself. Thus, even an important patristic writer may err in his teaching from time to time, and not be consistent in his interpretation.

In retrospect, support for the opinion that the Last Supper took place a day before the Jewish Passover Seder is not only ancient [back as far as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus], has not only been affirmed in essentially all places [Rome, Lyons, Asia, Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Syria, and (later) Bulgaria], but has been accepted by almost all of the ancient Church authorities -- Epiphanius and Ephrem being the only possible dissenters -- but also supporters! Thus, the criteria for catholic truth proposed by Vincentius of Lérins have been fulfilled by the “Non-Seder” position.

In conclusion, one can readily agree with Cyril of Alexandria:

*“...Besides this **Cyril [of Alexandria]** showed, in a letter to the Pope, what was defective in the Latin calculation; and this demonstration was taken up again, some time after, by order of the Emperor, by Paschasinus, Bishop of Lilybaeum and Proterius of Alexandria, in a letter written by them to Pope Leo I. In consequence of these communications, Pope Leo often gave preference to the Alexandrian computation, instead of that of the Church of Rome. At the same time also was generally established, **the opinion so little entertained by the ancient authorities of the Church--one might say, so strongly in contradiction to their teaching--that Christ partook of the passover on the 14th of Nissan, that he died on the 15th (not on the 14th, as the ancients considered), that he lay in the grave on the 16th, and rose again on the 17th.** In the letter we have just mentioned, Proterius of Alexandria openly admitted all these different points.”⁸¹*

⁸¹ Percival HR, The Seven Ecumenical Councils, in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 14., Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.56.

CHAPTER IV: THE TESTIMONY OF THE SANHEDRIN

Chapter IV: The Testimony of the Sanhedrin



**Detail of “Jesus before the Sanhedrin”
from a Fresco in St. Clement Church, Ohrid, Macedonia**

Beyond the testimony of the Church Fathers, there is the official testimony of the Sanhedrin סְנֵדֶרֶת רַבִּי (from the Greek synedrion συνηδριον, for “sitting in council”), the Supreme Court of Jewish Law which sat in Jerusalem during the later Second Temple period. The Sanhedrin was originally composed of priests and headed by the High Priest. They were members of the party of the Sadducees with regard to their religious convictions. Sages from the party of the Pharisees also became members of the Sanhedrin, particularly in the last decades of the Second Temple period. In this era the High Priest continued to exercise his traditional function as head of the Sanhedrin particularly where political interests were at stake. The Great Sanhedrin traditionally convened in the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple.⁸² The Mishnah Tractate “Sanhedrin” which is amplified in the Babylonian Talmud discusses the law and functioning of the courts. Capital crimes are discussed at length. In the Gemara of the Talmud one finds a most tantalizing morsel of history in the sections dealing with capital offenses:

⁸² Wigoder G, The Encyclopedia of Judaism, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1989, p. 624.

CHAPTER IV: THE TESTIMONY OF THE SANHEDRIN

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate SANHEDRIN (43a):Mishnah 6.1. IF THEN THEY FIND HIM INNOCENT, THEY DISCHARGE HIM; BUT IF NOT, HE GOES FORTH TO BE STONED, AND A HERALD PRECEDES HIM [CRYING]: SO AND SO, THE SON OF SO AND SO, IS GOING FORTH TO BE STONED BECAUSE HE COMMITTED SUCH AND SUCH AN OFFENSE, AND SO AND SO ARE HIS WITNESSES. WHOEVER KNOWS ANYTHING IN HIS FAVOUR, LET HIM COME AND STATE IT.

GEMARA. Abaye said; It must also be announced: On such and such a day, at such and such an hour, and in such and such a place [the crime was committed], in case there are some who know [to the contrary], so that they can come forward and prove the witnesses Zomemim.

*AND A HERALD PRECEDES HIM etc. This implies, only immediately before [the execution], but not previous thereto. [In contradiction to this] it was taught: **On the eve of the Passover Yeshu** {Jesus' appellation in Aramaic} [Footnote: Ms. M. adds '**the Nasarean**'] **was hanged.** For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, '**He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostacy. Any one who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.**' But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover! [Footnote: A Florentine Ms. adds: and the eve of Sabbath] — 'Ulla retorted: **Do you suppose that he was one for whom a defence could be made? Was he not a Mesith [enticer], concerning whom Scripture says, Neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him?** With Yeshu however it was different, for he was connected with the government [or royalty, i.e., influential].⁸³*

Here is an impartial (?) witness, i.e., the Jewish Rabbis of the Talmud, as to the day and date of the crucifixion. Their testimony is clear in this passage -- Jesus was hung (on the cross) on the eve of the Passover which was also the eve of the Sabbath. It was before the Passover Seder. This passage has often been expunged from copies of the

⁸³ Shachter J, Sanhedrin, Chapter 6, in Epstein I (editor), Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin, Socino Press, London, 1983, p. 43a, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

CHAPTER IV: THE TESTIMONY OF THE SANHEDRIN

Talmud in response to Christian persecution, a passage that immediately strikes a Christian as libel against his Messiah and Lord. However, when considered from the view point of the Pharisees of that time, i.e., those who had condemned and executed Him, the Talmudic testimony appears quite consistent with our understanding of their jealousy and hatred of Him. Additionally, it conveniently justifies their own actions as appropriate for saving the nation at the expense of one man. Jesus the Nazarean was convicted of sorcery and apostacy. In their opinion, He was an enticer who shouldn't be spared, one who was then hanged on the eve of Passover – on the eve of the Sabbath. Not only is the chronology clearly spelled out by these adversaries of Christ and of the Church, but how well this testimony corresponds to the Gospel testimony of the actions of the High Priests and Pharisees involved in the conspiracy against Jesus. Had they not condemned Him far in advance of the Passover? Had they not sought information concerning His whereabouts so they might seize Him? Had they not threatened to cast those out of the Synagogue who believed in Him? And had they not sought [false] witnesses against Him? But did they really follow their own law? Of course not. They did not really try to find impartial witnesses in support of Christ. Rather the following false statement was written to justify their own crimes, to provide cover for themselves. *For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostacy. Any one who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.'* ***But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!***

Summary:

The amoraim,⁸⁴ the Rabbis of the Talmudic period, reflecting the opinions of the Jewish tradition are in complete agreement with the majority of Church Fathers regarding the crucifixion of Jesus: He was hung on the tree on the eve of Passover which was the eve of the Sabbath, which as we have seen was the 14th of Nisan.

⁸⁴ amoraim = plural of amora = those who explain, i.e., the name given to the rabbis in the Gemara who explain the teaching of the Mishnah.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter V: The Testimony of the New Testament

THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS AND PAPYRUS FRAGMENTS

The next witnesses called to testify in the defense of the Patristic chronology are the authors of the four Gospels themselves. Unfortunately, there exist those “scholars” and “theologians,” such as those involved with the Jesus Seminar, who deny the inspiration and antiquity of the Gospels, preferring to dissect out what are the true sayings of Jesus from later accretions -- leaving almost nothing unscathed.⁸⁵

In contrast the Orthodox Church has never questioned the historical veracity and inspiration of the New Testament texts. One of the early Pre-Nicene Church Fathers Irenaeus of Lyons (A.D. c.130 – c.208)[See Page 29], writes:

*We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. **Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon***

⁸⁵ Father Justin, “The Jesus Seminar: A Rejoinder for Orthodox Pastors: An address prepared by for the Clergy Conference of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America,” held in Boston in October, 1995, downloaded from Holy Transfiguration Monastery, (Hyperlink = <http://www.cybercom.net/~htm/>). {This is a very scholarly and important paper well worth downloading and studying for a history and analysis of the whole subject of textual criticism.}

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*⁸⁶

A nearly a millenium later, Archbishop Theophylact (A.D. c.1050 - c.1108)[See Page 76] maintains the same opinion.

*...Matthew, then, first wrote the Gospel, in the Hebrew language for the Jews who believed, eight years after Christ's Ascension. Some say that John translated it from the Hebrew language into Greek. Mark wrote his Gospel ten years after the Ascension, instructed by Peter. Luke wrote his Gospel fifteen years after the Ascension, and John the most wise theologian, thirtytwo years after the Ascension."*⁸⁷

Thus, according to Archbishop Theophylact, assuming Jesus was crucified in AD 30, Matthew wrote his Gospel by A.D. 38, Mark, by A.D. 40, Luke by A.D. 45, and John no later than A.D. 62. In this same volume of the Explanation 2 pages earlier, there is a very important quote from the Life of the Evangelist Matthew According to St. Sophronius (who was Patriarch of Jerusalem from AD 634-638):

Matthew, also known as Levi, tax collector turned apostle, was the first to compose the Gospel of Christ, in Judea in the Hebrew language for those of the circumcision who believed. It is unknown by whom it was later translated into Greek. The Hebrew text is preserved to this day in the library of Caesarea that was most diligently assembled by the Martyr Pamphilus. The Nazarenes of Berroia in Syria, who use this text, gave me permission to copy it. From this one is easily convinced that where the evangelist makes use of the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, either himself, or in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he does not follow the authority of the Seventy, but of the Hebrew text. It is from the latter that these two passages come: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" and "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Both of these passages are excellent testimonies of the Church about herself, cutting through the fog of modern revisionists on the dating of the Gospels, i.e., the fog of those who would undermine the authority of the Scriptures as authentic witnesses and records so as to be able to discount them and follow their own fantasies rather than the authentic

⁸⁶ Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book 3, Chapter 1:1, in Roberts A & Donaldson J, (editors) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 414.

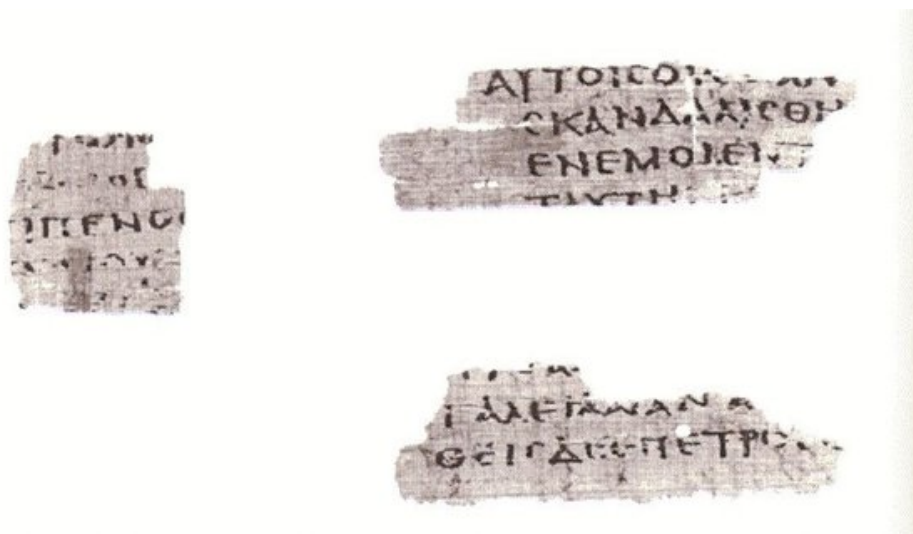
⁸⁷ Theophylact, in "Preface by Blessed Theophylact," The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1992, p. 8.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

tradition of the Church.

According to modern scriptural scholars the earliest surviving papyrus fragments of a Greek Gospel of Matthew, the “Magdalen papyrus” designated p64, were found in Luxor, Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century. The papyrus contains fragmented verses from chapter 26 including part of the narrative of the dinner in Bethany where Jesus was anointed by costly oil in the house of Simon the leper. It also contains excerpts from the Last Supper itself! Verse fragments include parts of Matt 26: 7-8, 10, 14-15 on the verso side and Matt 26:22-23, 31, and 32-33 on the recto side of the papyrus.⁸⁸

Magdalen Papyrus p64 recto side



Fragment 3, RECTO (From St. Matthew 26:22-23) *They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, “Not me, Lord, surely?” He answered, “Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me.”*

Fragment 1, RECTO (From St. Matthew 26:31) *Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away from me tonight, for the scripture says”*

Fragment 2, RECTO (From St. Matthew 26:32-33) *I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.” At this, Peter said to him*

⁸⁸ Thiede CP, and D’Ancona MD, Eyewitness to Jesus: Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., New York, NY, 1996, p. 56.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

These fragments as well as those of the so-called “Barcelona papyrus” (which contains excerpts from chapter 3 and 5 of Matthew) are from the same codex and are together now designated as p64/67. Initially thought by scholars to have originated in the late 2nd or early 3rd century, these papyri have recently been redated by one controversial Western scholar to A.D. 66 or earlier -- i.e., to within 33-36 years of the events themselves⁸⁹ although not without vigorous refutation by the mainstream academic community. [Controversial because he disagrees with those scholars who advocate a later date which allows the latter to say the scriptures were altered, redacted, rewritten, etc., and not composed in their entirety by the apostles.] Were this more ancient dating be proven correct, it would corroborate the early Church’s testimony, i.e., that Gospel of Matthew was penned (with the narrative portions) well within the lifetime of many of those who experienced the events firsthand and who could testify to its truth (as in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 15:6: *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.*). Additionally, since Matthew’s Gospel is assumed to have been originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic and then translated into Greek,^{90 91 92} this former version must be older still than the Magdalen papyrus. Unfortunately, no copies or fragments of Matthew’s Gospel in the original language are known to be extant.

However, a papyrus fragment in the Hebrew language thought to be of the Gospel According to St. Mark was recently discovered in Qumran among the Dead Sea Scrolls in cave 7. Designated 7Q5, it allegedly contains fragments of a narrative excerpt from Mark 6:52-53: “*on to the land...of Gennesaret.*” Because of the overrunning of the Qumran

⁸⁹ Thiede CP, and D’Ancona MD, Eyewitness to Jesus: Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., New York, NY, 1996, p. 125.

⁹⁰ Irenaeus writes, “*Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church.*” in Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” Book III, 1.1., Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A & Donaldson J, (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.414.

⁹¹ Jerome, Gennadius, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 3, Richardson EC, (translator), in Schaff P & Wace H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 362: “*Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and aforesometimes publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. **The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea** which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to be by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Saviour quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew...*”

⁹² Theophylact, in “Preface by Blessed Theophylact,” The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1992, p. 8.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

community in the Jewish-Roman wars in A.D. 68, this fragment, if authentic, must have been written prior to that date. (Note: Some skeptical scholars argue that the fragment could have been placed in the archives in Qumran at a later date.)

Dead Sea Scrolls Papyrus 7Q5 from Qumran



The earliest papyrus of the Gospel of Luke is codex p4 in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, containing parts of chapters 1,3,5-6, is considered late 1st century.

The earliest exemplar of the Gospel of John is p52, the John Rylands University papyrus, dated A.D. 110-125 and containing passages John 18:31-34, 37-38 -- sections dealing with Jesus' trial before Pilate, thus, also germane to our discussion of the Last Supper. St. John is thought by academic scholars to have written his gospel either during the persecutions under Nero (~A.D. 64), or near the end of his life after his return to Ephesus to resume his episcopate after exile on the isle of Patmos (thus sometime between A.D. 96-100).^{93 94} His gospel was the last written of the gospels and has a

⁹³ Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book 3, Chapter 1:1, in Roberts A & Donaldson J, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 414: *Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*"

⁹⁴ Jerome, "The Principle Works of St. Jerome: Prefaces to the Commentaries: Matthew," Fremantle WH, Lewis G, & Martley WG, (translators), in Schaff P & Wace H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 495: *The Last is John, the Apostle and Evangelist, whom Jesus loved most, who, reclining on the Lord's bosom, drank the purest streams of doctrine, and was the only one thought worthy of the words from the cross, "Behold! thy mother." When he*

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

different emphasis from the synoptic gospels. But being the last gospel written, its author was no doubt familiar with the writings of the other gospels and their interpretation by others. Consequently, the Gospel of John is the final word on the subject. As the last surviving disciple, John's writings complete the corpus of the New Testament.

In terms of Greek text base, the modern critical texts of the Greek New Testament are based on a relatively few Egyptian Codices (Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus) along with many Egyptian papyri -- preserved because of the dryness of the climate of Egypt. This is the text base that most of our modern English Bible translations are based upon. Unfortunately, these codices show significant deviations from the Byzantine Imperial Text -- deviations which are not theologically neutral.⁹⁵ In contrast, the Byzantine Imperial Text, also known as the Majority Text or Koine Text,⁹⁶ comprises 90% of the >5000 extant ancient manuscripts).⁹⁷ The latter has a fuller text and preserves several ancient renderings confirmed by early papyri (including the Chester Beatty Papyri p45 and p46 and the Bodmer Papyrus II p66) which are missing in the Alexandrian critical texts. These renderings date from at least the third century.⁹⁸

GOSPEL PASSAGES PERTINENT TO PASSOVER CHRONOLOGY

Let us now consider the pertinent Gospel passages, especially in light of the previous Patristic and Rabbinic Testimony regarding the date of Jesus' crucifixion. The following passages have been selected because of the chronologic clues they contain. Unless otherwise stated, the English translation is that of the New Revised Standard

was in Asia, at the time when the seeds of heresy were springing up (I refer to Cerinthus, Ebion, and the rest who say that Christ has not come in the flesh, whom he in his own epistle calls Antichrists, and whom the Apostle Paul frequently assails), he was urged by almost all the bishops of Asia then living, and by deputations from many Churches, to write more profoundly concerning the divinity of the Saviour, and to break through all obstacles so as to attain to the very Word of God (if I may so speak) with a boldness as successful as it appears audacious...

⁹⁵ Green JP, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Vol. IV, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1985, p. v-x.

⁹⁶ Aland K, Aland B, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989, p. 4

⁹⁷ Hodges ZC, Farstad AL, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, 2nd Edition, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN, 1985, p. vi.

⁹⁸ Father Justin, "The Jesus Seminar: A Rejoinder for Orthodox Pastors: An address prepared by for the Clergy Conference of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America," held in Boston in October, 1995, downloaded from Holy Transfiguration Monastery, (Homepage = <http://www.cybercom.net/~htm/>).

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Version (a translation which corresponds to a critical Greek text base, not to the traditional Byzantine Imperial Text, i.e., the Majority Text!).

Gospel of Matthew

*Matt 26: 2 “You know that **after two days the Passover is coming**, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.” 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5 But they said, “**Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.**”*

{Comment: The intent of the chief priests and elders was to do away with Jesus before the Passover, or at least not during it.}

*Matt 26:17 **On the first day of Unleavened Bread** {Τῇ δὲ πρώτῃ τῶν ἀζύμων} **the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover** {Lit. “Pascha” = τὸ πάσχα}?” 18 He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; **I will keep** {Lit. “make the Pasch” = ποιῶ τὸ πάσχα} **the Passover at your house with my disciples.**’” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and **they prepared the Passover meal** {Lit. “Pascha” = ἠτοίμασαν τὸ πάσχα}.*

{Comment: According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, the first day of Unleavened Bread was celebrated the day before the passover lambs were sacrificed,⁹⁹ i.e., the 14th of Nisan which began 24 hours before the Passover Seder, at twilight on the 13th.}

*Matt 26:20 **When it was evening**, he took his place with the twelve; {Lit. “And evening coming he reclined” = Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης ἀνέκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα.}*

*21 and **while they were eating**, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” 23 He answered, “**The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.**”*

*Matt 26:26 **While they were eating**, Jesus took a loaf of bread {Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν ἄρτον}, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”*

⁹⁹ “Whence it is that, in memory of the want we were then in, we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread.” Josephus F, Antiquities of the Jews, , in Whiston W (translator), The Works of Flavius Josephus, Vol II, , ii, 15, 1, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, p. 171.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

{Comment: The Greek word for bread here is ἄρτος, ἄρτον which is used in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament as follows: bread as food, for a loaf of bread, as bread offerings, and as loaves of presentation, but not for the unleavened bread of Passover in the Septuagint. Moreover, in contrast to the critical Greek texts, the Greek majority text uses the definite article so that it should read “the loaf of bread.” Were Matthew truly trying to impress upon the reader that this was the Passover Seder, one would have expected him to use the expression “the matzah” τὸν ἄζυμον instead since this is the traditional designation in the Septuagint for the matzah of the Passover meal! There are no textual variants known which have ἄζυμον in place of ἄρτον in this verse.¹⁰⁰ Mark’s and Luke’s Gospels similarly use only the word ἄρτον for the breaking of the bread. -- The best counter-argument, i.e., that the Greek word ἄρτον could also include “unleavened bread” arises from Jesus’ meeting with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection. There the two disciples recognized Him in the breaking of bread. This was on the 16th of Nisan, obviously during the feast of unleavened bread. The only bread that would have been “authorized” would have been unleavened bread, i.e., matzah. Yet, Luke also uses the word ἄρτον not ἄζυμον: Luke 24:30 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ’ αὐτῶν λαβῶν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς· When he was at the table with them, he took [the] bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.}

Matt 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” [λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπ’ ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ’ ὑμῶν καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρός μου. Lit. “And I say to you that **from now I will never drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of My Father.**”]

{Comment: Not in Matthew nor in the other Gospels does Jesus drink this “cup of Blessing” as Edersheim and Lightfoot call it. Secondly, there is no word meaning *again* in the Greek text to suggest that He drank from it before passing the cup to the disciples. Were this a Passover Seder, to fulfill the oral law, Jesus would have to drink from this cup.}

Matt 26:30 When they had sung the hymn {Lit. “a hymn”}, *they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

¹⁰⁰ No textual variants are noted in the UBS 4th edition of the Greek New Testament, corresponding to Nestle-Aland 26th edition. Aland B, Aland K, Karavidopoulos J, Martini CM, Metzger BM, , The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft, Giglia-Druck (Printers), Stuttgart, Germany, 1993, p. 102.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

{Comment: These past several verses show important details of the events of the Last Supper: reclining, eating, dipping, blessing the food, the institution of the Eucharist, and the singing of a hymn. These will be discussed at length in a later chapter.}

*Matt 27:1 **When morning came**, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. 2 They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.*

*Matt 27:45 **From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon***

{Comment: Jesus was on the cross from the at least the 6th through the 9th hour.}

*Matt 27:57 **When it was evening**, {Lit. “And evening having come”} there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

*Matt 27:62 **The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation**, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’*

{Comment: If the next day was after the day of Preparation, then the day of the crucifixion was the day of Preparation, then came the sabbath, then the first day of the week.}

*Matt 28:1 **After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.*

Gospel of Mark

*Mark 14:1 **It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread**. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; 2 for they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”*

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 14:12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, {Lit. “the Unleavened”} when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” 13 So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” 16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. {Lit. “the Pasch” as in Matthew}

{Comment: Here Mark states that the Passover lamb was sacrificed on the first day of unleavened bread. We know that the Passover lamb was sacrificed on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan from historical and rabbinic sources. That day began on the previous day at twilight, Jewish days being reckoned from sunset to sunset, or in some cases, such as for the eve of Passover, from the waning of the sun, i.e., beginning after the midday sun of the 13th of Nisan began to fall from its zenith.}

Mark 14:17 When it was evening, he came with the twelve. 18 And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.”

{Comment: This evening is still the one preceding the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.}

*Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never **again** drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” [ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πίω ἐκ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. Lit. “Truly I say to you, no more, not at all, I may drink of the offspring of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”]*

{Comment: Again, there is no word for *again* in the Greek text.}

Mark 14:26 When they had sung the hymn, {Lit. “a hymn” as in Matthew} they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:53 They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 15:1 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

{This is now the morning of the 14th of Nisan, the Passover lambs still awaiting their slaying in the coming afternoon.}

Mark 15:25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. {Lit. "And it was the third hour (9 o'clock) and they crucified Him."} 26 *The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."*

{Comment: Compare Bishop Peter of Alexandria's testimony of the original manuscript of the Gospel of John: "*And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the third hour,*" as the correct books render it, and the copy itself that was written by the hand of the evangelist, which by the divine grace, has been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus, and is there adored by the faithful."¹⁰¹ Our current Gospel of St. John texts state the 6th hour. Either our current texts are wrong, or Bishop Peter was mistaken. However, he is adamant that the original manuscript written out by St. John was in the Church at Ephesus for all to see and confirm. Interestingly, the latest critical edition of the Greek New Testament fails to acknowledge this as a patristic textual variant.¹⁰²}

Mark 15:33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 *At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

37 *Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.*

Mark 15:42 When evening had come, {Lit. "And now evening occurring"} *and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,* 43 *Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.*

¹⁰¹ Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in Apud Galland, Ex Chronico Paschal, (fragments), as quoted in Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 282.

¹⁰² Current texts of St. John's Gospel read "about the sixth hour." No textual variants are noted in the UBS 4th edition of the Greek New Testament, corresponding to Nestle-Aland 26th edition. Aland B, Aland K, Karavidopoulos J, Martini CM, Metzger BM, , The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft, Giglia-Druck (Printers), Stuttgart, Germany, 1993.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

{Comment: Again, the day of the crucifixion is the day of Preparation, the day before the sabbath.}

Mark 16:1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.

The Gospel of Luke

A closer look at several passages in the Gospel of Luke is warranted since both Lightfoot and Edersheim tend to use Luke more than Matthew or Mark to substantiate their chronologic claims.

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it" 11 and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" ' 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there." 13 So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

Luke 22:14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." {critical Greek Text: 16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἔν τῃ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.¹⁰³ } 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another, which one of them it could be who would do this.

{Comment: Even using an Alexandrian based critical Greek New Testament text such as that used in the United Bible Society's 4th edition, one can see that Jesus eagerly desired

¹⁰³ Aland B, Aland K, Karavidopoulos J, Martini CM, Metzger BM, , The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft, Giglia-Druck (Printers), Stuttgart, Germany, 1993.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

to eat this Passover with the disciples. However, He then clearly states that He will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. When will it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God? When He becomes the Passover Lamb slain for the sins of the world. In other words, Jesus is telling us directly that this is not the Passover Seder, He did not eat the lamb, He is the Lamb. This is not the evening of Passover as Lightfoot and Edersheim profess it to be, but the previous evening. Yes, Jesus desired and would have liked to eat the unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and Passover lamb of the Seder with the disciples, and celebrate that most traditional and memorable holiday of Israel, but instead He sanctifies the dinner of this, the previous evening.

In the Majority Text, the original Greek is even more emphatic: Luke 22:16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ φάγω ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.^{104 105} Similarly, the 11th century Greek text used by the Blessed Theophylact for his Explanation of the Gospel of Luke corresponds essentially to the Majority Text--only a minor spelling variation separating the two: λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐχ ἔτι οὐ μὴ φάγω ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.¹⁰⁶ Literally, **“For I say to you that never in any way I eat of it, until when it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”** In other words, “No, I won’t eat it, I won’t even take a morsel from it!” How much stronger is Jesus’ reply in this text base. One has to remember that the Textus Receptus (a derivative of the Majority Text family of manuscripts) was the official Greek text base of the English translations available to Lightfoot and Edersheim. Admittedly, Edersheim lived in the era of papyrus and manuscript discovery and textual criticism of the latter half of the 19th century, so several editions of critical texts were available to him, unlike Lightfoot. No doubt both were familiar with the readings of the Gospels in the Textus Receptus in Greek. Nonetheless, this Majority Text reading is the most explicit witness to the Patristic chronology among the synoptic gospels. Nor is it contradicted by its weaker critical Text counterpart!!}

Luke 22:66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council.

¹⁰⁴ Green JP, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Vol. IV, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1985, p. 235. Green uses the Textus Receptus, not an Alexandrian text, based on that reconstructed by Scrivener FHA, the New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorized Version, Cambridge University Press, 1894.

¹⁰⁵ Hodges ZC, Farstad AL, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, 2nd Edition, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN, 1985, p. 274.

¹⁰⁶ Theophylactus Bulgariae Archiepiscopus, “Ennarratio in Evangelium Lucae,” Cap. XXII, Ver.16, in Commentarius in Lucae Evangelium, in Migne JP (editor), Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus 123, Turnholti Belgium, typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, Tradition Catholica Saeculum XI, annus 1070, pp. 1068, (Greek and Latin).

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 23:44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

*Luke 23:50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, 51 had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. 54 **It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.** {Lit. and a sabbath was coming on} 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. **On the sabbath** they rested according to the commandment.*

{Comment: Luke is even more precise than Matthew and Mark in that he states that Jesus was laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea on the day of Preparation, and that the sabbath was coming on, so that Joseph did not break the sabbath law. The myrrh-bearing women were also able to prepare spices and ointments to some degree before the sabbath began.}

The Gospel of John

*St. John 13:1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 **The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him.** And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ... And you are clean, though not all of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

{Comment: St. John definitely states that it was before the festival of the Passover, i.e., before the Passover Seder, that a supper occurred in which Jesus unmasked Judas' uncleanness, giving him opportunity to 'come clean' so to speak with the washing of the feet. Judas of course fails to repent.}

St. John 13:21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another,

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

uncertain of whom he was speaking. 23 One of his disciples —the one whom Jesus loved —was reclining next to him; 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” 26 Jesus answered, “**It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread** {Lit. “small piece of bread” = τὸ ψωμίον} **when I have dipped it in the dish.**” **So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.** 27 **After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.** Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 **So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.**

{Comment: The betrayer was given a small piece of bread which was dipped in the dish. This is an extremely important detail which will be amplified in later chapters (see pages 132 and 187). Also, noteworthy is the Greek word for the morsel of bread, ψωμίον. ψωμίον is a diminutive of the word for bread ψωμῶς, and thus designates a small piece or morsel of bread. Again, this is not the word the Septuagint uses for the unleavened bread of Passover.}

St. John 18:28 “Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was **early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.**”

Ἄγουσιν οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καϊάφα εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον· ἦν δὲ πρῶτῃ· καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα.

{Comment: Here is the critical 28th verse of John 18, whose meaning has been discussed and debated for 19 centuries and which is such a focal point for Lightfoot and Edersheim. What did John mean by “the Passover?” Much of the next few chapters will be laying the background for and then revealing the answer in its Biblical and rabbinic context!}

St. John 19:13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the **day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon.** He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” 15 They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.” 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

{Comment: Note! It was the day of Preparation for the Passover, not for the Sabbath. The Passover lambs had yet to be sacrificed. St. John is leaving nothing to chance here.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As to the time, as previously mentioned, compare Bishop Peter of Alexandria's testimony of the original manuscript of the Gospel of John: *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the third hour ¹⁰⁷,* " *as the correct books render it, and the copy itself that was written by the hand of the evangelist, which by the divine grace, has been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus, and is there adored by the faithful.* Bishop Peter's copy and the Majority Text appear divergent on the hour, but both are emphatic on the day. Perhaps it is only the day, not the hour, that Bishop Peter is testifying to when he states *as the correct books render it.* But for sure, it is the day at a minimum!}

St. John 19:31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity.

Οἱ οὖν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἐπεὶ παρασκευὴ ἦν, ἵνα μὴ μείνη ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τὰ σώματα ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ, ἦν γὰρ μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου,
Lit: "Therefore the Jews, since it was preparation, that the bodies may not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for great was the day of that sabbath."

{Comment: Why is this sabbath, the sabbath following the day of Preparation of the Passover, a great sabbath? On computerized boolean searching, no other sabbath day in scripture or in the Mishnah or Babylonian Talmud is called great. Could it be because it was both the festival sabbath and the weekly Sabbath -- i.e., when the Yom Tov of the festival fell on a weekly Sabbath?¹⁰⁸ There would appear to be no other viable reason.}

So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

St. John 19:38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. 39 Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. 40 They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was

¹⁰⁷ Current texts of St. John's Gospel read "about the sixth hour." No textual variants are noted in the UBS 4th edition of the Greek New Testament, corresponding to Nestle-Aland 26th edition.

¹⁰⁸ This is the conclusion of Dr. Farrar, author of a famous life of Christ quoted by Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As they Were At the Time of Christ, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p.396.

CHAPTER V: THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. 42 And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

{Comment: St. John agrees with St. Luke. Joseph of Arimathea laid Jesus in the tomb before sunset. Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes to anoint the body of Jesus before sunset, both thus avoiding breaking of the Sabbath laws.}

Summary:

In summary, using the Majority Text as the basis for the Greek New Testament, one finds a stronger Biblical argument for supporting the Patristic view that the Last Supper was not celebrated on the day of the Passover Seder, but on the previous evening. The lack of a Greek word in the critical or Majority Greek text of the Synoptic Gospels corresponding to the erroneous English insertion of *again*, plus the additional emphasis of the Majority Text when Jesus' says, "...never in any way I eat of it, until when it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" further underwrites the idea that Jesus did not eat the Passover but would have liked to have celebrated the Passover Seder on the following evening with his disciples were that to have been possible. However, the course of events and the will of His Father preempted those human desires and replaced them with divine obedience to the will of God, even to death on a cross. Consequently, in lieu of the true Jewish Passover Seder, He celebrated a special dinner with His disciples one day earlier, one that included reclining, blessing of the food, breaking of bread, dipping of bread (not bitter herbs), the drinking of wine, and most importantly, the institution of the New Covenant. After dinner, He and His disciples went to Gethsemane to pray. He was subsequently betrayed, arrested, tortured, judged, condemned, and crucified -- all on the day of preparation, the eve of the Sabbath, and, finally, was placed in the tomb before sunset just as the rest of Israel was roasting their passover lambs and were reclining in family gatherings to relive their exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land.

Chapter VI: Summary of the Passover Laws of Korbanot

Having reviewed the major Biblical passages related to the celebration of the Passover by the 12 tribes of Israel under the old testament economy and having reviewed the Testimony of the Church Fathers, the Rabbis, and the Gospels, we are still confronted by the question of what the Apostle John meant by the term “the Passover” (τὸ πάσχα?) in St. John 18:28 which Chrysostom failed to answer satisfactorily as well. Lightfoot and Edersheim presumed it to be the festal chagigah of the 15th of Nisan. Unfortunately for them, the Holy Tradition of the Church and the records of the Sanhedrin both show their chronology and theory to be completely in error. Furthermore, as will be shown from the Rabbinic writings alone, Lightfoot and Edersheim’s arguments about the chagigah of the 15th of Nisan being “the Passover” can be totally refuted, even if one assumes their chronology were correct. In other words, either they did not uncover all the facts concerning the chagigah, or chose to suppress them for their own ends. Alternatively, having accepted the unalterable premise that the Last Supper was the Passover Seder, they set about to best explain the meaning of τὸ πάσχα to preserve their theory. Given the snarl of the rabbinic laws and their dispersion over thousands of pages of text in Hebrew and Aramaic, one could conceive that they just missed the critical points (although the principle rabbinic discourses that contradict them are in the same sections that they quote from). Yet, their genius is not to be denied on so many other issues of Jewish tradition and history. Perhaps they thought no one else could untangle or would be interested in untangling that Gordian knot of halachah (oral law) in the original languages. Or they saw so many conflicting and confusing laws that it was beyond them. Consequently, one must presume that they saw what they wanted to see, and wrote about it with fervor. Yet, the real answer to St. John’s enigmatic statement in chapter 18 verse 28 eluded them.

To lay the necessary groundwork for correctly interpreting John 18:28 we turn now to the Biblical and rabbinic understanding of how the priests and the people of the Land of Israel understood and implemented the various requirements of the Torah for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Much of this revolves around the laws of korbanot (קִרְבָּנוֹת = offerings), i.e., the various animal, bird, flour, and drink offerings to be offered by the Jews first in the Tabernacle in Shiloh and from the days of King Solomon onward down to the Second Temple days in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

These laws of korbanot are unfamiliar to most Bible students for several reasons: 1). due to their very dryness, obscurity, and complexity (although they are of active interest to Levites and Kohens in Israel who are anticipating the building of a Third Temple in the relatively near future in Jerusalem); 2). because they have not been actually

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

practiced since the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in A.D. 70 so there is no living legacy concerning them; and 3)., especially for the Church, because the sacrificial offerings (being the shadow) have been replaced in the New Testament Church by Christ's offering of Himself both on the cross and in the Eucharist. For all these reasons the priestly ritual surrounding the Temple Cult tends to be ignored in the Church in favor of the typology.

The Biblical basis of these Laws is found primarily in the 3rd Book of Moses in the Torah, Leviticus.¹⁰⁹ Most of the book is devoted to the sacrifices and rites of the Temple cult, including the procedures for the numerous Passover offerings. The Rabbinic compilation of the practices in vogue during the Second Temple period is found in the Mishnah, the Oral Law, i.e., the Tradition of the Elders.¹¹⁰ The clarification of the finer points of the practices is found in the further explanations of the rabbis in the Gemara¹¹¹ of the Babylonian (תלמוד בבלי) and Jerusalem Talmuds (תלמוד ירושלמי). One needs at least a cursory knowledge of these works to understand the Passover practices in use at the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

Beyond the physical rites themselves, there is the whole concept of "korban" (קָרְבָּן = kar-ban), a term which implies that the offerer must deprive himself of something to appease the recipient, i.e., God, to make Him receptive to the entreaties of the supplicant. "Korban" is derived from the verb קָרַב (kah-rav) which means to "come near." Consequently, the individual (or community) who brought an offering to the Lord in the Temple did so in the expectation that his relationship with God would be reestablished or improved. He could then draw near to God in greater confidence and in expectation of greater spiritual growth and personal benefit -- similarly for the whole community of Israel during the three great Jewish pilgrim festivals of Pesach, Weeks, and Tabernacles (Booths) as well as on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

The sacrificial procedure עֲבוֹדָה (a-vo-dah) differs for each type of animal, bird or flour offering. Before any offering could be brought, it had to be properly identified as an offering. This could take the form of a verbal declaration -- as was necessary to distinguish the pesach lamb from the chagigah lamb of the 14th of Nisan. In the case of most pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem for a feast, a predesignated offering would be bought with money previously designated for purchasing that specific offering. Certain offerings had to be purchased with consecrated money, others did not. For example, the shalmei chagigah, the required feast peace offering on the 15th of Nisan was required to be purchased with first tithe money, whereas the chagigah of the 14th of Nisan could be

¹⁰⁹ וַיִּקְרָא Va-yik-ra Lit. = "and He called" also known as Leviticus = ΛΕΥΙΤΙΚΟΝ in the LXX

¹¹⁰ Mishnah מִשְׁנָה = teaching or instruction

¹¹¹ from the Aramaic "gemar" = "that which is learned from tradition"

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

purchased with maaser sheni (second tithe) funds.

In the case of an individual offering such as a sin or a peace offering, the individual brought the animal into the Courtyard of the Priests [the area immediately surrounding the Holy Place and Holy of Holies]. This was a Holy area, whose access was permitted to the ordinary people of the land only for the expressed purpose of sacrificing their offerings.

But before the Kohen כֹּהֵן (priest) actually slew the animal in the kosher manner known as sh'-chi-tah שְׁחִיטָה (slaughter), he had to be ritually clean טָהוֹר (ta-hor). Before performing the the sacrificial procedure, the avodah, he had to wash his hands and feet with sanctified water from the laver and garb himself in the priestly vestments. The owner then brought his animal before the cleansed priest, placed his own hands on the animal's head, and leaned down with all his strength while he either praised his God (e.g. for peace offerings) or confessed his sins before the priest (for sin offerings). This process of "leaning" was called s'-mi-chah סְמִיכָה. Thus, there was personal effort expended as well as personal financial sacrifice involved in both the praise and confession before a priest.

The animal was then slain, its blood caught in a sacred vessel as it spurted from the animal's neck. The vessel was then carried to the appropriate part of the Altar by a priest who stirred it to keep it from congealing, and either applied it to the horns of the altar, splashed it against the walls of the altar, or poured it out at the base of the altar depending on the type of offering. After the blood had been applied, the sacrificial internal organs/fat, the e-mu-rin אֲמוֹרֵי ^, were removed and burned on the altar. In the case of a whole burnt offering, the whole animal was dismembered and burned on the altar. In essence, the animals underwent a vicarious death for the offerer(s) so that the latter could come near to God and enjoy His personal favor.

The meat of sin offerings and guilt offerings were eaten by the priests. The meat of communal peace-offerings and firstborn offerings were eaten by the priests and their families. The meat of personal peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings were eaten by the offerer with the exception of the breasts and right hind thigh which were eaten by the priests and their households. Lastly, the meat of the Pesach lamb was eaten by those registered for it.

Meal Offerings מִנְחָה (min-chat, plural of מִנְחָה min-chah) usually consisted of finely sifted flour and olive oil, requiring additional hours of preparation. The grain had to be ground to flour (as in the case of the first-fruits offering of barley), the ingredients

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

had to be consecrated, the oil and flour mixed, the cakes or loaves prepared (Note: the minchah offering could consist of raw flour, fried cakes, or baked loaves), in some cases it was sprinkled with frankincense (לְבוֹנָה l'-vo-nah), in two cases “waving” was performed, it was brought near the altar, and then they were either burned completely, or had only a token portion, the ko-metz קֶמֶץ, burned on the altar. The rest was eaten by the officiating priest. The procedure for removal of the kometz by the priest was called the k'mi-tzah קְמִי־צָה. Essentially, the priest separated a small piece of the minchah by filling the space between his right palm and the middle three fingers with the mixture.

The following offerings were regularly celebrated in Pesach: ¹¹²

A. Celebrated by the Priests for the Whole Congregation of Israel:

1. **Olah עֹלָה = Whole Burnt Offering/Elevation-Offering.** An olah must be a male animal, either cattle, sheep, or goat, and either young or mature. It is totally burned except for its hide (kept by the priests). Its blood is thrown at the base of the Outer Alter so as to splash on all 4 sides. The hide is removed and given to the priests. The carcass is then dismembered and the pieces placed on top of the altar, salted, and then burned in the fire.
 - a. **Tamid תָּמִיד = Continual (Daily) Offering of Lambs**
 - 1). Morning, 1 lamb
 - 2). Afternoon, 1 lamb
2. **Minchah מִנְחָה = Meal Offering** is made with flour, oil, and frankincense and is offered with the Tamid
 - a). Morning
 - b). Afternoon
3. **Nesachim נְסֻכִּים = Libation Offerings of wine** offered with Tamid
 - a). Morning
 - b). Afternoon
4. **Ketoret קְטוֹרֶת = Daily Incense Offering** Following the Tamid
 - a. Morning
 - b. Afternoon
5. **Mussaf מוֹסֵף = Additional Offerings** for Pesach (Daily during Feast)
 - a). **Chatat חַטָּאת = Sin Offerings** are performed with semichah

¹¹² Danziger Y & Goldwurm H, “Summary of the Laws of Korbanos,” in Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 21, 257-358.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

(leaning) and confession. It is slaughtered in the Temple Courtyard; its blood is applied to 4 horns of the Outer Altar. Its emurin אֲמִירִי (sacred fat and internal organs) are salted and burned upon the Altar. Its sacred meat, kad'shey kodashim קִדְּשֵׁי קִדְּשִׁים (most-holy offerings), is eaten by the priests within the Temple Courtyard. The priests had to maintain a sanctity of level “kodesh” קֹדֶשׁ (holy) to eat this sacred meat.

1). 1 goat

b). **Olat** עֹלָה = pleural of Olah

1). 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs

c). **Minchah** מִנְחָה with Olat

d). **Nesachim** נִסְכִּים with Olat

6. **Omer** עֹמֶר (Lit. sheaf) = **First-Fruits**

a). This is a special communal **minchah** offering which is made on the 16th of Nisan. It is made of barley flour, contains oil and levonah, undergoes kemitzah, and the kometz is burned on the Altar. The rest is eaten by the priests. After it is offered, the new grain can be harvested and eaten by all Israel.

b). The Omer is accompanied by an Olah (a 1-year old lamb without blemish) a Minchah, and a Nesachim.

B. Individual or small group offerings (obligatory unless otherwise marked)

1. The **Pesach-Offering** פֶּסַח = The **Passover Lamb**. A group of at least 10 people may join together to offer 1 lamb or kid, but they had to register in advance. They were known as me'nuyim מְנוּיִים (registered eaters). One could offer for all. Semichah was not performed. After being declared to be the Passover lamb (and not the chagigah), it was slaughtered in the Courtyard of the Priests. The blood was poured out above the base of the Outer Altar, the emurin removed salted, and burned. The group then took it home and roasted it, eating it with matzah מַצָּה (unleavened bread) and maror מָרוֹר (bitter herbs) by midnight.

2. The **Shalmei Chagigah** שְׁלָמֵי חַגִּיגָה (= **Peace Offerings** שְׁלָמִים) of the 14th of Nisan. The owner performs semichah (leaning) praising the Lord. Slaughtered it in the Courtyard of the Priests, the priests splashed the blood against the lower part of the Outer Altar. Its emurin (sacrificial fats and organs) were removed with the breast and right hind thigh. They were held by the owner and the priest together and waved in all 4 directions then up and down; the emurin

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

were salted and burned on the Altar. The terumah¹¹³ תְּרוּמָה, the breast and right hind thigh, were then given to priest to eat. Only the priest who offered the chagigah could partake of it. He had to be in the sanctified status of “terumah” תְּרוּמָה to eat this offering. As an offering of lesser holiness, kadashim kalim קְדָשִׁים קְלִיִּם, all peace offerings are accompanied by meal and libation offerings and may be eaten by ordinary people, except for the terumah. They could be eaten anywhere in Jerusalem.

- a. Optional, i.e., may be required for large family or group for Seder. It was authorized when the community was clean, when it was a weekday, and when the group was large, so that a pesach lamb would afford each member a minimal amount of meat.
- b. The chagigah of the 14th Nisan was from the flocks, a lamb or goat, of males only, year old only, was subject to the prohibition of breaking of bones since it was like the Pesach, and was eaten only by those who registered for it and had to be eaten before midnight. It was “as the Passover lamb, except it had to be declared by the offer to be the “chagigah.”¹¹⁴

3. Olah Re'eyah עֹלָה רֵאִיָּה = **Burnt Offering of Appearance**

- a. Required, on Yom Tov, 15th of Nisan, the first day of the festival. It is bought with unconsecrated funds (not tithes). The owner performs semichah (leaning). (See Olah above)
- b. The **Minchah** מִנְחָה = Meal-Offerings
 - 1). Required with Olah Re'eyah
- c. The **Nesachim** נִסְכִּים = Libations
 - 1). Required with Minchah for Olah Re'eyah

4. Shalmei Chagigah שְׁלָמֵי שְׁחֵטָה = **Peace Offerings of Celebration of the Festival**. The owner performs semichah (leaning) praising the Lord. Slaughtered it in the Courtyard of the Priests, the priests splashed the blood against the lower part of the Outer Altar. Its emurin (sacrificial fats and organs) were removed with

¹¹³ The terumah is ‘that which is lifted or separated’; the heave-offering given from the yields of the yearly harvests, from certain sacrifices, and from the shekels collected in a special chamber in the Temple (terumath ha-lishkah). Terumah gedolah (great offering: the first levy on the produce of the year given to the priest (v. Num XVIII. 8ff). Its quantity varied according to the generosity of the owner, who could give one-fortieth, one-fiftieth, or one-sixtieth of his harvest. Terumah ma’aser (heave-offering of the tithe); the heave-offering given to the priest by the Levite from the tithes he receives (v. Num . XVIII. 25f.).}

¹¹⁴ Schachter J, Freedman H, (translators) , Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Epstein I, (editor), Socino Press, London, 1983, pp. 69b, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993, p.69b

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY OF THE PASSOVER LAWS OF KORBANOT

the breast and right hind thigh. They were held by the owner and the priest together and waved in all 4 directions then up and down; the emurin were salted and burned on the Altar. The terumah תְּרוּמָה, the breast and right hind thigh, were then given to the priest to eat. Only the priest who offered the chagigah could partake of it. He had to be in the sanctified status of terumah תְּרוּמָה to eat this offering. All such peace offerings are accompanied by meal and libation offerings.

- a. Required, generally on Yom Tov, 15th of Nisan, the first day of the festival. But it could also be brought on any of the 7 days of the feast.¹¹⁵ This is “**the chagigah**” that Edersheim and Lightfoot consider to be pivotal in their arguments about the Last Supper being a true Passover Seder. The fact that it could be brought on any day of the feast disavows their argument regarding it being “**the Passover**” in John 18:28! (See page 138.)
- b. It could be from the flocks or herds, lambs or goats, male or female, 1 or 2 year olds.

5. The **Shalmei Simchah** שְׁלָמֵי שִׂמְחָה = **Peace Offerings of Joy, or Rejoicing**
The owner performs semichah (leaning) praising the Lord. Slaughtered it in the Courtyard, the priests splashed the blood against the lower part of the Outer Altar. Its emurin (sacrificial fats and organs) were removed with the breast and right hind thigh. They were held by the owner and the priest together and waved in all 4 directions then up and down; the emurin were salted and burned on the Altar. The breast and right hind thigh were then given to priest to eat. It was accompanied by meal and libation offerings.

- a. Optional, if supply of meat during festival requires supplementation for one to rejoice.
- b. It could be from the flocks or herds, lambs or goats, male or female, 1 or 2 year olds.

¹¹⁵ *Mishnah 1:6 One who did not offer the chagigah on the first Yom Tov of the festival, may offer the chagigah throughout the festival or on the last Yom Tov of the festival*, Rosenberg AY, “Tractate ‘Chagigah,’” in Scherman N & Zlotowitz (editors), The Mishnah: Moed Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, NY, 1989, p. 15.

**CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY OF THE CHRONOLOGY OF
PESACH OFFERINGS
IN THE RABBINIC CALENDAR**

Chapter VII: Chronology of Pesach (Rabbinic)

Date	Part of Day	Events and Selected Offerings
14 Nisan	Evening = Eve of Passover	Sanhedrin selects Omer (sheaves) for First-Fruits . Begin search for leaven with a lamp.
	Morning	Finish work (permitted till 6th hour in Judah, but Beth Hillel permitted work only till daybreak), remove leaven, last meal with leaven at 5th hour, burn remaining leaven at 6th hour = 1200 noon
	Afternoon	The afternoon tamid (obligatory perpetual sacrifice) is slaughtered in early afternoon and offered 1 hour later, then Pesach Lamb . Also, optional chagigah for the 14th of Nisan.
15 Nisan	Evening = 1st day of Festival of Unleavened Bread = Yom Tov = Good Day or Holiday = “Sabbath”	Beginning of Pesach proper, roast lamb whole as a group, then celebrate the Pesach Seder with family or group. This day is considered a solemn assembly in which no occupational work is done, i.e., a special “Sabbath.”
	Morning & Afternoon	Late Pesach lamb. Obligatory burnt offering of appearance (Olah re’eyah), and obligatory peace offering of the festival (shalmei chagigah) , and optional peace offering of joy (shalmei simchah) all to be accompanied by meal and libation of wine offerings (minchat nesachim).
16 Nisan	2nd day of festival = Chol HaMoed (Literally the ordinary part of the festival) Festival of First-fruits	Late olah re’eyah, shalmei chagigah, (shalmei simchah). Omer harvested at night then FIRST-FRUITS offered by priest in the morning (waving the meal offering).
17 Nisan	3rd day of festival = Chol HaMoed (Literally the ordinary part of the festival)	Late olah re’eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah if necessary.
18 Nisan	4th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olah re’eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah if necessary
19 Nisan	5th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olah re’eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah if necessary

**CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY OF THE CHRONOLOGY OF
PESACH OFFERINGS
IN THE RABBINIC CALENDAR**

20 Nisan	6th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olah re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah if necessary
21 Nisan	7th day of festival = Yom Tov , a strict Sabbath	Late olah re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah if necessary

116117118

¹¹⁶ Danziger Y & Goldwurm H, "Summary of the Laws of Korbanos," in Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 257-358.

¹¹⁷ Rosenberg AY, "Chagigah," in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Seder Moed, Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp.1-65.

¹¹⁸ Epstein I, editor, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Socino Press, London, 1983, pp. 1-122, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Chapter VIII: Passover According to the Babylonian Talmud

The Jewish Practice Of Celebrating The Passover:

The Jewish practices of celebrating the Passover in the time of Jesus are essentially described in the Rabbinic book of oral tradition known as the Mishnah **משניות** (in Hebrew = Mishnot, a plural, literally “teachings” or “instructions”) a terse summary of Jewish Law and practices compiled in Israel after the crushing defeat of Judea in A.D. 70 by the Roman Armies of Vespasian. The final form of the book emerged about A.D. 200. Additional rabbinic commentary related to the Mishnah is found in the collected writings of the two rabbinic schools: the Gemara (“that which is learned from the tradition”) of the Babylonian Talmud and Jerusalem Talmud. Several hundred years were required to edit these latter texts to their present form. The term mishnah also refers to each individual instruction.

In this thesis the Mishnahs and Gemaras are listed by their tractate source as well as by the standardized page number of the text (in parentheses). Mishnahs in the Babylonian Talmud are also identified by their Standard Numbering from the Mishnah if different from their numbers in the Talmud. Comments added to the original text by the source editor for clarification, when supplied, are listed in square brackets []. Square brackets are also used to delimit extra words supplied by the source editor for proper and smooth translation into English. Source editor’s footnotes to the texts, when used as footnotes, begin their entry with the word “Footnotes:”. The author’s comments are placed in braces { }.

Babylonian Talmud-- Tractate PESACHIM: ¹¹⁹ (page 2a) Mishnah 1:1. ON THE EVENING [OR] OF THE FOURTEENTH [OF NISAN] A SEARCH IS MADE FOR LEAVEN BY THE LIGHT OF A LAMP..

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (page 5a) GEMARA ...It was taught likewise: ‘[Even] the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses’: [this means] on the eve of the Festival. Yet perhaps that is not so, but [rather] on the Festival itself? — Therefore it is stated, ‘thou shalt not offer the blood of thy sacrifice with leavened bread,’ [i.e.,] thou shalt not kill the Passover sacrifice while leavened bread still exists [in thy, house]: that is R. Ishmael’s view. R. Akiba said, That is unnecessary:

¹¹⁹ Pesachim = Lit: “passover sacrifices”

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

lo, it is said, 'Even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses', and it is written, no manner of work shall be done in them; while we find that kindling is a principal labour. R. Jose said, It is unnecessary: lo, it is said, 'Even [ak] on the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses': [that means,] from the eve of the Festival. Or perhaps it is not so, but rather on the Festival? Therefore is stated, 'Ak', which serves to divide; hence if [it means] on the Festival itself, can [part of it] be permitted? Surely the putting away of leaven is likened to [the prohibition of] eating leavened bread, while the prohibition of eating leavened bread is likened to [the duty of] eating unleavened bread.

{Author's Note: An important point is made here. The Torah commands that during the Feast of Unleavened Bread no leaven is to be found within their households for the entire 7 days of the feast. Yet, it also commands that on the first day you should put away the leaven from your houses. At the same time the Torah commands that no work is to be done on the first day. Obviously, the searching for and burning of the last bits of leaven had to be done on the previous day. Indeed, the interpreters of the Torah found the solution in beginning the search for leaven almost 24 hours earlier --at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan the eve day of the Pesach. Even Edersheim admits that the Jews themselves considered the 1st day of the Pesach to be the 14th of Nisan, the afternoon of which the Pesach lamb was traditionally sacrificed:

“...It began on the 14th of Nisan, that is, from the appearance of the first three stars on Wednesday evening [the evening of what had been the 13th], and ended with the first three stars on Thursday evening [the evening of what had been the 14th of Nisan]. As this is an exceedingly important point, it is well here to quote the precise language of the Jerusalem Talmud [Jer. Pes 27 d, line before last] ‘What means: On the *Pesach* ? [Footnote: The question is put in connection with Pes. I. 8.] On the 14th [Nisan].’ And so Josephus [Ant. ii, 15, 1] describes the Feast as one of eight days, {see page 89} evidently reckoning its beginning on the 14th, and its close at the end of the 21st Nisan.”¹²⁰

In describing the start of the feast of Unleavened bread at the time of the Last Supper, Edersheim's dates are correct, but days of the week are wrong. Based on the Holy Tradition of the Church and the Talmudic witness, Edersheim's chronology should be corrected to read “from the appearance of the first three stars on Thursday evening...and ended with the first three stars on Friday evening.”

¹²⁰ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, Book V, Chapter IX, p. 479.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Consider again how Josephus (page 89), Chrysostom (page 66), and the Blessed Theophylact (page 76) interpret the “*1st day of unleavened bread*” in the Gospels.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (10b) Mishnah 1:3. R. JUDAH SAID: WE SEARCH [FOR LEAVEN] ON THE EVENING OF THE FOURTEENTH, AND IN THE MORNING OF THE FOURTEENTH, AND AT THE TIME OF REMOVAL. BUT THE SAGES MAINTAIN: IF HE DID NOT SEARCH IN THE EVENING OF THE FOURTEENTH, HE MUST SEARCH ON THE FOURTEENTH; IF HE DID NOT SEARCH IN [THE MORNING OF] THE FOURTEENTH, HE MUST SEARCH AT THE APPOINTED TIME; IF HE DID NOT SEARCH AT THE APPOINTED TIME, HE MUST SEARCH AFTER THE APPOINTED TIME. AND WHAT HE LEAVES OVER HE MUST PUT AWAY IN A HIDDEN PLACE, SO THAT HE SHOULD NOT NEED SEARCHING AFTER IT.

{Comment: Here we note that Jewish days begin with the evening and are followed by the night, morning, and afternoon.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (11a/b) Mishnah 1:4. R. MEIR SAID: ONE MAY EAT [LEAVEN] THE WHOLE OF THE FIVE [HOURS] AND MUST BURN [IT] AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTH. R. JUDAH SAID: ONE MAY EAT THE WHOLE OF THE FOUR [HOURS]. KEEP IT IN SUSPENSE THE WHOLE OF THE FIFTH, AND MUST BURN IT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTH. R. JUDAH SAID FURTHER: TWO UNFIT LOAVES OF THE THANKS OFFERING USED TO LIE ON THE ROOF OF THE [TEMPLE] IZTABA: AS LONG AS THEY LAY [THERE] ALL THE PEOPLE WOULD EAT [LEAVEN]; WHEN ONE WAS REMOVED, THEY WOULD KEEP IT IN SUSPENSE, NEITHER EATING NOR BURNING [IT]; WHEN BOTH WERE REMOVED, ALL THE PEOPLE COMMENCED BURNING [THEIR LEAVEN]. R. GAMALIEL SAID: HULLIN {unconsecrated food} MAY BE EATEN THE WHOLE OF THE FOUR [HOURS] AND TERUMAH {leaven in the status of heave offering} THE WHOLE OF THE FIVE [HOURS]. AND WE BURN [THEM] AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTH [HOUR].

{Comment: This mishnah essentially means that leavened bread could be eaten as late as the 5th hour, or 11:00 A.M. on the 14th of Nisan, the morning of the sacrifice of the passover lambs. Interpreting this allegorically, we understand that leaven is often synonymous with sin in the Scriptures. (E.g., *1Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity*

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

and truth.) During the Last Supper the light of Jesus Christ unmasked the leaven of sin and Satan in Judas and had him removed from the midst of His disciples. Similarly, the Chief Priests and Elders mistakenly thought they were unmasking the “leaven” in Jesus and were in essence removing His corrupting influence on the nation of Israel (See Gemara from *Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate Sanhedrin page 81*). They had until the 5th hour that next morning to purge Israel of the leaven in their midst. They did so by turning Him over to the Romans for crucifixion that very morning. }

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (50a) Mishnah 4:1. WHERE IT IS THE CUSTOM TO DO WORK ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER UNTIL MIDDAY ONE MAY DO [WORK]; WHERE IT IS THE CUSTOM NOT TO DO [WORK], ONE MAY NOT DO [WORK]. HE WHO GOES FROM A PLACE WHERE THEY WORK TO A PLACE WHERE THEY DO NOT WORK, OR FROM A PLACE WHERE THEY DO NOT WORK TO A PLACE WHERE THEY DO WORK, WE LAY UPON HIM THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE PLACE WHENCE HE DEPARTED AND THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE PLACE WHITHER HE HAS GONE;

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (55a) Mishnah 4:5 ...BUT THE SAGES MAINTAIN, IN JUDEA THEY USED TO DO WORK ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER UNTIL MIDDAY, WHILE IN GALILEE THEY DID NOT WORK AT ALL. [AS FOR] THE NIGHT, — BETH SHAMMAI FORBID [WORK], WHILE BETH HILLEL PERMIT IT UNTIL DAYBREAK.

{Comment: This means that the Sanhedrin could potentially work till at least daybreak on the morning of the 14th of Nisan or perhaps as late as noon. (Hillel’s practices generally supplanting Shammai’s in most situations). In other words, in St. John 18:28, the chief priests and elders of the Sanhedrin needed to finish their work by daybreak (or at least by noon) or risk breaking the Oral Law for Pesach since it was early morning according to the text in St. John’s gospel.

If this day were Friday the 14th of as the Church Fathers and the Sanhedrin testify, how much more does this Mishnah apply to the following day, since the next day, Saturday the 15th of Nisan, the Chief Priests and Elders were no doubt working when they approached Pilate to ask Him to make the tomb secure. That Saturday morning was a great Sabbath day (the true weekly Sabbath and the Yom Tov Sabbath of the Festival. Thus, they should have doubly feared defilement.)

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (58a) Mishnah 5:1. THE [AFTERNOON] TAMID IS SLAUGHTERED AT EIGHT AND A HALF HOURS AND IS OFFERED AT NINE AND A HALF HOURS. ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER IT IS SLAUGHTERED AT SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS AND OFFERED AT EIGHT AND A

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

HALF HOURS, WHETHER IT IS A WEEKDAY OR THE SABBATH. IF THE EVE OF PASSOVER FELL, ON SABBATH EVE [FRIDAY], IT IS SLAUGHTERED AT SIX AND A HALF HOURS AND OFFERED AT SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS, AND THE PASSOVER OFFERING AFTER IT.

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (58a) GEMARA ...Raba objected: ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER IT IS SLAUGHTERED AT SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS AND OFFERED AT EIGHT AND A HALF HOURS, WHETHER IT IS A WEEKDAY OR THE SABBATH . Now if you think that [it must be slaughtered] at eight and a half hours according to Scriptural law, how may we perform it earlier? Rather, said Raba: **The duty of the tamid properly [begins] from when the evening shadows begin to fall.** What is the reason? Because Scripture saith, ‘**between the evenings**’, [meaning] **from the time that the sun commences to decline in the west.** Therefore on other days of the year, when there are vows and freewill-offerings, in connection with which the Divine Law states, [and he shall burn] upon it the fat of the peace-offerings [he-shelamim], and a Master said, ‘upon it’ complete [shalem] all the sacrifices, we therefore postpone it two hours and sacrifice it at eight and a half hours. **[But] on the eve of Passover, when there is the Passover offering after it, we advance it one hour and sacrifice it at seven and a half hours.** When the eve of Passover falls on the eve of the Sabbath, so that there is the roasting too [to be done], for it does not override the Sabbath, we let it stand on its own law, [viz.,] at six and a half hours...*

{Comment: This is an important gemara because it states that the Pesach lamb is actually sacrificed on the afternoon of the 14th, (as the Scriptures say, *Num. 28:16 On the fourteenth day of the first month there shall be a passover offering to the LORD. 17 And on the fifteenth day of this month is a festival;*) not at dusk at the beginning of the 15th of Nisan. Thus, it is correct to do so. Consider the practicality of trying to ritually slaughter hundred of thousands of lambs precisely at dusk. It is literally impossible. Rather, the greater part of the afternoon is dedicated to it. So in a sense, the preceding afternoon from the start of the declining of the sun, i.e., from noon forward, is considered part of the following day for convenience sake. Thus, the eve of the Passover, i.e., the 14th of Nisan can in a similar sense could be considered to begin in the afternoon of the 13th of Nisan, not precisely at dusk. This is in accordance with Chrysostom’s (page 66) and the Blessed Theophylact’s (page 73) understanding of the “first day of unleavened bread when they killed the Pascha.”}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (58a) GEMARA ...Our Rabbis taught: The [evening] tamid is [sacrificed] before the Passover offering, the Passover offering is [sacrificed] before the [burning of the evening] incense, the incense before [the kindling of] the lights...

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

{Comment: Jesus' Passion on the Cross between the 6th and 9th hour on the Eve of Passover correlates well for both the time of the sacrifice of the tamid and the passover lambs. He is the Pascal Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. But He is also the perpetual tamid (daily sin offering for the community), whose body is "broken" for us. The tamid as an olah offering, a whole burnt offering, was subject to being cut up (Lev 1:10-13), i.e., subject to the breaking of the bones unlike the Passover Lamb. Thus, the tamid is essentially a shadow of the true perpetual offering of Christ in the Eucharist. Hebr. 10:14 ...μιᾷ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκῆς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους. *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.* (The word διηνεκῆς is mistranslated by essentially all the English translations by the phrase "for all time." **In reality it means "perpetually" -- the continued repetition of an act without interruption**, i.e., "repetition without end.>"). Thus, Hebrews 10:14 should read: ***For by a single offering [of Himself] He has repeatedly without end perfected those who are sanctified.***¹²¹ This motif is readily apparent in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom of the Orthodox Church just before the faithful receive communion. At that time the priest prays, "The Lamb of God is broken and distributed; broken but not sundered, always fed upon and never consumed but sanctifying those who partake."¹²²}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (58b) GEMARA:...Our Rabbis taught: There is nothing which takes precedence over the morning tamid except [the burning of] the [morning] incense alone, in connection with which 'in the morning, in the morning' is stated; so (59a) let [the burning of the] incense, in connection with which 'in the morning, in the morning,' is stated, for it is written, And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices, in the morning, in the morning, take precedence over that in connection with which only one 'morning' is stated. And there is nothing which may be delayed until after the evening tamid save [the burning of] the incense, [the lighting of] the lamps, [the slaughtering of] the Passover sacrifice, and he who lacks atonement¹²³***on the eve of Passover, who performs ritual immersion a second time***¹²⁴***and eats his***

¹²¹ Makrakis A, An Orthodox-Protest Dialogue, Orthodox Christian Education Society, Chicago, IL, 1966, p. 43.

¹²² Cabasilas N, Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, S.P.C.K., William Clowes (Beccles) Limited, London, Great Britain, 1983, p.18.

¹²³Footnote: The technical designation, of an unclean person who may not eat holy flesh until he has brought a sacrifice after regaining his cleanliness, viz., a **zab** and a **zabab** (v. Glos. **a leper** and a **woman after childbirth**). **If one of these forgot to bring his sacrifice before the evening tamid was sacrificed on the eve of Passover, he must bring it after the tamid, since otherwise he may not partake of the Passover offering in the evening, which is obligatory.**

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Passover sacrifice in the evening. R. Ishmael the son of R. Johanan b. Beroka said: He who lacks atonement at any other time of the year too, who performs ritual immersion and eats of sacred flesh in the evening. [Footnote: ***If he brought a peace-offering that day but forgot to bring his purificatory sacrifice, he must bring it even after the afternoon tamid, so that he may eat the flesh of his peace-offering in the evening. R. Ishmael regarding this too as obligatory.***]

{Comment: This Gemara points out the offerings which are authorized on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan: the evening tamid, the incense, the Pesach lamb, and a late sacrifice for atonement. The footnote above also allows during the entire year, for a chagigah to be eaten by the zab (leper) or zabah (woman after childbirth) (see footnote above) who brought it. Although ritually bathed, the one lacking atonement was unclean until sunset. Once evening fell, if all the prerequisites had been accomplished, he/she became clean and could partake of the Pesach lamb.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (59b) Mishnah 5:2. IF A MAN SLAUGHTERED THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE,[Lit., 'not for its own name', i.e., as a different sacrifice. E.g., when he killed it he stated that it was for a peace-offering, not for a Passover sacrifice.] AND HE CAUGHT [THE BLOOD] AND WENT AND SPRINKLED IT FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE; OR FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE AND FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE; OR FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE AND FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE; IT IS DISQUALIFIED. HOW IS 'FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE AND FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE' MEANT? IN THE NAME OF THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE [FIRST] AND [THEN] IN THE NAME OF A PEACE-OFFERING. 'FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE AND FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE' [MEANS] IN THE NAME OF A PEACE-OFFERING [FIRST] AND [THEN] IN THE NAME OF THE PASSOVER-OFFERING.

{Comment: If the lamb was used for a purpose other than for what it was first declared, it was disqualified. This Mishnah also gives direct evidence that the peace offering (chagigah of the 14th of Nisan) and the pesach lamb were sacrificed at the same time, i.e., after the afternoon tamid, since the offerer had to declare whether his offering was the Pesach lamb or the peace-offering (chagigah)!}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (61a) Mishnah 5:3. IF HE KILLED IT FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT EAT IT OR FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED FOR IT, FOR UNCIRCUMCISED PERSONS OR FOR UNCLEAN

¹²⁴Footnote: Though he must perform ritual immersion the previous day, this being necessary before the purificatory sacrifice may be offered, he nevertheless repeats it before partaking of holy flesh.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

PERSONS, IT IS UNFIT. [IF HE KILLED IT] FOR THOSE WHO ARE TO EAT IT AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT TO EAT IT, FOR THOSE WHO ARE REGISTERED FOR IT AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED FOR IT, FOR CIRCUMCISED AND FOR UNCIRCUMCISED, FOR UNCLEAN AND FOR CLEAN PERSONS, IT IS FIT. IF HE KILLED IT BEFORE MIDDAY, IT IS DISQUALIFIED, BECAUSE IT IS SAID, [AND THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY . . . SHALL KILL IT] AT DUSK. IF HE KILLED IT BEFORE THE [EVENING] TAMID, IT IS FIT, PROVIDING THAT ONE SHALL STIR ITS BLOOD UNTIL [THAT OF] THE TAMID IS SPRINKLED; YET IF IT WAS SPRINKLED, IT IS FIT.

{Comment: In summary, a pesach offering had to be declared as to its purpose, since offerings in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan after the tamid could be for a pesach offering, a chagigah of the 14th, or an atonement offering. Regarding the pesach lamb itself, as long as some of the group were authorized to eat it, some were registered for it, some were circumcised, and some clean, then it was fit, and the unclean “Tebul Yom’s” could partake of it after sunset. In the case of the “they” in St. John 18:28 (“*Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.*”), the chief priests and elders could each have eaten the pesach lamb as “Tebul Yom” after sunset if they belonged to a group of registered eaters, of which some among those registered met the above criteria.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (64a) Mishnah 5:5. THE PASSOVER OFFERING IS SLAUGHTERED IN THREE DIVISIONS, FOR IT IS SAID, AND THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY OF THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL SHALL KILL IT: [I.E.,] ‘ASSEMBLY,’ ‘CONGREGATION,’ AND ‘ISRAEL.’ THE FIRST DIVISION ENTERED, THE TEMPLE COURT WAS FILLED, THEY CLOSED THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLE COURT, THEY SOUNDED A TEKI’AH, A TERU’AH, AND A TEKI’AH.¹²⁵ THE PRIESTS STOOD IN ROWS, AND IN THEIR HANDS WERE BASINS OF SILVER AND BASINS OF GOLD; A ROW WHICH WAS ENTIRELY OF SILVER WAS OF SILVER, AND A ROW WHICH WAS ENTIRELY OF GOLD WAS OF GOLD: THEY WERE NOT MIXED; AND THE BASINS HAD NO [FLAT] BOTTOMS, LEST THEY PUT THEM DOWN AND THE BLOOD BECOME CONGEALED. Mishnah 5:6 THE ISRAELITE KILLED [THE LAMB],¹²⁶ AND THE PRIEST CAUGHT [THE BLOOD]; HE HANDED IT TO HIS COLLEAGUE AND HIS COLLEAGUE [PASSED IT ON] TO HIS COLLEAGUE; AND HE RECEIVED THE FULL [BASIN] AND GAVE BACK THE EMPTY ONE. THE PRIEST NEAREST THE ALTAR SPRINKLED IT ONCE

¹²⁵ Footnote: A teki’ah is a long, straight blast on the shofar (ram’s horn); teru’ah is a series of three short consecutive blasts

¹²⁶ Priests and individual Israelites could ritually slaughter the Pesach offering.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

*OVER AGAINST THE BASE [OR THE ALTAR]. 5:7 THE FIRST DIVISION [THEN] WENT OUT AND THE SECOND ENTERED; THE SECOND WENT OUT AND THE THIRD ENTERED. AS THE MANNER OF THE FIRST [GROUP], SO WAS THE MANNER OF THE SECOND AND THE THIRD. THEY RECITED THE HALLEL; IF THEY FINISHED IT THEY REPEATED, AND IF THEY REPEATED [AND WERE NOT FINISHED YET], THEY RECITED IT A THIRD TIME, THOUGH THEY NEVER DID RECITE IT A THIRD TIME. R. JUDAH SAID: THE THIRD DIVISION NEVER REACHED 'I LOVE THAT THE LORD SHOULD HEAR' [ETC.], BECAUSE THE PEOPLE FOR IT WERE FEW. **Mishnah 5:8** AS WAS DONE ON WEEK-DAYS SO WAS DONE ON THE SABBATH, SAVE THAT THE PRIESTS SWILLED THE TEMPLE COURT, [BUT] WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SAGES. R. JUDAH SAID: HE [A PRIEST] USED TO FILL A GOBLET WITH THE MIXED BLOOD [AND] HE SPRINKLED IT ONCE ON THE ALTAR; BUT THE SAGES DID NOT AGREE WITH HIM. **Mishnah 5:9** HOW DID THEY HANG UP [THE SACRIFICES] AND FLAY [THEM]? THERE WERE IRON HOOKS FIXED IN THE WALLS AND IN THE PILLARS, ON WHICH THEY SUSPENDED [THE SACRIFICES] AND FLAYED [THEM]. IF ANY ONE HAD NO PLACE TO SUSPEND AND FLAY, THERE WERE THERE THIN SMOOTH STAVES WHICH HE PLACED ON HIS SHOULDER AND ON HIS NEIGHBOUR'S SHOULDER, AND SO SUSPENDED [THE ANIMAL] AND FLAYED [IT]. R. ELIEZER SAID: WHEN THE FOURTEENTH (64b) FELL ON THE SABBATH, HE PLACED HIS HAND ON HIS NEIGHBOUR'S SHOULDER AND HIS NEIGHBOUR'S HAND ON HIS SHOULDER, AND HE [THUS] SUSPENDED [THE SACRIFICE] AND FLAYED [IT]. **Mishnah 5:10** THEN HE TORE IT AND TOOK OUT ITS EMURIM, PLACED THEM IN A TRAY AND BURNT THEM ON THE ALTAR. THE FIRST DIVISION WENT OUT AND SAT DOWN ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT,¹²⁷ THE SECOND [SAT] IN THE HEL,¹²⁸ WHILE THE THIRD REMAINED IN ITS PLACE. WHEN IT GREW DARK THEY WENT OUT AND ROASTED THEIR PASCHAL LAMBS.*

{Comment: Here we see the standard practice of the slaughter of the Paschal lambs in the Temple. Regardless of whether one was a early or late offerer, on the Sabbath, all remained on the Temple Mount until it grew dark. Sabbath law forbid them from carrying their lambs home. They had to wait on the Temple Mount till sunset.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (69b) Mishnah 6:3. WHEN DOES HE BRING A HAGIGAH WITH IT [THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE]? WHEN IT COMES DURING THE WEEK, IN PURITY, AND IN SMALL [PORTIONS]. BUT WHEN IT COMES ON THE SABBATH, IN LARGE [PORTIONS], AND IN

¹²⁷ Footnote: If the 14th fell on the Sabbath, as they could not carry their sacrifices home and had to wait for the evening.

¹²⁸ Footnote: A place within the fortification of the temple

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

UNCLEANNES, ONE DOES NOT BRING THE HAGIGAH WITH IT. THE HAGIGAH WAS BROUGHT OF FLOCKS, HERDS, LAMBS OR GOATS, OF THE MALES OR THE FEMALES, AND IT IS EATEN TWO DAYS AND ONE NIGHT.....

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (69b) GEMARA: ...R. Ashi said: This proves that the hagigah of the fourteenth (70a) is not obligatory. For if you should think that it is obligatory, let it come [be sacrificed] on the Sabbath, and let it come [when the Passover sacrifice is divided] in large [portions], and in uncleanness. Nevertheless, what is the reason that it comes [when the paschal lamb is divided] in small portions? -- As it was taught: The hagigah which comes with the Passover is eaten first, so that the Passover be eaten after the appetite is satisfied.

AND IT IS EATEN TWO DAYS etc. Our Mishnah is not in agreement with the son of Tema. For it was taught: The son of Tema said: The hagigah which comes with the Passover is as the Passover,

חגיגת הבאה עם הפסח הרי היא כפסח

and it may only be eaten a day and a night, whereas the chagigah of the fifteenth is eaten two days and one night;...

...Come and hear: The hagigah which comes with the Passover is as the Passover: it comes from the flock, but it does not come from the herd; it comes from the males but it does not come from the females; it comes a year old, but it does not come a two-year old, and it may be eaten only a day and a night, and it may be eaten only roast, and it may be eaten only by those who have registered for it. [Now,] whom do you know to hold this view? The son of Tema. This proves that we require everything. This proves it.

The Scholars asked: According to the son of Tema, is it subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone, or is it not subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone? [Do we say,] though the Divine Law assimilated it to the Passover, yet the Writ saith, '[neither shall ye break a bone] thereof,' [implying] 'thereof,' but not of the hagigah;' ...Hence it must be [the view] of the son of Tema, which proves that it {the hagigah} is subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone!...

(70b)....But 'flock' refers to the Passover offering, [while] 'herd' refers to the hagigah... Now, does then the Passover offering come from the herd: surely the Passover offering comes only from lambs or from goats?

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

{Comment: In this critically important Mishnah and Gemara the reference is to the “ḥagigah” brought on the fourteenth of Nisan, not the obligatory chagigah of the 15th of Nisan. This Mishnah lays down the conditions when the former is brought.

In principle, the chagigah of the 14th was used to supplement the Pesach lamb for registered groups in which a single Pesach sacrifice would prove insufficient to adequately feed the number of people in the group, hence the “*SMALL [PORTIONS].*” Such groups would bring chagigah offerings along with their pesach offering on the fourteenth of Nisan. This optional chagigah was not obligatory and could therefore have been purchased with consecrated money. One had to declare whether the offering in his possession was a pesach offering or a peace offering (chagigah). After ritual slaughter and dismissal from the Temple, the owner would take his chagigah and pesach offerings home and roast them after sunset. The chagigah would be eaten first and provide the main part of the feast, with the pesach portion eaten last. Both had to be finished by midnight.

When the 14th of Nisan was a Thursday night to Friday night as the Fathers testify of Holy Week, then the case applies whereby the chagigah “*COMES DURING THE WEEK*” and not on the Sabbath. By “*IN PURITY*” the Mishnah implies that the majority of the community was clean.¹²⁹ Thus, on that Friday morning (14th of Nisan) when the Chief Priests brought Jesus before Pilate, all these parameters applied. So the bringing of a chagigah on this 14th of Nisan was appropriate.

Of utmost importance, **the Gemara states**

חגיגת הבאה עם הפסח הרי היא כפסח

“the **chagigah** that comes with the passover (she) is **as the Passover**” and is to be like the Pesach lamb in virtually all respects!!! It comes only from the flocks, whereas the chagigah of the 15th or chagigah of rejoicing can come from either and could be a significantly different animal. It is male only, a year old only, may only be eaten that day and night (till midnight), could only be eaten by those who registered for it, and may not have any of its bones broken. In all respects, up to the point of slaughter, the chagigah was the same as the Pesach offering. **As we shall prove, this chagigah is the *Pesach* of St. John 18:28** “*Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover {Pesach}.*” }

¹²⁹ Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 240 on Pesachim 6:3.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (70b) GEMARA... 'Ulla said in R. Eleazar's name: **Peace-offerings which a man slaughtered on the eve of the Festival, he does not discharge therewith [his duty] either on account of rejoicing or on account of ḥagigah.** 'On account of rejoicing.' because it is written, and thou shalt sacrifice [peace-offerings . . .] and thou shalt rejoice; we require the slaughtering...*

{Comment: These are the two other peace offerings delineated for Pesach as previously discussed (pages 105-106):

- 1). the "chagigah of rejoicing," deduced from, 'and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast'(Deut. XVI, 14) which was offered on any of the 3rd through 7th days of the feast to ensure the celebrants had sufficient meat to rejoice
- 2). the chagigah of the 15th of Nisan = the chagigah required on the first day of all Festivals (hence in the case of Passover, required on the fifteenth of Nisan.).}

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (71a) GEMARA ...When Rabin came, he said in R. Eleazar's name: **Peace-offerings which one slaughtered on the eve of the Festival, he discharges therewith [his duty] on account of rejoicing, but he cannot discharge therewith [his duty] on account of ḥagigah.** 'He discharges [his duty] on account of rejoicing,' [for] we do not require the slaughtering at the time of rejoicing. 'But not on account of ḥagigah'; this is an obligatory [sacrifice], and every obligatory [sacrifice] comes from nought but hullin.*

{Comment: The chagigah of the 14th was not required, but optional depending on the size of the group and the day of the week. The chagigah of the 15th was required for "keeping of the feast." Here, the Gemara states that the chagigah of the 14th, if offered, does not take away the requirement of the chagigah of the 15th of Nisan, although it did discharge the requirement for rejoicing.}

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (76b) Mishnah 7:4. **FIVE THINGS [SACRIFICES] MAY COME IN UNCLEANNESS, YET MUST NOT BE EATEN IN UNCLEANNESS: THE 'OMER,' THE TWO LOAVES, THE SHEWBREAD, THE SACRIFICES OF THE PUBLIC PEACE-OFFERINGS, AND THE HE-GOATS OF NEW MOONS. THE PASCHAL LAMB WHICH COMES IN UNCLEANNESS IS EATEN IN UNCLEANNESS, FOR FROM THE VERY BEGINNING IT CAME FOR NO OTHER PURPOSE BUT TO BE EATEN.***

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

GEMARA. What does 'FIVE' exclude? — It excludes the ḥagigah [for example] of the fifteenth. ¹³⁰For I might argue, since it is a public sacrifice and a season is fixed for it, ¹³¹let it override uncleanness; therefore he informs us [that] **since you can make it up the whole seven [days],** ¹³²**it does not override the Sabbath, and since it does not override the Sabbath, it does not override uncleanness.**

{Comment: the “UNCLEANNES” here refers to the whole community or the whole of the priesthood as will be shown below. When the community or the priesthood is unclean, the paschal lamb could be eaten. But when the community is unclean, the chagigah of the 15th cannot be eaten that day, but can be eaten on subsequent days of the festival.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (79a) Mishnah 7:6. IF THE COMMUNITY OR THE MAJORITY THEREOF WAS DEFILED, OR IF THE PRIESTS WERE UNCLEAN AND THE COMMUNITY CLEAN, THEY MUST SACRIFICE IN UNCLEANNES. IF A MINORITY OF THE COMMUNITY WERE DEFILED: THOSE WHO ARE CLEAN OBSERVE THE FIRST [PASSOVER], WHILE THOSE WHO ARE UNCLEAN OBSERVE THE SECOND.

{Comment: At the time of Jesus' crucifixion one presumes that the majority of the community were “clean” and that most of the priests were also ritually “clean.” So, in the case of John 18:28 “Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover” -- the “they” would constitute a minority if “they” became defiled beyond the extent that they could be bathed and become clean at sunset. Consequently, they would have to observe the second Passover, the priests for sacrificing, and both the priests and people for eating the Passover sacrifice. But the question remains, who are the “they” and what is the source of their “defilement?” In John, the antecedent of “they” is a bit nebulous. Possibilities include the officials of the high priest Annas who sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas the high priest, or even those officers of the high priest and Pharisees who arrested Jesus originally. Pilate later (John 19:6) addresses only the Chief Priests and their officials -- who are also probably priests; in Matthew it appears to be all the chief priests and elders of the people; in Mark, the chief priests, elders, scribes, and the whole council; in Luke, the whole assembly, but especially the chief priests. So we can consider the “they” to be at least the High Priests and their officials. Since the source of their defilement is not specified,

¹³⁰ Footnote: And similarly the ḥagigah of any other Festival.

¹³¹ Footnote: In the sense that all Jews must bring a ḥagigah

¹³² Footnote: If not brought on the first day it can be brought for a week afterwards, v. Hag. 9a.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

as long as it wasn't contamination through a corpse or new personal zaraath (leprosy, which required a period of observation and made the individual temporarily unqualified for atonement -- not applicable in this case), i.e., the types of contamination that require more than 1 day for cleansing, the "*they*" could be ritually bathed and become clean at dusk. In other words each of them could be designated as a "Tebul Yom," or "bathed of the day," and could partake of their paschal lamb after the setting of the sun. Were it through a corpse, etc., and they were a minority of the priests, pharisees, elders, or scribes, then the contaminated individuals would be unclean for 7 days and would have to observe the second passover -- certainly not a damning condition by any stretch of the imagination.

The Biblical basis for defilement prohibiting the celebration of the Passover is quite specific and doesn't really seem to apply in this case of John 18:28:

*Num. 9:9 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 10 Speak to the Israelites, saying: Anyone of you or your descendants who is **unclean through touching a corpse, or is away on a journey, shall still keep the {second} passover to the LORD.***

Surely, the chief priests, elders, and officials could not be exercising such caution over this straightforward Biblical law. They surely could avoid touching a corpse, even if one existed. Yes, the dwelling places of Gentiles in the land of Israel were considered unclean if inhabited for greater than 40 days and if no slave or Israelite woman were living within it.¹³³ The argument forwarded by some, that "they" feared to enter the Praetorium, a Gentile area (the official Palace and residence of Pilate, the Governor of the Roman Province of Judea) because of the possibility of the presence of an "abortus" (see page 5) buried therein, is extremely tenuous even by Rabbinic standards.¹³⁴ So what else could be at stake in entering the Praetorium? One must also consider at the same time, that by not entering the Praetorium, but, rather, by calling for Pilate to come out to meet them and listen to their accusations, they would still achieve both of their objectives: (1) to be able to eat the Passover, and (2) to have one man die for the people rather than have the Romans come and destroy both their holy place and their nation. The great Jewish philosopher and scholar Maimonides, who codified the Jewish law in the late Middle Ages gives us a listing of 13 circumstances during the Passover in which the offerer is accounted unclean and is unable to eat the Passover offering by reason of his uncleanness

¹³³ Neusner J, "Ohalot 18: 7," The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 980.

¹³⁴ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book V, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 566-7.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

but must celebrate the second Passover.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, none of these circumstances apply to the situation that St. John describes. Consequently, the solution to this mysterious defilement has to be sought elsewhere in the Holy Scriptures and rabbinic tradition and not in this communal uncleanness or minority defilement through a corpse.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (91a) Mishnah 8:7. ONE MAY NOT SLAUGHTER THE PASSOVER OFFERING FOR A SINGLE PERSON: THIS IS R. JUDAH'S VIEW; BUT R. JOSE PERMITS IT. AND EVEN A COMPANY OF A HUNDRED WHO CANNOT EAT AS MUCH AS AN OLIVE [JOINTLY], ONE MAY NOT KILL FOR THEM. AND ONE MAY NOT FORM A COMPANY OF WOMEN AND SLAVES AND MINORS.

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (91a) GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: How do we know that one may not slaughter the Passover-offering for a single person? Because it is said, Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover-offering for one: this is R. Judah's opinion. But R. Jose maintained: A single person and he is able to eat it, one may slaughter on his behalf; ten who are unable to eat it, one must not slaughter on their behalf.

R. 'Ukba b. Hinena of Parishna pointed out a contradiction to Raba: Did then R. Judah Say: One may not kill the Paschal lamb for a single person? But the following contradicts it: [As to] a woman; at the First [Passover] one may slaughter for her separately, but at the second one makes her an addition to others: this is the view of R. Judah. — Said he to him, Do not Say, 'for her separately,' but 'for them separately.' Yet may we form a company consisting entirely of women? Surely we learned, ONE MAY NOT FORM A COMPANY OF WOMEN AND SLAVES AND MINORS. Does that not mean women separately and slaves separately and minors separately? — No, he replied, [it means] women and slaves and minors [together]. Women and slaves, on account of obscenity; minors and slaves, on account of licentiousness...

With whom does the following dictum of R. Eleazar agree. [viz.]: '[The observance of the Passover-offering by] a woman at the First [Passover] is obligatory, while at the Second it is voluntary, and it overrides the Sabbath.' If voluntary, why does

¹³⁵ Moses ben Maimon, Danby H (translator), The Code of Maimonides, Book 9: The Book of Offerings, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1963, pp. 27-32, e.g., "1. Who is accounted unclean and is put off until the Second Passover? Anywho cannot eat the Passover offering during the night of the fifteenth of Nisan by reason of his uncleanness: for example, men or women with flux, menstruants, women after childbirth, or such as had intercourse with menstruants..."

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

it override the Sabbath? Rather say: 'at the Second it is voluntary, while at the First it is obligatory and overrides the Sabbath.' With whom [does it agree]? With R. Judah.¹³⁶

{Comment: This Mishnah and the Gemara establish that women were required to keep the 1st Passover, that a single person could not register by himself for a Passover sacrifice, but that groups of women +/- minors were allowed. The rather lengthy discussion in the Gemara on this subject appears to be more theoretical than practical. The general practice was for families or groups of families to celebrate together.}

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (91b) Mishnah 8:8. AN ONEN*¹³⁷ *PERFORMS TEBILLAH {ritual immersion} AND EATS HIS PASSOVER-OFFERING IN THE EVENING, BUT [HE MAY] NOT [PARTAKE] OF [OTHER] SACRIFICES. ONE WHO HEARS ABOUT HIS DEAD [FOR THE FIRST TIME]*¹³⁸ *AND ONE WHO COLLECTS THE BONES [OF HIS PARENTS], PERFORM TEBILLAH AND EAT SACRED FLESH. IF A PROSELYTE WAS CONVERTED ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER, — BETH SHAMMAI MAINTAIN: HE PERFORMS TEBILLAH AND EATS HIS PASSOVER-OFFERING IN THE EVENING; WHILE BETH HILLEL RULE: ONE WHO SEPARATES HIMSELF FROM [THE STATE OF] UNCIRCUMCISION IS LIKE ONE WHO SEPARATED HIMSELF FROM A GRAVE.*

{Comment: The Onen, one who is mourning for a dead relative who is awaiting burial, can ritually bathe and eat of the Passover, as can one who hears about the dead, or has just collected the bones of his parent.}

¹³⁶ Epstein I, editor, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Socino Press, London, 1983, p. 91a, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

¹³⁷ Footnote: An onen is a mourner whose dead relative is awaiting burial, opposite to an abel, amourner from the time of burial for a period of 7 or 30 days. An onen may not eat the flesh of sacrifices (v. Lev. X. 19f). By Scriptural law a man is an onen on the day of death only, but not at night; the Rabbis, however, extended these restrictions to the night too. **Since, however, the Passover-offering is a Scriptural obligation, they waived their prohibition in respect of the night, and hence he may eat thereof. He is not unclean, but requires tebillah to emphasize that until the evening sacred flesh was forbidden to him, whereas now it is permitted.** In respect of other sacrifices the Rabbinical law stands, and he may not partake of them.

¹³⁸ Footnote: He too is a mourner on that day by Rabbinical law. In the evening. This applies to all sacrifices, for since even during the day he is an onen by Rabbinical law only, the Rabbis did not extend his aninuth (v. Glos.) to the evening.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (99b) Mishnah 10:1. ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER CLOSE TO MINHAH ¹³⁹A MAN MUST NOT EAT UNTIL NIGHTFALL. EVEN THE POOREST MAN IN ISRAEL MUST NOT EAT [ON THE NIGHT OF PASSOVER] UNTIL HE RECLINES; AND THEY SHOULD GIVE HIM NOT LESS THAN FOUR CUPS [OF WINE], AND EVEN [IF HE RECEIVES RELIEF] FROM THE CHARITY PLATE.

{Comment: **There is a short absolute fast for all Israelites (except the Priests as we shall demonstrate) starting around mid-day until the evening Passover Seder.** The Orthodox Church following a similar strict fast on Holy Saturday, the eve of Pascha. The Jewish Passover Seder is normally eaten in a reclining position only -- in contrast to wrong opinion of those whom Archbishop Theophylact quotes as saying the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal because Jesus and His disciples were reclining (see page 73). Also 4 cups of wine are necessary for proper celebration.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (108a) GEMARA. Between these cups, if he wishes to drink [more] he may drink; between the third and the fourth he must not drink. ¹⁴⁰ Now if you say that it [wine] satisfies, why may he drink? Surely he will merely gorge on the unleavened bread! Hence this proves that it sharpens the appetite.

*...‘Even the poorest man in Israel must not eat until he reclines.’ It was stated: [For the eating of] the unleavened bread reclining is necessary; for the bitter herbs reclining is not necessary. [As for the drinking of] the wine, — It was stated in R. Nahman’s name [that] reclining is necessary, and it was stated in R. Nahman’s name that reclining is not necessary. Yet they do not disagree: one [ruling] refers to the first two cups, and the other ruling refers to the last two cups. Some explain it in one direction, others explain it in the other direction. [Thus:] some explain it in one direction: for the first two cups reclining is necessary, because it is at this point that freedom commences; for the last two cups reclining is necessary, [because] what has been has been. Others explain it in the contrary direction: on the contrary, the last two cups necessitate reclining, [because] it is precisely then that there is freedom; **the first two cups do not necessitate reclining, [because] he is still reciting ‘we were slaves.’ Now that it was stated thus and it was stated thus, both [the first and the last ones] necessitate reclining. Lying on the back is not reclining; reclining on the right side is not reclining. Moreover he may put [his food] into the windpipe before the gullet, and thus endanger himself.***

¹³⁹ MINHAH = afternoon sacrifice--done at 12:30 on the Eve of the Sabbath

¹⁴⁰ Footnote: The third cup is drunk in connection with grace after meals. Having dined already, he has no need to drink for his appetite, and if he now drinks more he will appear to be adding to the statutory number (four) of cups. The Jerusalem Talmud states that drink after the meal (apart from the two which are still to be drunk to make up the four) intoxicates and makes the person unfit to recite the hallel.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

*A woman in her husband's [house] need not recline, but if she is a woman of importance she must recline. A son in his father's [house] must recline. The scholars asked: **What about a disciple in his teacher's presence?** — Come and hear, for Abaye said: **When we were at the Master's [Rabbah b. Nahman's] house, we used to recline on each other's knees. When we came to R. Joseph's house he remarked to us, 'You do not need it: the fear of your teacher is as the fear of Heaven.'***

*An objection is raised: **A man must recline with all [people], and even a disciple in his master's presence?** — That was taught of a craftsman's apprentice. The scholars asked: What about an attendant? — Come and hear, [or R. Joshua b. Levi said: **A attendant, who ate as much as an olive of unleavened bread while reclining has discharged [his duty]. Thus, only while reclining, but not if he was not reclining. This proves that he must recline. This proves it.***

...R. Joshua b. Levi also said: Women are subject to [the law of] these four cups

*(108b) because they too were included in that miracle. **Our Rabbis taught: All are bound to [drink] the four cups, men, women, and children.** Said R. Judah: Of what benefit then is wine to children? But we distribute to them.*

{Comment: Reclining is required for men and important women beginning at least with the 3rd cup of wine. At least a olive-sized piece of unleavened bread had to be eaten in the reclining position. Reclining signified their deliverance from the slavery in Egypt.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (114a) Mishnah 10:2. THEY FILLED THE FIRST CUP FOR HIM; BETH SHAMMAI MAINTAIN: HE RECITES A BLESSING FOR THE DAY [FIRST], AND THEN RECITES A BLESSING OVER THE WINE; WHILE BETH HILLEL RULE: HE RECITES A BLESSING OVER THE WINE [FIRST], AND THEN RECITES A BLESSING FOR THE DAY.

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (114a) GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: [These are] the matters which are disputed by Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel in respect to the meal: Beth Shammai maintain: He recites a blessing for the day [first] and then recites a blessing over the wine, because the day is responsible for the presence of the wine; moreover, the day has already become sanctified while the wine has not yet come. But Beth Hillel maintain: He recites a blessing over the wine and then recites a blessing for the day, because the wine enables the kiddush to be recited. Another reason:

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

the blessing for wine is constant, while the blessing for the day is not constant , [and of] that which is constant and that which is not constant, that which is constant comes first. Now the law is as the ruling of Beth Hillel. Why state [another reason]? — [This:] for should you argue: there we have two [reasons], whereas here there is [only] one, [I answer that] here also there are two, [for of] that which is constant and that which is not constant, that which is constant comes first. ‘Now the law is as the ruling of Beth Hillel’: that is obvious, since there issued a Bath Kol? — If you wish I can answer that this was before the Bath Kol. Alternatively, it was after the Bath Kol, and this is [in accordance with] R. Joshua who maintained We disregard a Bath Kol.

{Comment: In a sacramental society such as ancient Israel, invoking the Lord’s blessing over wine and the day were to be expected.}

[From Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (39a) Mishnah 2:6. AND THESE ARE THE HERBS WITH WHICH A MAN DISCHARGES HIS OBLIGATION ON PASSOVER: WITH LETTUCE [HAZARETH]. WITH TAMKA, WITH HARHABINA, WITH ENDIVES [‘ULSHIN] AND WITH MAROR. THE LAW IS COMPLIED WITH BY [EATING THEM] BOTH MOIST [FRESH] AND DRY, BUT NOT PRESERVED [IN VINEGAR], NOR STEWED NOR BOILED AND THEY COMBINE TO THE SIZE OF AN OLIVE. AND YOU CAN DISCHARGE [YOUR OBLIGATION] WITH THEIR STALK[S]. AND WITH DEMAI, AND WITH FIRST TITHE THE TERUMAH OF WHICH HAS BEEN SEPARATED, AND WITH HEKDESH AND SECOND TITHE WHICH HAVE BEEN REDEEMED.

GEMARA. H A Z E R E T H is hassa [lettuce]; ‘U L S H I N is hindebi [endives]. TAMKA: Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said: It is called temakta. H A R H A B I N A: R. Simeon b. Lakish said: [It is] the creeper of the palm tree. AND WITH MAROR: merirta...

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (114a) Mishnah 10:3. THEY THEN SET [IT] BEFORE HIM. HE DIPS THE LETTUCE [into water or vinegar] BEFORE YET HE HAS REACHED THE AFTERCOURSE OF THE BREAD. [the aphikomen] THEY SET BEFORE HIM MATZAH, LETTUCE [HAZERETH], AND HAROSETH AND TWO DISHES, THOUGH THE HAROSETH IS NOT COMPULSORY. R. ELEAZAR SON OF R. ZADOK SAID: IT IS COMPULSORY. AND IN THE TEMPLE THEY USED TO BRING THE BODY OF THE PASSOVER-OFFERING BEFORE HIM.

GEMARA: *Resh Lakish said: This proves that precepts require intention, [for] since he does not eat it the stage when bitter herbs are compulsory, he eats it with [the*

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

*blessing,] ‘Who createst the fruit of the ground,’ and perhaps he did not intend [to fulfill the obligation of] bitter herbs; **therefore he must dip it again with the express purpose of [eating] bitter herbs.** For if you should think [that] precepts do not require intention, why two dippings: surely he has [already] dipped it once? But whence [does this food]? Perhaps after a precepts do not require intention, and as to what you argue, **why two dippings,** [the answer is,] that there may be a distinction for [the sake of] the children. And should you say, if so, we should be informed about other vegetables: If we were informed about other vegetables I would say: Only where other vegetables [are eaten first] do we require two dippings, but lettuce alone does not require two dippings: hence he informs us that even lettuce [alone] requires two dippings, so that there may be a distinction [shown] therewith for the children. Moreover, it was taught: If he ate them [the bitter herbs] while demai, he has discharged [his duty]; if he ate them without intention, he has discharged [his duty]; if he ate them, in half quantities, he has discharged [his duty], providing that he does not wait between one eating and the next more than is required for the eating of half [a loaf]? -it is [dependent on] Tannaim. For it was taught, R. Jose said: Though he has [already] dipped the lettuce [hazereth], it is a religious requirement to bring lettuce and haroseth and two dishes before him Yet still, whence [does this food]: perhaps R. Jose holds [that] precepts do not require intention and the reason that we require two dippings is that there may be a distinction [shown] for the children?- If so, what is the ‘religious requirement?’*

{Comment: Notice that the Passover Seder requires the dipping of lettuce. This is a most important detail. For in the Gospels, we don’t see Jesus dipping lettuce or bitter herbs, but a morsel of bread!

St. John 13:26 ἀποκρίνεται [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς, Ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ᾧ ἐγὼ βάψω τὸ ψωμίον καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ. βάψας οὖν τὸ ψωμίον [λαμβάνει καὶ] δίδωσιν Ἰούδα Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου. “*Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I give this **piece of bread** when I have dipped it in the dish.’ So when he had **dipped the piece of bread** [taking it in his hand and], he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.”*

ψωμίον is a diminutive of the word for bread ψωμὸς, i.e., a small piece or morsel of bread. Thus, with no stretch of the imagination would the giving of the dipped morsel of bread to Judas correspond to the dipping of the bitter herbs into the vinegar or water in the Passover Seder. Indeed, on any night except that of the Seder, one might “dip once” as one observes in the following mishnah.

Edersheim, anticipating this line of reasoning, attempts to thwart it by the following:

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

“But we have direct testimony, that, about the time of Christ [The statement is in regard to Hillel, while the Temple stood.], **‘the sop’ which was handed round consisted of these things wrapped together: flesh of the Paschal Lamb, a piece of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs** [Jer. Chall. 57b].¹⁴¹ This, we believe, was ‘the sop,’ which Jesus, having dipped it for him in the dish, handed first to Judas, as occupying the first and chief place at Table. But before He did so, probably while **He dipped it in the dish...**”¹⁴²

However, in attempting to verify Edersheim’s reference (Jerusalem Talmud Tractate Challah -- only recently translated into English from an obscure dialect -- a Gallilean dialect of Western Aramaic!), one finds only the following simple statements in the Gemara to Mishnah 1:1:

*...Hillel the Elder would fold together all three of them [the Passover offering’s meat, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs, and eat them all at once]. “[Because they held that the several items had the effect of nullifying one another,]” said R. Yohanan, “[Hillel’s colleagues] differed from Hillel the Elder’s [view of the matter].” And lo, as a matter of fact, R. Yohannan himself folds together unleavened bread and bitter herbs! Here [where he holds one may not do so], it was in the time of the Temple, while there [where he holds one may do so], it is in the time that the Temple is no longer standing. And even if you maintain that in both instances [we speak of] the time in which the Temple is standing, two items are more than one and have the effect of neutralizing it [but if you take only two items, one does not neutralize the other].*¹⁴³

It is important to note, that at no time is this famous “Hillel’s sandwich” ever dipped! In reviewing the corresponding material in the Babylonian Talmud some amplification of the arguments are found:}

¹⁴¹ Reference not specifically corroborated in Yerushalmi Challah. It is too short to have at least 57 pages.

¹⁴² Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book V, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 506.

¹⁴³ Neusner J (translator), The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation, 9, Hallah, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991, p. 17.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (115a) GEMARA to Mishnah 10.3 Rabina said, R. Mesharsheya son of R. Nathan told me: Thus did Hillel ¹⁴⁴ say on the authority of tradition: A man must not make a sandwich of matzah and bitter herbs together and eat them, because we hold that matzah nowadays ¹⁴⁵ is a Biblical obligation, whereas bitter herbs are a Rabbinical requirement and thus the bitter herbs, which are Rabbinical, will come and nullify the matzah, which is Biblical. And even on the view that precepts cannot nullify each other, that applies only to a Biblical [precept] with a Biblical [precept], or a Rabbinical [precept] with a Rabbinical [precept], but in the case of a Scriptural and a Rabbinical [precept], the Rabbinical [one] comes and nullifies the Scriptural [one]. Which Tanna do you know [to hold] that precepts do not nullify each other? — it is Hillel. ¹⁴⁶ For it was taught, it was related of Hillel that he used to wrap them together, for it is said, they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. R. Johanan observed: Hillel's colleagues disagreed with him. For it was taught: You might think that he should wrap them together and eat them, in the manner that Hillel ate it, therefore it is stated, they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, [intimating] even each separately. To this R. Ashi demurred: If so, what is [the meaning of] 'even'? Rather, said R. Ashi, this Tanna teaches thus: You might think that he does not discharge his duty unless he wraps them together and eats them, in the manner of Hillel therefore it is stated, they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, [intimating] even each separately. **Now that the law was not stated either as Hillel or as the Rabbis, one recites the blessing. '[Who hast commanded us] concerning the eating of unleavened bread' and eats; then he recites the blessing, 'concerning the eating of bitter herbs,' and eats; and then he eats unleavened bread and lettuce together without a blessing, in memory of the Temple, as Hillel [did].** ¹⁴⁷

R. Eleazar said in R. Oshaia's name: **Whatever is dipped in a liquid requires the washing of the hands. Said R. Papa: Infer from this that the lettuce (115b) must be plunged right into the haroseth [which is a liquid] to counteract the kappa [a poisonous substance in the hazereth (lettuce)].** For if you should think that it need not be sunk into it, why is the washing of the hands required? Surely he does not touch [the haroseth]? Yet perhaps I may maintain that in truth it need not be sunk [into the haroseth], the kappa dying from its smell; yet why is washing of the hands required? In case he plunges it in.

¹⁴⁴ Footnote: The reference is to R. Hillel, the fourth century Babylonian amora, and not to Hillel, the great Nasi who flourished in the first century B.C.E.

¹⁴⁵ Footnote: I.e., after the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of sacrifices.

¹⁴⁶ Footnote: Hillel 1 {First Century B.C.}

¹⁴⁷ In good rabbinic fashion, the Footnotes conclude that "Though the aforementioned Tanna does not disagree with Hillel, as R. Ashi has shown, it was nevertheless held that some Rabbis did disagree. Thus he acts on both views, by eating them first separately and then together."

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

R. Papa also said: A man must not keep the bitter herbs [an appreciable time] in the haroseth, because the sweetness of its ingredients [sc. the haroseth] my neutralize its bitterness, whereas the taste of bitter herbs is essential, but it is then absent.

R. Hisda brought Rabbana 'Ukba and he lectured: If he washed his hands at the first dipping- he must wash his hands at the second dipping [too]. The Rabbis discussed this before R. Papa: This was stated in general, for if you should think that it was stated here [in connection with Passover], why must he wash his hands twice? Surely he has [already] washed his hands once? Said R. Papa to them: On the contrary, it was stated here, for if you should think that it was stated in general, why two dippings? What then? it was stated here? Then why must he wash his hands twice: surely he has [already] washed his hands once? — I will tell you: since he is to recite the Haggadah and Hallel, he may let his thoughts wander and touch [something unclean].

Raba said: If he swallows, unleavened bread, he discharges his duty; if he swallows bitter herbs, he does not discharge his duty. If he swallows unleavened bread and bitter herbs [together], he discharges his duty of unleavened bread, [but] not his duty of bitter herbs. If he wraps them in bast and swallows them, he does not discharge his duty of unleavened bread either.

R. Simi b. Ashi said: unleavened bread [must be set] before each person [of the company]. bitter herbs before each person. and haroseth before each person, but we remove the table only from before him who recites the Haggadah. R. Huna said: All these too [are Set only] before him who recites the Haggadah. And the law is as R. Huna..

{Comment: Although Hillel the Elder made a sandwich of pesach lamb, bitter herbs, and lettuce, the Gemara indicates only the lettuce was dipped in the haroseth. Each had to be eaten separately to discharge his festal duty, or if in combination, it still only counted for 1 of the 3 required items. Thus, Edersheim's arguments are again refuted. His selective referencing of the Jerusalem Talmud is interesting. Yes, it does reflect the Temple period, but so does the Babylonian Talmud. However, his argument of the dipping crumbles in the face of the fuller Gemara of the latter. Only the bitter herbs were dipped in vinegar or haroseth on Passover. Leavened bread and other foodstuffs were dipped on other occasions (see page 187).} Even if Hillel's sandwich was dipped consider the following comments in regard to this in a modern commentary on the Passover Seder:

In the time of the Temple, Hillel did not eat *Matzah* and *Maror* separately at all but only together, as a 'sandwich'; ...

According to some opinions, however, the 'sandwich' should *not* be dipped into *Charoses*. The poison of the *Maror* is neutralized by the

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Matzah, and we already discharged the duty of dipping in *Charoses* when we ate the *Maror* alone; in fact, if we now dipped the ‘sandwich’, too, our Seder would feature three dippings, whereas we always only speak of two (*Ravioh*, see p. 70). However, the *Taz* rejects this argument: the dipping of the *Maror* and of the ‘sandwich’ must be counted as one for we only dip both of them because we are in doubt as to which is the right way of eating *Maror*.

It should be noted that in the days of the Temple Hillel ate the ‘sandwich’ at the end of the meal, for it included the Pesach offering and this had to be eaten to make the person sated (*Mordechai*).¹⁴⁸

If the morsel that was dipped was Hillel’s sandwich as Edersheim proposes, then the last comment is very important. Unlike the modern Seder where dinner follows the dipping, then the eating of the afikomen (dessert = matzah by tradition) and drinking of wine, followed by the singing of the Hallel -- in the ancient Seder, once the ‘sandwich’ was eaten, dinner was over and there was no more eating of unleavened bread! In other words, there would be no further breaking of bread and partaking of it -- wine, yes -- bread, no. Consequently, for Jesus to introduce the breaking of the bread and the cup of the wine of the New Covenant after this point in the Seder would be exceptionally innovative.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (116a) Mishnah 10:4. THEY FILLED A SECOND CUP FOR HIM. AT THIS STAGE THE SON QUESTIONS HIS FATHER; IF THE SON IS UNINTELLIGENT, HIS FATHER INSTRUCTS HIM [TO ASK]: ‘WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL [OTHER] NIGHTS. FOR ON ALL [OTHER] NIGHTS WE EAT LEAVENED AND UNLEAVENED BREAD, WHEREAS ON THIS NIGHT [WE EAT] ONLY LEAVENED BREAD; ON ALL OTHER NIGHTS WE EAT ALL KINDS OF HERBS, ON THIS NIGHT BITTER HERBS; ON ALL OTHER NIGHTS WE EAT MEAT ROAST, STEWED OR BOILED, ON THIS NIGHT, ROAST ONLY. ON ALL OTHER NIGHTS WE DIP ONCE, BUT ON THIS NIGHT WE DIP TWICE.’ AND ACCORDING TO THE SON’S INTELLIGENCE HIS FATHER INSTRUCTS HIM. HE COMMENCES WITH SHAME AND CONCLUDES WITH PRAISE; AND EXPOUNDS FROM ‘A WANDERING ARAMEAN WAS MY FATHER’ UNTIL HE COMPLETES THE WHOLE SECTION.

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (116a) G E M A R A. Our Rabbis taught: If his son is intelligent [he] asks him, while if he is not intelligent his wife asks

¹⁴⁸ Elias J, Passover Haggadah with Translation and a New Commentary Based on Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Source, Artscroll Mesorah Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, p. 161.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

him; but if not, he asks himself. And even two scholars who know the laws of Passover ask one another.

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS? FOR ON ALL OTHER NIGHTS WE DIP ONCE, WHILE ON THIS NIGHT WE DIP TWICE. To this Raba demurred: Is then dipping once indispensable all other days? Rather, said Raba, It was thus taught: For on all other nights we are not obliged to dip even once, whereas on this night, twice. To this R. Safra demurred: A statutory obligation on account of children! Rather, said **R. Safra, He teaches thus: We do not dip even once, whereas this night [we dip] twice.**¹⁴⁹

HE COMMENCES WITH SHAME AND CONCLUDES WITH PRAISE. What is 'WITH SHAME'? Rab said: 'Aforetime our fathers were idolaters'; while Samuel said: 'We were slaves.' R. Nahman asked his slave Daru: 'When a master liberates his slave and gives him gold and silver, what should he say to him?' 'He should thank and praise him,' replied he. 'You have excused us from saying "Why [is this night] different?"' observed he. [Thereupon] he commenced by reciting, 'We were slaves.'

{Comment: Here we see the familial nature of the Passover -- the well-known questions between father and son. The absence of family members at the Last Supper is a strong flag against the notion that it was a Passover Seder. Secondly, on the night of the Last Supper, the Gospels mention only once the dipping of the morsel of bread in the bowl. As an objection to R. Safra above -- with Jesus it was bread that was dipped, not lettuce or other bitter herbs!}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (116a) Mishnah 10:5. R. GAMALIEL USED TO SAY: WHOEVER DOES NOT MAKE MENTION OF (116b) THESE THREE THINGS ON PASSOVER DOES NOT DISCHARGE HIS DUTY, AND THESE ARE THEY: THE PASSOVER-OFFERING, UNLEAVENED BREAD, AND BITTER HERBS. THE PASSOVER-OFFERING IS [SACRIFICED] BECAUSE THE OMNIPRESENT PASSED OVER THE HOUSES OF OUR FATHERS IN EGYPT, AS IT IS SAID, THEN YE SHALL SAY: IT IS THE SACRIFICE OF THE LORD'S PASSOVER, FOR THAT HE PASSED OVER ETC. THE UNLEAVENED BREAD IS [EATEN] BECAUSE OUR FATHERS WERE REDEEMED FROM EGYPT, AS IT IS SAID, AND THEY BAKED UNLEAVENED CAKES OF THE DOUGH WHICH THEY BROUGHT FORTH OUT OF EGYPT ETC. THE BITTER HERB IS [EATEN] BECAUSE THE EGYPTIANS EMBITTERED THE LIVES OF OUR FATHERS IN EGYPT, AS IT IS SAID, AND THEY MADE THEIR LIVES BITTER ETC. IN EVERY GENERATION A MAN IS BOUND TO REGARD HIMSELF AS THOUGH HE PERSONALLY HAD GONE

¹⁴⁹ "Obliged" (chayyabin) connotes a religious precept, whereas as stated in Pesachim 114b the first dipping is merely to stimulate the children's wonder.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

FORTH FROM EGYPT, BECAUSE IT IS SAID, AND THOU SHALT TELL THY SON IN THAT DAY, SAYING: IT IS BECAUSE OF THAT WHICH THE LORD DID FOR ME WHEN I CAME FORTH OUT OF EGYPT. THEREFORE IT IS OUR DUTY TO THANK, PRAISE, LAUD, GLORIFY, EXALT, HONOUR, BLESS, EXTOL, AND ADORE HIM WHO WROUGHT ALL THESE MIRACLES FOR OUR FATHERS AND OURSELVES; HE BROUGHT US FORTH FROM BONDAGE INTO FREEDOM, FROM SORROW INTO JOY, FROM MOURNING INTO FESTIVITY, FROM DARKNESS INTO GREAT LIGHT, AND FROM SERVITUDE INTO REDEMPTION. THEREFORE LET US SAY BEFORE HIM, HALLELUJAH! HOW FAR DOES ONE RECITE IT? BETH SHAMMAI MAINTAIN: UNTIL 'AS A JOYOUS MOTHER OF CHILDREN,' WHILE BETH HILLEL SAY: UNTIL 'THE FLINT INTO A FOUNTAIN OF WATERS,' AND HE CONCLUDES WITH [A FORMULA OF] REDEMPTION. R. TARFON USED TO SAY WHO REDEEMED US AND REDEEMED OUR FATHERS FROM EGYPT, BUT HE DID NOT CONCLUDE [WITH A BLESSING]. R. AKIBA SAID: 'SO MAY THE LORD OUR GOD AND THE GOD OF OUR FATHER SUFFER US TO REACH OTHER SEASONS AND FESTIVALS WHICH COME TOWARDS US FOR PEACE, REJOICING IN THE REBUILDING OF THY CITY AND GLAD IN THY SERVICE, AND THERE WE WILL PARTAKE OF THE SACRIFICES AND THE PASSOVER-OFFERINGS ETC. AS FAR AS BLESSED ART THOU, O LORD, WHO HAST REDEEMED ISRAEL.'

{Comment: If these 3 things, **THE PASSOVER-OFFERING, UNLEAVENED BREAD, AND BITTER HERBS**, were considered obligatory, why are they not mentioned in the Gospel accounts at least once, or even one of the three at least once? If the Last Supper were on the evening before the Seder, as the Fathers taught, then one would not expect to have them mentioned. Jesus could not have neglected to fulfill the law perfectly. Even if He didn't conform to this rabbinic tradition, He would of necessity conform to the Mosaic Law which read: *Exod 12:26 And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' 27 you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'* So there had to be some discussion of the meaning of Passover -- or the Law of Moses would have been broken.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (117b) Mishnah 10:7. THEY FILLED THE THIRD CUP FOR HIM. HE THEN RECITES GRACE AFTER MEALS. OVER THE FOURTH [CUP] HE CONCLUDES THE HALLEL, AND RECITES THE 'GRACE OF SONG.' BETWEEN THESE CUPS HE MAY DRINK IF HE WISHES; BETWEEN THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH HE MAY NOT DRINK.

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

GEMARA. R. Hanan said to Raba: This proves that Grace after meals requires a cup [of wine]. Said he to him: Our Rabbis instituted four cups as symbolizing freedom: let us perform a religious act with each.

Over the fourth [cup] he concludes the hallel, and recites the grace of song.

(118a) GAMARA. What is ‘the grace of song’? Rab Judah said: ‘They shall praise Thee, O Lord our God’; while R. Johanan said: ‘The breath of a living [etc.]’

Our Rabbis taught: At the fourth he concludes the Hallel and recites the great Hallel this is the view of R. Tarfon. Others say: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ‘What comprises the great Hallel? Rab Judah said: From ‘O give thanks’ until ‘the rivers of Babylon.’ While R. Johanan said: From ‘A song of ascents’ until ‘the rivers of Babylon.’ R. Aha b. Jacob said: From ‘for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself’ until ‘the rivers of Babylon.’ And why is it called the great Hallel? — Said R. Johanan: Because the Holy One, blessed be He, sits in the heights of the universe and distributes food to all creatures.

R. Joshua b. Levi said: To what do these twenty-six [verses of] ‘Give thanks’ correspond? To the twenty-six generations which the Holy One, blessed be He, created in His world; though He did not give them the Torah, He sustained them by His love.

R. Hisda said: What is meant by the verse, O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good? Give thanks unto the Lord who exacts man’s debts by means of His goodness: the wealthy man through his ox and the poor man through his sheep, the fatherless through his egg and the widow through her fowl.

...Now since there is the great Hallel, why do we recite this one? Because it includes [a mention of] the following five things: The exodus from Egypt, the dividing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Torah [Revelation], the resurrection of the dead, and the pangs of Messiah. The exodus from Egypt, as it is written, When Israel came forth out of Egypt; as the dividing of the Red Sea: The sea saw it, and fled; the giving of the Torah: The mountains skipped like rams; resurrection of the dead: I shall walk before the Lord [in the land of the living]; the pangs of Messiah: Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us.

{Comment: Over the 4th cup of wine of the Seder, the grace of song (Psalm 136) is sung. After the Last Supper, Jesus did sing a hymn with His disciples.}

CHAPTER VIII: THE PASSOVER ACCORDING TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM: (119b) Mishnah 10:8. ONE MAY NOT CONCLUDE AFTER THE PASCHAL MEAL [BY SAYING]. 'NOW TO THE ENTERTAINMENT! [APIKOMAN].'

{Comment: After the Seder (and 4 cups of wine), sleeping was authorized but entertainment was not. There is no mention of leaving the premises during the night in the Mishnah or in the Talmud. In the original Egyptian Passover, no one was to go outside of the door of their house from dusk until the next morning (Exodus 12:22) because the Lord was going to pass through the land of Egypt and the destroyer would strike down all the firstborn.}

Having reviewed the rabbinic discussions concerning the Passover preparations, the actual sacrifice in the Temple, and finally the Seder dinner itself, we now turn to the rabbinic discussions on the “chagigah.”

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

Chapter IX: Jewish Practice of Celebrating the Chagigah

Pesach (Passover), Shavuos (Weeks), and Succos (Tabernacles) are the three pilgrimage festivals in which every Jewish male was commanded to appear at the Temple in Jerusalem and celebrate joyfully before God. Importantly, he was not to appear with empty hands, but was required to bring a burnt offering and a peace offering of celebration on the first day, the Yom Tov יום טוב (Lit: “good day”) of every pilgrimage festival. If the chagigah did not supply enough meat for the household or group to be truly joyful before the Lord in their celebrations for the week, then additional peace offerings of joy were to be slaughtered.

The Mishnah Tractate Chagigah חגיגה describes these three major types of offerings for the three pilgrimage festivals:

1. the burnt offering of appearance עולה ראיה (olah re’eyah),
2. the peace offerings of celebration שלמי חגיגה (shalmei chagigah), and
3. the peace offerings of joy שלמי שמחה (shalmei simchah).

The tractate does not discuss the Chagigah of the 14th of Nisan, as previously reviewed in Tractate PESACHIM of the Babylonian Talmud.

The Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud Tractate CHAGIGAH provides rabbinic discussion that amplifies the Mishnah Tractate CHAGIGAH. Proper understanding of the shalmei chagigah is essential to unmask the misunderstanding of the chagigah that led Lightfoot, Edersheim, and countless others since to consider that Jesus was crucified on the 15th of Nisan as a “shalmei chagigah,” and not on the 14th of Nisan as our Passover Lamb.

MISHNAH TEXTS AND TALMUD COMMENTARY (GEMARA) ON THE OLAH RE’EYAH AND SHALMEI CHAGIGAH

MISHNAH Tractate CHAGIGAH ¹⁵⁰: ***Mishnah 1:1 ALL ARE OBLIGATED IN RE’EYAH*** ¹⁵¹ ***EXCEPT FOR A DEAF PERSON, AN IMBECILE, A MINOR, A PERSON OF UNDETERMINED SEX, A HERMAPHRODITE, WOMEN, SLAVES WHO HAVE NOT BEEN FREED, THE LAME, THE BLIND, THE INFIRM, THE AGED AND ONE WHO IS UNABLE TO ASCEND BY FOOT.***

¹⁵⁰ CHAGIGAH = Lit. “festival offering”

¹⁵¹ RE’EYAH = Lit. “appearance”

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

{Comment: All Jews were required to attend the 3 pilgrim festivals in Jerusalem (Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos) unless specifically excused. An olah re'eyah, a burnt offering of appearance, was required so that the individual did not appear empty handed before the Lord.}

MISHNAH Tractate CHAGIGAH: Mishnah 1:6 ONE WHO DID NOT OFFER THE CHAGIGAH ON THE FIRST YOM TOV OF THE FESTIVAL, MAY OFFER THE CHAGIGAH THROUGHOUT THE FESTIVAL OR ON THE LAST YOM TOV OF THE FESTIVAL.¹⁵²

{Comment: Compare the Mishnah Tractate above with the Talmud Tractate below with its rabbinic discussion.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate CHAGIGAH (9a): Mishnah 1:6. HE WHO DID NOT BRING HIS FESTAL-OFFERING ON THE FIRST FESTIVAL, DAY OF THE FEAST [OF TABERNACLES], MAY BRING IT DURING THE WHOLE OF THE FESTIVAL, EVEN ON THE LAST FESTIVAL DAY OF THE FEAST [OF TABERNACLES]. IF THE FESTIVAL, PASSED AND HE DID NOT BRING THE FESTIVAL OFFERING, HE IS NOT BOUND TO MAKE IT GOOD...

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate CHAGIGAH (9a): GEMARA. Whence do we know this? — R. Johanan in the name of R. Ishmael said: [The expression] ‘Azereth [‘solemn assembly’] is used of the seventh day of Passover, and [the expression] ‘Azereth is used of the eighth day of the Feast [of Tabernacles]. Just as there it intimates that one can make good [thereon the festal-offering due on the first day] so here it intimates that one can make good [thereon the festal-offering of the first day]. And it is free [for interpretation]; for were it not free one might object: whereas [this applies] to the seventh day of Passover which is not differentiated from the preceding [days], can you say this of the eighth day of the Feast [of Tabernacles] which is differentiated from the preceding [days]. But it is not so; it is quite free [for interpretation]. Consider, what does ‘Azereth mean? [Evidently it means], restrained [‘Azur] in respect of doing work. But behold it is written: Thou shalt do no work; wherefore, then, has the Divine Law written ‘Azereth? You must infer therefrom [that it is] in order to leave it free [for interpretation]. But the Tanna [of the following Baraitha] deduces it from here. **For it is taught: And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days.** One might think that he must go on bringing festal-offerings the whole of the seven days. Scripture, therefore, says, ‘it’: on it [only] are you to offer festal-offerings, but you are not to offer festal-offerings on all the

¹⁵² Rosenberg AY, Tractate “Chagigah” in Scherman N & Zlotowitz (editors), The Mishnah: Moed Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, NY, 1989, p. 15.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

seven days. If so, why does it say, 'seven'? To intimate that one may make good [the festal-offering during the seven days of the festival]. And whence [do we learn] that if he did not bring the festal-offering on the first festival day of the Feast [of Tabernacles] that he can go on bringing it during the course of the whole Festival, even on the last festival day? Scripture says: Ye shall keep it in the seventh month. If, now, [it is to be kept] in the seventh month, one might think that one can go on bringing the festal-offering throughout the whole month, therefore Scripture says. 'it': on 'it' [only] are you to offer festal-offerings, but you are not to offer festal-offerings outside it.]

{Comment: The obligation for the shalmei chagigah, the chagigah of the celebration or feast, is deduced in the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Chagigah 9a above from a verse concerning the Feast of Tabernacles (Succot): *Lev 23:41: "You shall keep it as a **festal** (חַג or חַגִּיךָ) to the Lord seven days"*, 'חַג' being interpreted as referring to a "Festival sacrifice." Also, in regard to Passover, it can be deduced from *Exod. 12:14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD*;¹⁵³ *throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.*

This obligatory shalmei chagigah is optimally brought by festival pilgrims on the first day of the festival. But he who neglected to do so, could offer it on any day for the duration of the festival. This is a damning statement for Lightfoot's and Edersheim's arguments about "*the passover*" being the chagigah of the 15th. Why? Even though Edersheim states some very important facts, his neglect of this Mishnah is his undoing:

"We can therefore quite understand that, *not* on the eve of the Passover, but on the first Paschal day, the Sanhedrists would avoid incurring a defilement which, lasting till the evening, would not only have involved them in the inconvenience of the Levitical defilement on the first festive day, but have actually prevented their offering on that day the Passover, festive sacrifice, or *Chagigah*. **For, we have these two express rules: that a person could not in Levitical defilement offer the *Chagigah*; and that the chagigah could not be offered for a person by some one else who took his place** (Jer. Chag. 76a, lines 16-14 from bottom).¹⁵⁴ These

¹⁵³ וְחַגְגִּיתֶם אֹתוֹ חַג לַיהוָה

¹⁵⁴ R. Bun bar Hiyya asked before R. Zeira, "**What is the law as to sending one's festal-offering with a third party?**" He said to him, "Let us derive the answer from the following: Men afflicted with blisters or with a polypus are exempt from making an appearance, as it is said, 'Thither shall you go...and thither shall you bring' (Deut. 12:6). "An unclean person is exempt from having to bring an appearance-offering, for it is written, 'When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord' (Deut. 31:11). "He who is worthy to make an appearance with all Israel brings an appearance-offering, and he who is not worthy to make an

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

considerations and canons seem decisive as regards the views above expressed. There would have been no reason to fear ‘defilement’ on the morning of the Paschal Sacrifice; but entrance into the Praetorium on the morning of the first Passover-day would have rendered it impossible for them to offer the *Chagigah*, which is also designated by the term *Pesach*..”¹⁵⁵

Because any sort of transferable defilement in the Praetorium short of contamination by a dead body would only defile for the day, what would the Chief Priests and others have to fear. The contaminated ones could ritually bathe, each becoming a “Tebul Yom.” Truly, in this state, they could not offer their chagigahs that day, since they were Levitically unclean. Truly, they could not eat a chagigah offered by another individual. So what harm would ensue? Only that they would have to wait one day! They could easily offer their chagigah on the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, or seventh day of the feast and fulfill their obligation for the chagigah. This fact is singularly missing in Edersheim’s discussions.

Lightfoot, takes a slightly different tack, dismissing “the Passover” as the paschal lamb, and the chagigah of the 14th in favor of the chagigah of the 15th of Nisan.

“II. τὸ πάσχα , *the Passover*, therefore here doth not signify the Paschal lamb, but the Paschal *chagigah*: of which we will remark these two or three things...

“...3. The proper time of bringing the *Chagigah* was the fifteenth day of the month. *Aruch* in אר : “They ate, and drank, and rejoiced, and were bound to bring their sacrifice of *Chagigah* on the fifteenth day;” i.e., the first day of the feast, &c.

“There might be a time, indeed, when they brought their *Chagigah* on the fourteenth day; but this was not so usual; and then it was under certain conditions...

“For this and other reasons the Rabbins account the *Chagigah* of the fourteenth day to be many degrees less perfect than that of the fifteenth; but it would be very tedious to quote their ventilations [discussions] about it. Take only these few instances:

appearance with all Israel does not bring an appearance offering.” And may he send his festal-offering with a third party? Said R. Yosé, “That cited passage indicates that one may not send a festal-offering through a third party.” in “Hagigah 1:1, XIV. A-F,” Neusner J (translator) *Talmud of the Land of Israel, 20, Yerushalmi Hagigah and Moed Qatan*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1986, p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Edersheim A, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 568.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

“R. Issai saith, ‘The *Chagigah* on the fourteenth day is not our duty.’” And a little after: “R. Eliezer saith, “By the peace offerings which they slay on the evening of the feast, a man doth not his duty, either as to rejoicing, or as to *Chagigah*..”

“...1. the evangelist expresseth it after the common way of speaking, when he calls it the *Passover*. ...

“...2. The elders of the Sanhedrim prepare and oblige themselves to eat the *Chagigah* [the *Passover*] on that day, because the next day was the sabbath; and the *Chagigah* must not make void the sabbath.

“*חגיגה אי ^ דוחה את השבת* *The Chagigah doth not set aside the sabbath*. Hence that we quoted before, that the *Chagigah* was not to be brought upon the sabbath day, as also not in case of uncleanness: because however the *Chagigah* and defilement might set aside the *Passover*, yet it might not the sabbath.” ¹⁵⁶

Lightfoot is mistaken about the *Chagigah on the fourteenth day* being *not so usual* and *under only certain conditions*. As we previously noted on the *chagigah* of the 14th (page 119), it was brought on weekdays, when the community of Israel was Levitically clean, and when it was needed as food to supplement the small year old Pesach lambs for the Seder. Certainly, all these would apply for the *Passover* of the trial and crucifixion of Christ. It was a Friday morning, the community of Israel as a whole was not declared to be unclean, and among the millions of celebrants, there must have been hundreds or thousands of registered groups who needed *chagigahs* based on the number of Pesach lambs. Consider the following numbering of the Pesach lambs during the time of King Agrippa¹⁵⁷:

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM (64b) GEMARA Our Rabbis taught: King Agrippa once wished to cast his eyes on the hosts of Israel. Said he to the High Priest, Cast your eyes upon the Passover sacrifices. He [thereupon] took a kidney from each, and six-hundred-thousand pairs of kidneys were found there, twice as many as those who departed from Egypt, excluding those who were unclean and those who were on a distant journey; and there was not a single Paschal lamb for which more than ten people had not registered; and they called it, ‘The Passover of the dense throngs.’

¹⁵⁶ Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, Vol. 3, Exercitations upon St John, Chapter. xviii. 28, pp. 420-423.

¹⁵⁷ Either Herod Agrippa of Acts Chapters 10-12; or his son Agrippa of Acts Chapters 25-26, A.D. 27- A.D.100

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

We can agree with Lightfoot that the chagigah of the 14th was not their duty, it was not obligatory, but it was important enough that one had to declare to the priests what the purpose of the lamb was -- for a Pesach offering or a peace-offering. Secondly, if the passover lamb itself became disqualified, in several cases it was allowed to be sacrificed as a peace offering.¹⁵⁸ The priests certainly had a vested interest in the declaration. The sacrificial procedures for the two were different. And, importantly, the priests received the terumah (the heave offerings) of the chagigah as their own. Certainly, the Chief Priest would be first in line for receiving terumah. So even if there were very few chagigahs, they would undoubtedly get theirs! Many degrees less perfect a sacrifice or not, let's be tedious and quote the ventilations of the rabbis about the chagigah!! For in so doing we will arrive at a much deeper understanding of John 18:28 and arrive at a new interpretation of the verse.}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate CHAGIGAH (16a): Mishnah 2:2. JOSE B. JO'EZER SAYS THAT [ON A FESTIVAL-DAY] THE LAYING ON OF HANDS [ON THE HEAD OF A SACRIFICE] MAY NOT BE PERFORMED; JOSEPH B. JOHANAN SAYS THAT IT MAY BE PERFORMED. JOSHUA B. PERAHIA SAYS THAT IT MAY NOT BE PERFORMED; NITTAI THE ARBELITE SAYS THAT IT MAY BE PERFORMED. JUDAH B. TARBAL SAYS THAT IT MAY NOT BE PERFORMED; SIMEON A. SHETAH SAYS THAT IT MAY BE PERFORMED. SHEMAIAH SAYS THAT IT MAY BE PERFORMED; ABTALION SAYS THAT IT MAY NOT BE PERFORMED. HILLEL AND MENAHEM DID NOT DIFFER. MENAHEM WENT FORTH, SHAMMAI ENTERED. SHAMMAI SAYS THAT IT MAY NOT BE PERFORMED; HILLEL SAYS THAT IT MAY BE PERFORMED. 16b THE FORMER [OF EACH] PAIR WERE PRINCES AND THE LATTER WERE HEADS OF THE COURT.

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate CHAGIGAH (16a): GEMARA ...Rami b. Hama said: You can deduce from this that the laying on of hands must be done with all one's strength; for if you suppose that one's whole strength is not required, what [work] does one do by laying on the hands? An objection was raised: [It is written]: Speak unto the sons of Israel . . . and he shall lay his hands. The sons of Israel lay on the hands but the daughters of Israel do not lay on the hands. R. Jose and R. Simeon say: **The daughters of Israel lay on the hands optionally.** R. Jose said: Abba Eleazar told me: Once we had a calf which was a peace-sacrifice, and we brought it to the Women's Court, and women laid the hands on it -- not that the laying on of the hands has to be done by women, but in order to gratify the women. Now if you suppose that we require the laying on of the hands

¹⁵⁸ Moses ben Maimon, Danby H (translator), The Code of Maimonides, Book 9: The Book of Offerings, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1963, pp. 22-23.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

*to be done with all one's strength, would we, for the sake of gratifying the women, permit work to be done with holy sacrifices! Is it to be inferred, therefore, that we do not require all one's strength? — Actually, I can answer you that we do require [it to be] with all one's strength, [but the women] were told to hold their hands lightly. If so, [what need was there to say], 'not that the laying on of the hands has to be done by women'? He could [more simply] have pointed out that it was no laying on of the hands at all! R. Ammi said: His argument runs: Firstly and secondly. **Firstly, it was no laying on of the hands at all, and secondly, it was [done] In order to gratify the women.***

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate CHAGIGAH (17a) Mishnah 2:3. ...BETH SHAMMAI SAY: PEACE-OFFERINGS MAY BE BROUGHT [ON THE FESTIVAL-DAY], AND THE HANDS NOT LAID THEREON; BUT NOT BURNT-OFFERINGS! AND BETH HILLEL SAY: BOTH PEACE-OFFERINGS AND BURNT-OFFERINGS MAY BE BROUGHT, AND THE HANDS LAID THEREON...

{Comment: Thus, according to Beth Hillel, semichah is to be performed on both the shalmei chagigah and the olah re'eyah and the slaughter done subsequently. The Gemara which follows this Mishnah further explains, according to Beth Hillel, that ordinary offerings whether voluntary or obligatory should not be brought on Yom Tov (the first day of the festival) since they can just as well be brought on Chol HaMoed (the intermediate days of the festival) or after the festival. Olat re'eyah and shalmei chagigah, however, could only be brought during this seven day period. No other sacrifices, not even shelamim which yield meat for their owner may be sacrificed on Yom Tov."} ¹⁵⁹

MISHNAH Tractate CHAGIGAH: Mishnah 2:5 THE HANDS HAVE TO BE RINSED FOR [EATING] UNCONSECRATED [FOOD], AND [SECOND] TITHE, AND FOR TERUMAH ¹⁶⁰; BUT FOR HALLOWED THINGS [THE HANDS] HAVE TO BE IMMERSSED. ¹⁶¹ IN REGARD TO THE [WATER OF] PURIFICATION, IF ONE'S HANDS BECAME DEFILED, ONE'S [WHOLE] BODY IS DEEMED DEFILED. IF ONE BATHED FOR UNCONSECRATED [FOOD], AND INTENDED TO BE RENDERED FIT SOLELY FOR UNCONSECRATED [FOOD], ONE IS PROHIBITED FROM [PARTAKING OF SECOND] TITHE.

¹⁵⁹ Rosenberg AY, "Tractate 'Chagigah,'" in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Moed Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, NY, 1989, p. 31.

¹⁶⁰ the kohen's share of the heave-offering (from yearly harvests, certain sacrifices, and shekels)

¹⁶¹ Footnote: I.e., such as are offered in the Temple, and if not wholly devoted to the altar, have to be eaten in the Temple Court.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

{Comment: For eating food in the status of terumah **תרומה**, such as the breast and right hind thigh of any of the chagigahs (which are offered in the Temple and have to be eaten in the Temple Court) the priest's hands have to be rinsed in cleansing water. If the priest's hand became defiled by touching a dead body, he was cleansed by the water of purification containing the ashes of the red heifer. Such contamination was considered more serious--as if his whole body was contaminated.}

MISHNAH Tractate CHAGIGAH: Mishnah 2:6 IF ONE BATHED FOR [SECOND] TITHE, AND INTENDED TO BE RENDERED FIT SOLELY FOR [SECOND] TITHE, ONE IS PROHIBITED FROM [PARTAKING OF] TERUMAH. IF ONE BATHED FOR TERUMAH, AND INTENDED TO BE RENDERED FIT SOLELY FOR TERUMAH, ONE IS PROHIBITED FROM [PARTAKING OF] HALLOWED THINGS. IF ONE BATHED FOR HALLOWED THINGS {sacrificial meat or flour}, AND INTENDED TO BE RENDERED FIT SOLELY FOR HALLOWED THINGS ONE IS PROHIBITED FROM [TOUCHING THE WATERS OF] PURIFICATION {the water containing the ashes of the Red Heifer, used to cleanse those who came in contact with a corpse}. IF ONE BATHED FOR SOMETHING POSSESSING A STRICTER [DEGREE OF SANCTITY], ONE IS PERMITTED [TO HAVE CONTACT WITH] SOMETHING POSSESSING A LIGHTER [DEGREE OF SANCTITY]. IF ONE BATHED BUT WITHOUT SPECIAL INTENTION, IT IS AS THOUGH ONE HAD NOT BATHED.

{Comment: Having become defiled, to eat his chagigah, the priest would have to be immersed in a cleansing bath to a level of purity of at least terumah **תרומה**. However, unless he bathed for “kodesh” **קֹדֶשׁ**, he could not eat of the “HALLOWED THINGS.” }

MISHNAH Tractate CHAGIGAH: Mishnah 2:7 THE *GARMENTS OF AN AM HA-ARETZ HAVE MIDRAS-[CONTAMINATION] FOR PERUSHIM. GARMENTS OF PERUSHIM HAVE MIDRAS-[CONTAMINATION] FOR THOSE WHO EAT TERUMAH. GARMENTS OF THOSE WHO EAT TERUMAH HAVE MIDRAS-[CONTAMINATION] FOR [THOSE WHO EAT] KODESH. GARMENTS OF [THOSE WHO EAT] KODESH HAVE MIDRAS-[CONTAMINATION] FOR [THOSE WHO HANDLE] THE WATER OF CONTAMINATION.

{Comment: The various hierarchical laws of contamination **טְמֵאָה** (tumah) and purity **טְהֻרָה** (taharah) are especially relevant to festival offerings, since spiritual purity was a prerequisite for appearance in the Temple and eating sanctified food such as sacrificial meat and the second tithe (maaser sheni). However, the ordinary people of the land

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

עַמֵּי הָאֶרֶץ (ammei ha-aretz), regarded by the Pharisees as generally unversed in and unconcerned with the intricate laws of purity, were given the status of being ritually pure during festivals for the good of Israel as a whole. This was in contrast to their halachic (legal) status all year round when, as a result of their careless behavior and ignorance, they had to be regarded as spiritually contaminated (tamei) as a precautionary measure.

MIDRAS-CONTAMINATION is a level of uncleanness conveyed by any of the individuals listed in Lev. 12:2 (women giving birth), 15:2 (men with discharges), or 15:25 (women with excessive duration of menstrual flows).¹⁶² It is the men with discharges that is most revealing to examine.

*Lev. 15:1 HASHEM spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 Speak to the CHILDREN of Israel and say to them: **Any man who will have a discharge from his flesh, his discharge is contaminated.** 3 Thus shall be his contamination when he discharges: whether his flesh runs with his discharge or it becomes stopped up because of his discharge, that is his contamination. 4 **Any bedding** upon which the person with the discharge will recline shall be contaminated, and **any vessel** upon which he will sit shall become contaminated. 5 A person who will touch his bedding shall immerse his garments, and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. 6 And one who sits upon a vessel upon which the one with the discharge has sat shall immerse his garments, and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. 7 **One who touch the flesh of the man with the discharge, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening.** 8 **If the person with the discharge will spit upon a pure person, he shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening.** 9 Any riding equipment upon which the person with the discharge will ride shall become contaminated. 10 And whoever touches anything that will be beneath him, shall become contaminated until evening; and whoever carries them shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. 11 **Whomever the man with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in the water, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening.** 12 Pottery that the man with the discharge will touch shall be broken; and any wooden utensil shall be rinsed in water...*

¹⁶² Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 1141.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

...16 A man from whom there is a discharge of semen shall immerse his entire flesh in the water and remain contaminated until evening. 17 Any garment or anything of leather upon which there shall be semen, shall be immersed in the water and remain contaminated until evening. ¹⁶³

The discharges this chapter is concerned with are seminal emissions. Semen that is discharged from a Jewish male is contaminated in and of itself, whether normal semen or pathologic (clear and loose which dribbles from the individual's flesh, or thick enough to clog the organ).[Referenced content is missing.] It contaminates the man, his garments, his bedding, vessels he sits on, and his touch. It is verses 7, 11, and 17 which draw our attention. If a man with a discharge touched a ritually clean person (priest included) without first having washed his hands, the ritually clean person becomes midras-contaminated, and must immerse his garments and himself in water -- i.e., he must immerse in a ritual cleansing bath and become a Tebul Yom. Only after sunset does his ritual purity return. Similarly, if the ritually clean person happened to touch the flesh or the garments of the midras contaminated individual, he would contract midras-contamination.

Now, from the Mishnahot above one infers that if *the garments of the am ha-aretz have midras-[contamination] for [the] perushim (Pharisees)*, --**how much more would that of the Roman detachment and Pilate himself have for the chief priests and their officers (who were probably priests as well)! Consider the following.** Among the group of Roman officials and soldiers who would be surrounding Pilate, or who would be on duty in the Praetorium, the likelihood of many of them having midras-contamination from semen emissions, given the lax moral status of the pagan Gentile Romans (especially being military troops), was undoubtedly not small. Gentiles in general were considered unclean. So in the minds of the Jewish High Priests and their officials, the Roman officials and guards in the Praetorium held a great potential to transmit midras-contamination. Since just touching the garment of a gentile with one's hand caused ritual defilement of the entire person, this probably constituted the major fear of the high priests and officers and caused them to refrain from going into Pilate --(***John 18:28) Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.*** If all or the majority of the priests were defiled, they could sacrifice the pesach lambs in impurity as noted previously in PESACHIM 79a. They could even bathe at the end of the day to regain their ritual purity and legally eat the pesach lamb for which they had registered. The reason this was

¹⁶³ Scherman N and Goldwurm H, Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary), Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, p. 241-243.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

possible was because the Pesach Seder began after the setting of the sun and, thus, constituted another day as Edersheim adroitly notes:

“Few expressions have given rise to more earnest controversy than this. On two things at least we can speak with certainty. **Entrance into a heathen house did Levitically render impure for that day--that is, till the evening.** The fact of such defilement is clearly attested both in the New Testament [Acts 10:28] and in the Mishnah, though its reasons might be various. [Ohol. xviii. 7, Tohar. vii 3] **A person who had so become Levitically unclean was technically called Tebhul Yom (‘bathed of the day’).** The other point is, that, **to have so become ‘impure’ for the day, would not have disqualified from eating the Paschal Lamb, since the meal was partaken of after the evening, and when a new day had begun.** In fact, it is distinctly laid down [Pes. 92a] that the ‘bathed of the day,’ that is, **he who had become impure for the day and had bathed in the evening, did partake of the Paschal Supper,** and an instance is related, [Jer. Pes. 36b lines 14-15 from bottom] when some soldiers who had guarded the gates of Jerusalem ‘immersed,’ and ate the Paschal Lamb. It follows that those Sanhedrists could not have abstained from entering the Palace of Pilate because by so doing they would have been disqualified for the Paschal supper. ¹⁶⁴

However, if a minority of the priests were defiled such as would have been the case on the morning of the crucifixion, they would not have been able to sacrifice the lambs of the Pesach or chagigah. They could have registered and eaten their Paschal lambs after sunset as Tebul Yoms. **But they would not have been allowed to eat the priest’s share of the chagigahs of the 14th** (the heave offerings, the terumah תְּרוּמָה, i.e., the tender breasts and right hind thighs), because they were no longer sanctified to a level of terumah תְּרוּמָה. Herein is the mystery revealed, that mystery of defilement that kept the priests from entering the Praetorium. The pharisees, scribes, and elders, etc., who were not priests, would not have been as significantly affected, since they could bathe and eat the Passover after sunset. Undoubtedly, of the groups of people included in the “they,” only the priests would have something to lose -- the terumah -- for only the priests were allowed by the Torah to partake of it. The details that St. John, the one known to the high priest (John 18:15), gives us in his Gospel are of utmost importance in ascertaining the priests fears. *(John 18:28) Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.* He

¹⁶⁴ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, Book V, p 566-567.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

states that they were concerned specifically about eating the Passover, not sacrificing it. From PESACHIM 69b one again read directly that the chagigah of the 14th of Nisan was considered to be the same as the pesach sacrifice:

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM (69b) GEMARA: ...Come and hear: The hagigah which comes with the Passover is as the Passover: it comes from the flock, but it does not come from the herd; it comes from the males but it does not come from the females; it comes a year old, but it does not come a two-year old, and it may be eaten only a day and a night, and it may be eaten only roast, and it may be eaten only by those who have registered for it...

...The Scholars asked: According to the son of Tema, is it subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone, or is it not subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone? [Do we say,] though the Divine Law assimilated it to the Passover, yet the Writ saith, '[neither shall ye break a bone] thereof,' [implying] 'thereof,' but not of the hagigah;' ...Hence it must be [the view] of the son of Tema, which proves that it {the hagigah} is subject to [the prohibition of] breaking a bone!...

Yes, the chagigah is as the passover lamb: it comes from the flock (lamb or goat), is male, 1 year old, is eaten roast only by those registered for it, and may not have any of its bones broken. **It differs from the paschal lamb in that its choice parts, the breast and right thigh (given by the Children of Israel to the priests, the kohanim) are eaten by the kohanim and their families in a clean area** [(essentially the Temple Courts) Lev 7:28-34 and 10:14-15], with the remainder eaten by the registered offerers!

*Lev 7:28 HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: 29 Speak to the children of Israel, saying: **when one brings his feast peace-offering for HASHEM, he shall deliver his offering for HASHEM from his feast peace-offering.** 30 With his own hands shall he bring the fire-offerings of HASHEM: the fat atop the breast shall he bring; the breast in order to wave as a wave-service before HASHEM. 31 The Kohen shall cause the fat to go up in smoke on the Altar; **and the breast is for Aaron and his sons.** 32 **You shall give the right thigh as a raised-up gift to the Kohen, from your feast peace-offerings.** 33 **Anyone from among the sons of Aaron who may offer the blood of the peace-offering and the fat -- the right thigh shall be his as a portion.** 34 For the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up have I taken from the children of Israel, from their feast*

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

peace-offering, and I have given them to Aaron the Kohen and his sons as an eternal stipend from the Children of Israel...

Lev 10:12 Moses spoke to Aaron and to Elazar and Issamar, his remaining sons...14 And the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising up are {for} you to eat in a pure place, you and your sons and daughters with you; for they have been given as your portion and the portion of your sons from the feast peace-offerings of the Children of Israel. 15 They are to bring the thigh of the raising-up and the breast of the waving upon the fire-offering fats to wave as a waving before HASHEM; and it shall be for you and your sons with you for an eternal decree, as HASHEM has commanded.”¹⁶⁵

Importantly, only the Kohen who offers the blood of the chagigah was entitled to the terumah תְּרומָה, the breast and right hind thigh. When the Chagigah was slaughtered the breast and the thigh waved along with its special fat. They were then cooked as the fat was burned on the altar. The breast and the thigh then had to be eaten that day or that night!}

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate MENACHOTH :¹⁶⁶ (61a) Mishnah 5:6. THESE REQUIRE WAVING BUT NOT BRINGING NEAR: ... THE SACRIFICIAL PORTIONS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S PEACE-OFFERINGS AND THE BREAST AND THIGH THEREOF, WHETHER THEY ARE THE OFFERINGS OF MEN OR OF WOMEN, BY ISRAELITES BUT NOT BY OTHERS...

Tractate MENACHOTH Mishnah 5:7 ...THE PEACE-OFFERING OF THE INDIVIDUAL REQUIRES THE LAYING ON OF HANDS FOR THE LIVING ANIMAL AND WAVING AFTER IT IS SLAUGHTERED...

Tractate MENACHOTH (62a) GEMARA* How was it arranged [For the waving]? *The sacrificial portions were put upon the palm of the hand and the breast and thigh above them; and whenever there were cakes [to be waved] the cakes were always on top, Where [is this seen]? — R. Papa said, At the consecration [of the priests].

Why is it so? Shall I say it is because it is written, The thigh of heaving and the breast of waving they shall put upon the fat of the fire-offering, to wave it for a wave-

¹⁶⁵ Scherman N and Goldwurm H (translators) Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 121-123, 157-159.

¹⁶⁶ Menachoth = plural form of Minchah = Lit. “meal offerings”

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

offering? But is it not also written, He shall bring the fat upon the breast? — Abaye answered, The latter refers to the manner in which the priest brings them from the slaughtering place and turns them over [into the hands of the priest that is about to wave them]. But is it not also written, And they put the fat upon the breasts? — This refers to the handing over of these to the priest that is about to burn them. [The priest that waved them when handing them to another priest to be burnt would naturally turn them over into that other priest's hands, so that now the fat would be on top.] These verses incidentally teach us that three priests are required [for this part of the service], as it is said, In the multitude of people is the king's glory.

Tractate MENACHOTH (105b): GEMARA: ... with it and says. 'If I was a leper, then this is my guilt-offering and this the log of oil for it; but if not, **let this be a freewill peace-offering**'. And that guilt-offering must be slaughtered on the north side, its blood must be applied upon the thumb and the great toe, it requires the laying on of hands, and drink-offerings, and the waving of the breast and the thigh, [Like the peace-offering. The special rites peculiar to the guilt-offering as well as those peculiar to the peace-offering must be observed with this offering, as it is not known which it is.] **and it may be eaten by the males of the priesthood during that day and the following night [until midnight].**

{Comment: The breast and thigh were brought with the sacred fat to another priest who waved them, was then given to a third priest who cooked them shortly thereafter, and presumably given back to the original priest who slaughtered the lamb as his special share to eat. Were a Kohen not terumah **תְּרוּמָה** in purity, he could not partake. Were he to do so, he would risk being cut off from his people as follows: **Lev. 7:20: "If a person eats flesh from the feast peace-offering {מִזֶּבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים} = lit. "from the sacrifice of the peace offerings" that is HASHEM'S while his contamination is upon him, that soul will be cut off from its people.**" In other words, the priest or high priest had to be clean to sacrifice, to eat, and as we shall see in the following passages could not be a tebul yom! Even if he were unaware of his uncleanness through a casual contact with Gentile clothing, nonetheless, he was still subject to the requirements of the Torah.}

MISHNAH -- Tractate KELIM ¹⁶⁷**Mishnah 1:5. TEN GRADES OF UNCLEANNESS EMANATE FROM MEN: A MAN** ¹⁶⁸**BEFORE THE OFFERING OF HIS OBLIGATORY SACRIFICES { Lit., 'lacking atonement' } IS FORBIDDEN TO EAT HOLY THINGS BUT PERMITTED TO EAT TERUMAH AND [SECOND] TITHE. IF HE IS { Lit., 'he**

¹⁶⁷ Kelim = Lit. "vessels"

¹⁶⁸ Footnote: Such as a confirmed leper or a zab, or a zabah, whose restoration to cleanness depends on the offering of the prescribed sacrifice.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

*returned to be'.} A **TEBUL YOM, HE IS FORBIDDEN TO EAT HOLY THINGS AND TERUMAH BUT PERMITTED THE EATING OF [SECOND] TITHE.***

{Comment: Here one notes that the priest lacking atonement as well as the priest Tebul Yom are forbidden to eat Holy Things. However, **the Tebul Yom who is a priest** (the only Israelite authorized to eat the terumah) **is also forbidden to eat the terumah תרומה, the heave offerings.**^{169}}}

MISHNAH -- Tractate KELIM Mishnah 1:6. THERE ARE TEN GRADES OF HOLINESS: THE LAND OF ISRAEL IS HOLIER THAN ALL OTHER LANDS. AND WHAT IS THE NATURE OF ITS HOLINESS? THAT FROM IT ARE BROUGHT THE 'OMER, THE FIRST-FRUITS AND THE TWO LOAVES, WHICH MAY NOT BE BROUGHT FROM ANY OF THE OTHER LANDS.

MISHNAH -- Tractate KELIM Mishnah 1:7. CITIES THAT ARE WALLED ARE HOLIER, FOR LEPERS MUST BE SENT OUT OF THEM AND A CORPSE, THOUGH IT MAY BE CARRIED ABOUT WITHIN THEM AS LONG AS IT IS DESIRED, MAY NOT BE BROUGHT BACK ONCE IT HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT.

MISHNAH -- Tractate KELIM Mishnah 1:8. THE AREA WITHIN THE WALL {of Jerusalem} IS HOLIER, FOR IT IS THERE THAT HOLY THINGS OF A MINOR DEGREE AND SECOND TITHE MAY BE EATEN. THE TEMPLE MOUNT IS HOLIER, FOR NEITHER ZABS NOR ZABAHS NOR MENSTRUANTS NOR WOMEN AFTER CHILDBIRTH MAY ENTER IT. THE RAMPART IS HOLIER, FOR NEITHER IDOLATERS NOR ONE WHO CONTRACTED CORPSE UNCLEANNESS MAY ENTER IT. THE COURT OF WOMEN IS HOLIER, FOR NO TEBUL YOM MAY ENTER IT, THOUGH NO SIN-OFFERING IS THEREBY INCURRED. THE COURT OF THE ISRAELITES IS HOLIER, FOR A MAN WHO HAS NOT YET OFFERED HIS OBLIGATORY SACRIFICES MAY NOT ENTER IT, AND IF HE ENTERS HE INCURS THEREBY A SIN-OFFERING. THE COURT OF THE PRIESTS IS HOLIER, FOR NO ISRAELITES MAY ENTER IT EXCEPT WHEN THEY ARE REQUIRED TO DO SO IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS, SLAYING OR WAVING.

¹⁶⁹ The terumah is 'that which is lifted or separated'; the heave-offering given from the yields of the yearly harvests, from certain sacrifices, and from the skekels collected in a special chamber in the Temple (terumah ha-lishkah). Terumah gedolah (great offering: the first levy on the produce of the year given to the priest (v. Num XVIII. 8ff). Its quantity varied according to the generosity of the owner, who could give one-fortieth, one-fiftieth, or one-sixtieth of his harvest. Terumah ma'aser (heave-offering of the tithe); the heave-offering given to the priest by the Levite from the tithes he receives (v. Num . XVIII. 25f.).

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

MISHNAH -- Tractate KELIM Mishnah 1:9. THE AREA BETWEEN THE ULAM {porch} AND THE ALTAR IS HOLIER, FOR MEN AFFLICTED WITH BLEMISHES OR WITH A WILD GROWTH OF HAIR MAY NOT ENTER IT. THE HEKAL IS HOLIER, FOR NO ONE WHOSE HANDS OR FEET ARE UNWASHED MAY ENTER IT. THE HOLY OF HOLIES IS HOLIER, FOR ONLY THE HIGH PRIEST, ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, AT THE SERVICE, MAY ENTER IT. R. JOSE STATED: IN FIVE RESPECTS IS THE AREA BETWEEN THE ULAM AND THE ALTAR ON A PAR WITH THE HEKAL, FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH BLEMISHES OR WITH A WILD GROWTH OF HAIR, OR WHO HAVE DRUNK WINE OR WHOSE HANDS OR FEET ARE UNWASHED MAY NOT ENTER THERE, AND THE PEOPLE MUST KEEP AWAY FROM THE AREA BETWEEN THE ULAM AND THE ALTAR WHEN THE INCENSE IS BEING BURNED.

{Comment: Of note, the Tebul Yom could not enter the Court of the Women. Consequently, he could not climb the steps and enter the Court of the Israelites, nor the Court of the Priests, nor the area between the porch of the Holy Place and the outer altar of sacrifice. Importantly, it was only in the Temple Court, i.e., the Court of the Priests, that the chagigah could be ritually slaughtered. Remember, only the priest who slaughtered the chagigah of the 14th of Nisan was able to eat of it. Consequently, if a priest had been contaminated earlier that day, then ritually bathed (becoming a Tebul Yom) awaiting sunset to eat of the Holy Things or of the terumah, nonetheless, he could not enter the Court to sacrifice the chagigah, nor could he eat the terumah anyway according to Mishnah 1:5 above.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: ¹⁷⁰ (55a) Mishnah 5.7. THE PEACE-OFFERING IS A SACRIFICE OF LESSER SANCTITY. IT MAY BE SLAIN IN ANY PART OF THE TEMPLE COURT, AND ITS BLOOD REQUIRES TWO SPRINKLINGS, WHICH CONSTITUTE FOUR; AND IT MAY BE EATEN IN ANY PART OF THE CITY, BY ANY PERSON, PREPARED IN ANY WAY, DURING TWO DAYS AND ONE NIGHT. THE PARTS THEREOF WHICH ARE SEPARATED ARE SIMILAR, SAVE THAT THESE ARE EATEN BY PRIESTS, THEIR WIVES, THEIR SONS, AND THEIR SLAVES.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (55a) GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: And he shall kill it at the door of the tent of meeting . . . and he shall kill it before the tent of meeting . . . and he shall kill it before the tent of meeting: this teaches that all sides [of the Temple court] are fit in the case of sacrifices of lesser sanctity, and the north [side] a fortiori: if sacrifices of higher sanctity, which were not made fit [for slaughtering] on all

¹⁷⁰ Zevachim = Lit. “sacrifices”

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

sides, are fit on the north; is it not logical that sacrifices of lesser sanctity, which are fit on all sides, are fit in the north? R. Eliezer said: The Writ comes specifically to declare the north fit. For you might say, is not [the reverse] logical: If sacrifices of lesser sanctity, which are fit on all sides, yet their place is not fit for sacrifices of higher sanctity; then sacrifices of higher sanctity, which are permitted in the north only, is it not logical that their [particular] place is not permitted for sacrifices of lesser sanctity? Therefore 'the tent of meeting' is stated.

{Comment: This Gemara reinforces the idea that the Temple Court mentioned in the Mishnah is really the Court of the Priests, since the “north” side means the north side of the altar of burnt offerings. This is the Court immediately in front of the Temple, not the large Court of the Gentiles. Again, this was off limits to the Tebul Yom. For the offerer, any part of Jerusalem was authorized for the eating of the remaining portion of the chagigah once the terumah had been removed by the priests.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (55b) GEMARA ...Why is 'the door of the tent of meeting' written in one case, whereas 'before the tent of meeting' is written in the others? — We are thereby informed of Rab Judah's teaching in Samuel's name. For Rab Judah said in Samuel's name: If a peace-offering is slaughtered before the doors of the hekal are opened, it is invalid, for it is said, 'And he shall kill it at the entrance [opening] of the tent of meeting': when it is open, but not when it is shut. It was stated likewise: Mar 'Ukba b. Hama said in R. Jose son of R. Hanina's name: If one slaughtered a peace-offering before the doors of the hekal were opened, it is invalid, because it is said, 'And he shall kill it at the entrance [opening] of the tent of meeting': when it is open, and not when it is shut. In the West [Palestine] they recited it thus: R. Aha b. Jacob said in R. Ashi's name: If a peace-offering is slaughtered before the doors of the hekal are opened, it is invalid; in the Tabernacle, [if it is slaughtered] before the Levites set up the Tabernacle or after the Levites take down the Tabernacle, it is invalid.

...What about the space behind the place of the Mercy Seat [kapporeth]? — Come and hear, for Rami son of Rab Judah said in Rab's name: There was a small passage way behind the place of the Mercy Seat, in order to make the whole Temple court fit for the consumption of most holy sacrifices and the slaughtering of minor sacrifices...

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (56a) GEMARA... A Tanna recited before R. Nahman: ***The whole Temple court was a hundred and eighty-seven cubits in length by a hundred and thirty-five in breadth. Said he to him, Thus did my father say: Within such an area the priests entered, consumed the most holy and slaughtered the minor sacrifices there, and were liable for uncleanness. What does this exclude? Shall we say that it excludes the windows, doors and the thickness of the wall? Surely we learnt: The***

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

*windows and the thickness of the wall are as within? — Rather, it is to exclude the chambers. But if they are built on nonsacred ground and open into sacred ground, surely we learnt: Their inside is holy? — That is by Rabbinical law [only] — And not by Scriptural law? Surely it was taught: **How do we know that the priests may enter the chambers which are built on non-sacred ground and open into sacred ground, eat there the most holy sacrifices and the residue of the meal-offering? Because it says, In the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it: Scripture permitted many courts for eating!** — Said Raba: Eating is different. But are they not [holy] in respect of uncleanness? Surely it was taught: The chambers built on non-sacred ground: priests may enter therein and eat there the most holy sacrifices;...*

{Comment: This Gemara further reinforces the idea that the slaughter of the peace-offering occurs within the Court of the Priests, immediately surrounding the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. It measured 187 cubits by 135 cubits.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (56a) Mishnah 5:8 . THE FIRSTLING, TITHE AND PASSOVER-OFFERING ARE SACRIFICES OF LESSER SANCTITY. THEY ARE SLAUGHTERED IN ANY PART OF THE TEMPLE COURT, AND THEIR BLOOD REQUIRES ONE SPRINKLING, PROVIDED THAT IT IS APPLIED OVER AGAINST THE BASE. THEY DIFFERED IN THEIR CONSUMPTION [AS FOLLOWS]: THE FIRSTLING WAS EATEN BY PRIESTS [ONLY], WHILE THE TITHE MIGHT BE EATEN BY ANY MAN. AND THEY WERE EATEN IN ANY PART OF THE CITY, PREPARED IN ANY MANNER, DURING TWO DAYS AND ONE NIGHT. THE PASSOVER-OFFERING MIGHT BE EATEN ONLY AT NIGHT, ONLY UNTIL MIDNIGHT, AND IT MIGHT BE EATEN ONLY BY THOSE REGISTERED FOR IT, AND IT MIGHT BE EATEN ONLY ROASTED.

{Comment: Similarly, the Passover is slaughtered in this same Court of the Priests. One of those registered for it had to be ritually clean to enter this area and participate in its offering. Obviously, a Tebul Yom, who is a priest, could register for a particular pesach lamb and could eat of it after sundown, although he could not enter the Court and be the sacrificer. Could he also register for a chagigah and eat it after sundown? The answer is definitely, “No!” The following extensive discussion settles this question conclusively. We start with his eligibility with respect to a sin offering. The argument proceeds to the terumah specifically, but is built upon all the intermediate steps, hence the full discourse is quoted.}

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (98b) Mishnah 12:1. {A PRIEST WHO IS ¹⁷¹} A TEBUL YOM AND ONE WHO LACKS ATONEMENT DO NOT SHARE IN SACRIFICES FOR CONSUMPTION IN THE EVENING. AN ONEN MAY HANDLE [SACRED FLESH], BUT MAY NOT OFFER, AND DOES NOT RECEIVE A SHARE FOR CONSUMPTION IN THE EVENING. MEN WITH BLEMISHES, WHETHER PERMANENT OR TRANSIENT, RECEIVE A SHARE AND MAY EAT [OF THE SACRIFICES]. BUT MAY NOT OFFER. WHOEVER IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICE DOES NOT SHARE IN THE FLESH; AND HE WHO DOES NOT SHARE IN THE FLESH DOES NOT SHARE IN THE HIDES. EVEN IF ONE WAS UNCLEAN WHEN THE BLOOD WAS SPRINKLED BUT CLEAN WHEN THE FATS WERE BURNED [ON THE ALTAR], HE DOES NOT SHARE IN THE FLESH, FOR IT IS SAID: HE AMONG THE SONS OF AARON, THAT OFFERETH THE BLOOD OF THE PEACE-OFFERINGS, AND THE FAT, SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT THIGH FOR A PORTION.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (99a) GEMARA: How do we know it? — Said Resh Lakish, Because Scripture saith, The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: the priest who offers for sin may eat; he who does not offer for sin, may not eat. Yet is this a general rule? surely there is the whole ward, which do not offer for sin, yet they eat? ¹⁷²

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate ZEVACHIM: (99a) GEMARA... — We mean he who is eligible to offer for sin. But lo, a minor is not eligible to offer for sin, yet he eats [thereof]? — Rather, what does ‘Shall eat it’ mean? He shall receive a share therein: he who is eligible to offer for sin, receives a share; he who is not eligible to offer for sin, does not receive a share. ¹⁷³

But surely one who is blemished is not eligible to offer for sin, yet he receives a share? — The Divine Law included a blemished [person] [in the privilege of sharing], viz., Every male among the priests. [may eat thereof]. which includes a [priest] with a blemish. Yet say that ‘every male’ includes a tebul yom? — It is logical to include a blemished [priest], since he may eat. On the contrary, one should include a tebul yom,

¹⁷¹ Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT 1988, p. 725, on Zebachim 12:1.

¹⁷² Footnote: The priests were divided into wards, which officiated in rotation, (v. Glos. s.v. Mishmar). Only one of the priests sprinkled the blood of a particular sacrifice, yet the whole of the ward to which he belonged would share it.

¹⁷³ Footnote: A minor accordingly does not receive a share in his own right, but merely eats of another priest’s share. — **From this we learn that a tebul yom and one who lacks atonement do not receive shares.**

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

since he will be eligible in the evening? — Nevertheless, he is not eligible at present. R. Joseph said: Consider: what does 'shall eat it' mean? [Surely] shall share therein. Then let the Divine Law write 'shall share therein'? why 'shall eat therein'? That you may infer: he who is fit to eat, shares [therein]; he who is not fit to eat does not share [in it].

Resh Lakish asked: Is a share to be given to a blemished [priest] who is unclean? [Do we say,] Since he is not eligible [to perform the service] and yet the Divine Law included him, it makes no difference, for what does it matter whether he is unclean or blemished? Or perhaps, he who is fit to eat [when the sacrifice is offered] receives a share, [while] he who is not fit to eat does not receive a share? — Said Rabbah, Come and hear: A High Priest can offer [a sacrifice] as an onen, but he may not eat nor receive a share to eat in the evening. This proves that one must be fit to eat [when the sacrifice is offered]. This proves it.

R. Oshaia asked: Is a share of public sacrifices given to an unclean [priest]?¹⁷⁴

Do we say, the Divine Law saith, 'The priest that offereth it for sin [shall eat it]', and this one too can offer for sin; or perhaps, he who is fit to eat receives a share, he who is not fit to eat does not receive a share?{Footnote: He is definitely not fit to eat, for a public sacrifice brought in uncleanness may not be eaten.} — Said Rabina, Come and hear: A High Priest may offer [sacrifices] as an onen, but he may not eat, nor receive a share to eat in the evening. This proves that he must be fit to eat. This proves it.

AN ONEN MAY HANDLE [SACRED FLESH], BUT MAY NOT OFFER etc. An onen may handle [sacred flesh]? Surely the following contradicts it: An onen and one who lacks atonement need immersion for sacred flesh? — Said R. Ammi in R. Johanan's name: There is no difficulty: here [in the Mishnah] he had performed immersion; there, he had not performed immersion. But what even if he did perform immersion: aninuth{the status of onen} returns to him? for Rabbah son of R. Huna said: If an onen performed immersion, his aninuth returns to him! — Rather, there is no difficulty: here he dismissed [it] from his mind; in the other case he did not dismiss [it] from his mind. But inattention requires [sprinkling on] the third and the seventh [days]: for R. Justai son of R. Mathun said in R. Johanan's name: Inattention requires sprinkling on the third and the seventh [days]! — There is no difficulty: In the one case he was careless about defilement of the dead; in the other he was careless about defilement by a reptile. Defilement of the dead is genuine defilement and requires sunset?{Footnote: Even after immersion the priest may not eat flesh of sacrifices until sunset, whereas only immersion is required above.}moreover, even terumah too [should require immersion]? — Said R. Jeremiah:

¹⁷⁴ Footnote: For public sacrifices can be offered in uncleanness, if the whole congregation is unclean. Hence, though this priest could not sacrifice just then, yet in general he was eligible for public sacrifices.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

[This law holds good] when he declares, I was on my guard against anything that would defile me, but not against anything that would disqualify me.

And is there half watchfulness? — Yes, and it was taught even so: If the basket was still on his head (102b)[he is] like an unclean [person]: as an unclean person may not eat—so long as he is not clean, so may this man not eat so long as he is not made whole; hence it informs us [otherwise].

WHOEVER IS NOT ELIGIBLE etc. Is he not? surely a [priest] with a blemish is not eligible, yet he receives a share? Moreover [it implies that every] one who is eligible for service receives a share; lo, an unclean [priest] is eligible for the service in public sacrifices, and yet does not receive a share? — He means: who is fit to eat. Lo, a minor is fit to eat, yet does not receive a share? — He does not teach this. Now that you have arrived at this, [you can say,] After all, it is as we first said: if [your difficulty is] on account of an unclean [priest], he does not teach this; and if [your difficulty is] on account of a [priest] with a blemish: a [priest] with a blemish was included by the Divine Law.

EVEN IF ONE WAS UNCLEAN WHEN THE BLOOD WAS SPRINKLED BUT CLEAN WHEN THE FATS WERE BURNED, HE DOES NOT RECEIVE A SHARE. Hence, if he was clean when the blood was sprinkled but unclean when the fats were burned, he does receive a share. Our Mishnah does not agree with Abba Saul. For it was taught, Abba Saul said: He never receives a share unless he was clean from the time of the sprinkling of the blood until the time of the burning of the fats [inclusive], because it is said, He [among the sons of Aaron,] that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, [shall have the right thigh for a portion] this intimates that even [at] the burning of the fat too [cleanness] is required.

R. Ashi asked: What if he was defiled in between? Do we require him [to be clean] at the sprinkling and at the burning, and [this condition] is fulfilled; or perhaps he must be clean from the time of the sprinkling until the time of the burning of the fats? The question stands over.

Raba said: I have the following discussion as a tradition from R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon, which he stated in a privy. You can argue: If a priest, a tebul yom, came and demanded: Give me of an Israelite's meal-offering, that I may eat thereof, one [the clean priest] can answer him: If I can repulse you from an Israelite's sin-offering, though you have a valid right to your own sin-offering, surely I can repulse you from an Israelite's meal-offering, seeing that you have no valid right in your own meal-offering. [He can reply:] If you repulse me from an Israelite's sin-offering, that is

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

because just as I have a great privilege, so have you a great privilege; will you repulse me from an Israelite's meal-offering, where just as my own rights are weak, so are your rights weak? [He can answer:] Lo, it says, [And every meal-offering . . .] shall be the priest's that offereth it: come, offer, and eat.

[If the tebul yom demands:] Give me [a share] of an Israelite's sin-offering, that I may eat, he can reply: If I can repulse you from an Israelite's meal-offering, though I have no privileges in my own meal-offering, surely I can repulse you from an Israelite's sin-offering, seeing that I have great privileges in my own sin-offering. He can retort: If you can repulse me from an Israelite's meal-offering, where just as you have no privileges so have I no privileges: will you repulse me from an Israelite's sin-offering, where just as you have great privileges, so have I great privileges? He can answer: Lo, it says, The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: come, offer it for sin, and eat!

If [the tebul yom] demands Give me [a share] of the breast and the thigh, that I may eat, he can reply: If I can repulse you from an Israelite's sin-offering, though you have great privileges in your own sin-offering, surely I can repulse you from a peace-offering, where your privileges are weak, since you have rights only to the breast and thigh thereof. He can retort: If you can repulse me from a sin-offering, where my rights are weak in respect of my wives and servants, will you repulse me from the breast and thigh, where my rights are strong in respect of my wives and my slaves? He can answer: Lo, it says, It shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings against the altar: Come, sprinkle and eat. Thus the tebul yom departs, bearing his arguments on his head,¹⁷⁵ with an onen on his right and one who lacks atonement on his left.

{Comment: If the Kohen bathed at the end of the day, it would still be too late to eat the chagigah. Why? Once evening fell, all the Passover lambs and chagigah would have been sacrificed and the priests would have retired to their own homes to celebrate their Passover seders. Consequently, if a minority of the priests were defiled on the morning of the 14th of Nisan, they could not sacrifice the Pascal lambs, but could bathe at the end of the day, and eat their Passover lambs (perhaps sacrificed by another member of his registered group), but that would be too late for him to partake of the his (priest's) share of the terumah **הִרְיָגָה**. Why didn't the priests wish to enter the Praetorium on that morning that Jesus was condemned? Through fear of defilement by the touch of Gentiles who might have a discharge, **they were afraid of losing their right as priests to partake of their choice parts of the lambs and to partake of it before sunset -- and at**

¹⁷⁵ Footnote: Lit., 'with his leniencies and stringencies on his head' — his arguments have availed him nought, and he retires crestfallen.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

a time when the rest of Israel was fasting in toto in anticipation of their evening Passover Seders (see page 125)! So one sees that it is the terumah תרומה of the chagigah of the 14th that is essential for understanding John 18:28 -- and not the shalmei chagigah of the 15th of Nisan as Edersheim believed. Not only do the Fathers proclaim the chronology of the latter, but all the rabbinic evidence of the Mishnah and Gemara clearly support it.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate YEVAMOTH ¹⁷⁶ (70a) *Mishnah. 8:1 AN UNCIRCUMCISED [PRIEST] AND ALL LEVITICALLY UNCLEAN PERSONS MAY NOT EAT TERUMAH. THEIR WIVES AND SLAVES, HOWEVER, MAY EAT TERUMAH. [A PRIEST WHO IS] WOUNDED IN HIS STONES AND ONE WHOSE MEMBRUM IS CUT OFF, AS WELL AS THEIR SLAVES, MAY EAT TERUMAH, BUT THEIR WIVES MAY NOT. IF, HOWEVER, NO COHABITATION TOOK PLACE AFTER THE MAN WAS WOUNDED OR HAD HIS MEMBRUM CUT OFF, THE WIVES ARE PERMITTED TO EAT.*

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate YEVAMOTH (74a) GEMARA.

...AND ALL LEVITICALLY UNCLEAN PERSONS etc. Whence is this deduced? — R. Johanan replied in the name of R. Ishmael: Scripture stated, What man soever of the (74b) seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath an issue etc. Now, what is it that is equally applicable to all the seed of Aaron? You must say that it is terumah.¹⁷⁷ But might it not be assumed to refer to the breast and the shoulder?¹⁷⁸ — [These are] not [permitted] to [a woman] who returns. But terumah also is not permitted to a halalah!¹⁷⁹ — A halalah is not regarded as of the seed of Aaron.¹⁸⁰ And whence is it inferred that until he be clean means ‘until sunset’, perhaps it means, ‘until the atonement is brought’?¹⁸¹ — This cannot be entertained. For a Tanna of the school of R. Ishmael [taught] that Scripture speaks of a zab who noticed only two issues, and of a leper while under observation, both being cases similar to that of one who is unclean by the dead; as he who is unclean by the dead is not liable to bring an atonement so are these such as are

¹⁷⁶ Yevamoth = Levirate Marriages

¹⁷⁷ Footnote: It cannot refer to holy food of the higher degree of sanctity which is permitted to male priests only.

¹⁷⁸ Footnote: Of the peace-offerings which belong to the class of holy food of a minor degree of sanctity, and are permitted to the priestly males and females. (V. Lev. X, 14).

¹⁷⁹ Halalah = of impaired priestly stock

¹⁸⁰ Footnote: Having been born of a forbidden marriage.

¹⁸¹ Footnote: And on the basis of this interpretation the unclean is permitted to eat terumah even before he has brought his atonement.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

not liable to bring an atonement. Let it be said, then, that this ¹⁸² applies only to those who are not liable to bring an atonement, but that for those who are liable to an atonement, ¹⁸³ purification is incomplete until the atonement has been brought! Furthermore, in respect of what we learned, ‘If he performed the prescribed ablution and came up from his bathing he may eat of the [second] tithe; after sunset he may eat terumah; and after he has brought his atonement he may also eat of the holy food’; ¹⁸⁴ whence, it may also be asked, are these laws derived? — Raba replied in the name of R. Hisda: Three Scriptural texts are recorded: It is written, And shall not eat of the holy things, unless he bathe his flesh in water, ¹⁸⁵ implying if he bathed, however, he is clean. It is also written, And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, and afterwards he may eat of the holy things.¹⁸⁶

{Comment: It couldn’t be more specific. One who is Levitically unclean may not eat terumah. This Mishnah and Gemara also delineate the process for ritual cleansing. A priest who ritually bathed could partake of the second tithe, and at sunset he could partake of the terumah, and after he had brought his offering for atonement, he could partake of the holy things.}

Now, let’s reexamine Edersheim’s insightful (only in part) and eloquently erroneous argument in the light of this rabbinic evidence:

The point is of importance, because many writers have interpreted the expression ‘the Passover’ as referring to the Paschal Supper, and have argued that, according to the Fourth Gospel, our Lord did not on the previous evening partake of the Paschal Lamb, or else that in this respect the account of the Fourth Gospel does not accord with that of the Synoptists. But as, for the reason just stated, it is impossible to refer the expression “Passover” to the Paschal Supper, we have only to inquire whether the term is not also applied to other offerings. And here both the Old Testament [Deut xvi. 1-3; 2 Chron. xxxv. 1,2,6,18--”From flock and herd” can refer to sacrifices for the Community, not for individual] and Jewish writings [quotes other 2ndary sources] show, **that the term**

¹⁸² Footnote: That sunset alone, though no sacrifice had yet been brought, completes the purification of the unclean as far as the consumption of terumah is concerned.

¹⁸³ Footnote: Only a confirmed leper, and a zab who has had three attacks of gonorrhoea are, on recovery and purification, liable to bring sacrifices. Cf. Meg. 8a.

¹⁸⁴ Footnote: Neg. XIV, 3, Pes. 35a, Nid. 71b.

¹⁸⁵ Footnote: Lev. XXII, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Footnote: Ibid. 7.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

Pesach, or ‘Passover,’ was applied not only to the Paschal Lamb, but to all the Passover sacrifices, especially [consider the Community] to what was called the Chagigah, or festive offering (from Chag, or Chagag, to bring the festive sacrifice usual at each of the three Great Feasts).’ According to the express (Chag. i.3) the Chagigah {referring to the shalmei hagigah} was brought on the first festive Paschal Day. It was offered immediately after the morning-service, **and eaten on that day-- probably some time before the evening**, when, as we shall by-and-by see, **another ceremony claimed public attention**{the harvesting of first-fruits}. We can therefore quite understand that, not on the eve of the Passover, but on the first Paschal day, the Sanhedrists would avoid incurring a defilement which, lasting till the evening, would not only have involved them in the inconvenience of the Levitical defilement on the first festive day, but have actually prevented their offering on that day the Passover, festive sacrifice, or Chagigah. [But they could bring it on any other day of the feast.] for, we have these two express rules: that a person could not in Levitical defilement offer the Chagigah; and that the chagigah could not be offered for a person by some one else who took his place [Jer. Chag. 76a, lines 16-14 from bottom]. These considerations and canons seem decisive as regards the views above expressed. There would have been no reason to fear ‘defilement’ on the morning of the Paschal Sacrifice; but entrance into the Praetorium on the morning of the first Passover-day would have rendered it impossible for them to offer the {shalmei }Chagigah, which is also designated by the term Pesach.”¹⁸⁷

Unfortunately, if we agree with Edersheim’s mistaken chronology, then Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us on the wrong day, and becomes Christ our Chagigah of the 15th of Nisan instead of Christ our Passover sacrificed for us as the Apostle Paul and Bishop Peter of Alexandria have so eloquently stated:

*1Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. **For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed.** 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

¹⁸⁷ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, Book V, p 567-568.

CHAPTER IX: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE CHAGIGAH

*...On that day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Passover in the evening, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, being made the victim to those who were about to partake by faith of the mystery concerning Him, according to what is written by the blessed Paul: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;” and not as some, who, carried along by ignorance, confidently affirm that after He had eaten the Passover, He was betrayed; which we neither hear from the holy evangelists, nor has any of the blessed apostles handed it down to us. At the time, therefore, in which our Lord and God Jesus Christ suffered for us, according to the flesh, He did not eat of the legal Passover; but as I have said, He Himself, as the true Lamb, was sacrificed for us in the feast of the typical Passover, on the day of the preparation, the fourteenth of the first lunar month. The typical Passover, therefore, then ceased, the true Passover being present: “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” as has been before said and as that chosen vessel, the apostle Paul teaches.*¹⁸⁸

Furthermore, Christ Jesus, our First-Fruits to God risen from the dead, finds Himself being the first-fruits on Saturday instead of on Resurrection Sunday as we shall see below. Consequently, it is not just a matter of chronology and foolish arguments over days that are at stake, but rather our own salvation, resurrection, and deification! This is a dangerous heresy that undermines our entire Christian faith. No wonder Chrysostom was so opposed to the Judaizing tendency in Constantinople (page 232 below), and spoke out so harshly against it.}

¹⁸⁸ Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, (fragments), in Apud Galland, Ex Chronico Paschal, as quoted in Roberts A, Donaldson J, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 282.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

Chapter X: The Jewish Practice of Celebrating First-Fruits

Background:

Before any grain product of the new crop could be harvested, a measured amount of ground barley had to be brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesach, the 16th of “Abib” אֲבִיב (Lit. fresh young ears of barley corn)¹⁸⁹ = 16th of Nisan, as a minchah, a meal-offering (see page 103) of the first grain of the early harvest. It sacramentally symbolized that the fertility of the soil and the fruit of the ground were truly gifts from the Lord, and that the Israelites were obligated to thank Him for it. This offering was known as the “Omer” עֹמֶר (Lit. sheaf). It was the offering of the “First-Fruits” of the Land of Israel each year to the Lord. Once the omer was brought to the Temple and offered, all grain that had taken root prior to that time could be eaten; later grain had to wait until the next year’s omer had been brought.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, the Festival of the offering of First-Fruits was an important event for everyday life for the common people.

Furthermore, the Festival of First-Fruits is germane to our discussion of the chronology of the Passover and the Last Supper. For the resurrected Son of God Jesus Christ, our First-Fruits to God, having risen from the dead on Sunday morning, is typologically represented by the Omer offering being “lifted up” on the morning after the festival (and weekly) Sabbath. Jesus was lifted up on the cross on Friday, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, but He was “lifted up” in the Heavenly Tabernacle and brought Himself before His Father as an offering on our behalf on Sunday morning. Moreover, the “seed that had taken root” prior to the resurrection (the Old Testament

¹⁸⁹ Abib is the original Biblical name for the first month of the year (see Exodus 13:4, 23:15, 34:18, and here Deut 16:1). It was later changed to Nisan during the Babylonian Exile (see Neh 2:1 and Esth 3:7).

Abib = אֲבִיב means “fresh young ears of barley” and ties the Jewish Passover to the yearly agricultural cycle in Israel. It is the month in which the barley ripens. Passover chronologically falls at the time of the full moon, i.e., the middle of first month in which the barley is fully ripe by the time of the full moon. As shown in Leviticus 23 later in the text, the first day after the Sabbath after the eve of Passover was reserved for the celebration of “first-fruits.” Passover and First-Fruits are only secondarily related to the vernal

equinox. Nisan = נִסָּן is a loan word from Babylonian -- it is the name of the Babylonian god of spring.

¹⁹⁰ Scherman N, Goldwurm H, Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp. 397-398.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

Saints), that had been imprisoned in the dark storage bins of Gehenna, were now brought forth like the prosphora -- “We offer to You, what is already Yours”¹⁹¹

The Biblical Celebration of the Feast of First-Fruits (Early Barley Harvest) Within the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Exod. 23:19 The choicest of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

Exod. 34:26 The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God.

Lev. 2:14 If you bring a grain offering of first fruits to the LORD, you shall bring as the grain offering of your first fruits coarse new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire. 15 You shall add oil to it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering. 16 And the priest shall turn a token portion of it into smoke —some of the coarse grain and oil with all its frankincense; it is an offering by fire to the LORD.

Lev. 23:9 The LORD spoke to Moses: 10 Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall raise the sheaf before the LORD, that you may find acceptance; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall raise it. 12 On the day when you raise the sheaf, you shall offer a lamb a year old, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 And the grain offering with it shall be two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the LORD; and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14 You shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your settlements.

{Comment: Although the biblical instructions for the festival are restricted to a few verses, what is very clear is that the “sheaf” was raised up before the LORD so that the people would find themselves acceptable to the LORD -- a statute forever for all generations in all settlements. Typologically, we are made acceptable to God through the “Omer” Jesus Christ.}

1Cor. 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. 21 For since death came through a human being, the

¹⁹¹ From the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Eucharistic Service for the Faithful.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

*resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 But each in his own order: **Christ the first fruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.*

Other Historical Sources: Philo the Jew (20 B.C. - A.D. 50):

Philo was a Jewish Philosopher who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. He is one of the most important Jewish authors of the Second Temple period, being a contemporary of both Jesus and of St. Paul. He was a prolific writer, with a deep devotion to his Jewish heritage.

*“THE SIXTH FESTIVAL XXIX. (162) **There is also a festival on the day of the paschal feast, which succeeds the first day, and this is named the sheaf, from what takes place on it; for the sheaf is brought to the altar as a first fruit** both of the country which the nation has received for its own, and also of the whole land; so as to be an offering both for the nation separately, and also a common one for the whole race of mankind; and so that the people by it worship the living God, both for themselves and for all the rest of mankind, because they have received the fertile earth for their inheritance; ... (171) That the first fruit is a handful for their own land for all lands, offered in thanksgiving for prosperity and a good season which the nation and the entire race of human beings were hoping to enjoy, has been demonstrated. We should not be unaware that many benefits have come by means of the first fruit: first, memory of God -- it is not possible to find a more perfect good than this; then, the most just recompense to the real Cause of fruitfulness.*

*(174)...And there are many meanings intended by this offering of the first fruits. In the first place they are a memorial of God; secondly, they are a most just requital to be offered to him who is the real cause of all fertility; (175) **and the sheaf of the first fruits is barley**, calculated for the innocent and blameless use of the inferior animals; for since it is not consistent with holiness to enjoy and partake of any thing which is given for food, without first giving thanks to that being to whom it is becoming and pious to offer them.*

That portion of the food which was honored with the second place, namely, barley, was ordered by the law to be offered as first fruits; for the first honors were

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

*assigned to wheat, of which it has deferred the offering of the first fruits, as being more honourable, to a more suitable season.”*¹⁹²

{Comment: Philo confirms the idea that the Festival of First-Fruits took place on the second day of the feast of Passover. As a contemporary of the Gospel events themselves, he is an important witness to the Jewish practice in vogue at the time of the crucifixion.}

Other Historical Sources: Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37? - A.D. 100?):

Flavius Josephus is the most important of the ancient historians for Israel of the Second Temple period. He lived through the Jewish Wars against Rome that brought about the destruction of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple. During the war, he was in command of the Jewish troops in the Galilee. However, noting the power of Rome, and discerning that opposing Rome was futile, he surrendered to them, appealed to his countrymen to do the same, and later wrote a full history of the Jewish people as well as of the war itself. Because of his capitulation to and collusion with the Romans, he has been considered an out and out traitor by the Jews ever since. Philosophically, he eventually aligned himself with the religious party of the Pharisees.

*“In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called Nisan, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians, the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which I before told you we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the Passover; and so we do celebrate this passover in companies, leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following. The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread; on every one of which days two bulls are killed, and one ram, and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt, besides the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest, for sins; for it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days. **But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the 16th day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them.** And while they suppose it proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, in the first place, **they offer the first fruits of their barley**, and that in the manner following: They take a handful of the ears, and dry them, then beat them small, and purge the barley from the bran; they then bring one tenth deal to the altar, to God; and casting one handful of it upon the fire, they leave the rest for the use of the priest; and after this it is that they may*

¹⁹² Philo, The Special Laws, Treatise II, Section XXIX, (162-175), in Yonge CD, (translator), The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1993, pp. 583-4.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

*publicly or privately reap their harvest. They also at this participation of the first-fruits of the earth, sacrifice a lamb, as a burnt-offering to God.”*¹⁹³

{Comment: Josephus, similarly, confirms that the first fruits of the barley harvest were raised to the Lord on the second day of unleavened bread, the 16th of Nisan.}

Rabbinic Sources Regarding the Festival of First-Fruits:

*Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH*¹⁹⁴ (64b) *Mishnah 10:2. THE PRECEPT OF THE ‘OMER {sheaf} IS THAT IT SHOULD BE BROUGHT FROM [WHAT GROWS] NEAR BY. IF [THE CROP] NEAR JERUSALEM WAS NOT YET RIPE, IT COULD BE BROUGHT FROM ANY PLACE...*

*Babylonian Talmud — Tractate SANHEDRIN*¹⁹⁵ (11b) *GEMARA. to 1.2: ...because the barley for the Omer was obtained [by preference] in Judea.*

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (83b) Mishnah 8:1. ALL THE OFFERINGS OF THE CONGREGATION OR OF THE INDIVIDUAL MAY BE OFFERED FROM [PRODUCE GROWN] IN THE LAND [OF ISRAEL] OR OUTSIDE THE LAND, FROM THE NEW [PRODUCE] OR FROM THE OLD, EXCEPTING THE ‘OMER-OFFERING AND THE TWO LOAVES, WHICH MUST BE OFFERED ONLY FROM THE NEW PRODUCE AND FROM [PRODUCE GROWN] IN THE LAND. ALL [OFFERINGS] MUST BE OFFERED FROM THE CHOICEST PRODUCE. AND WHICH IS THE CHOICEST? MICHMAS AND ZANOHA RANK FIRST FOR THE QUALITY OF THEIR FINE FLOUR; SECOND TO THEM IS HAFARAIM IN THE VALLEY. THE [PRODUCE OF THE] WHOLE LAND WAS VALID, BUT THEY USED TO BRING IT FROM THESE PLACES.

{Comment: The Omer offering is to be the **best** of the new produce of the land of Israel.}

¹⁹³ Josephus F, Antiquities of the Jews, Book III, Chapter X, 5, in Whiston W (translator), The Works of Flavius Josephus, Vol. II, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978, p. 218.

¹⁹⁴ Menachoth = plural of Minchah = Lit “meal offerings.” Interestingly, the Babylonian Talmud departs from the usual order of the Mishnah in this tractate, making the corresponding passages in the Talmud harder to find without complete reading or computer aid.

¹⁹⁵ Sanhedrin = Lit. “sitting in council” from the Greek συνέδριον

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (85a) Mishnah 8:2
ONE MAY NOT BRING [IT] FROM THE PRODUCE OF A MANURED FIELD OR FROM AN IRRIGATED FIELD OR FROM A FIELD STOCKED WITH TREES; BUT IF ONE DID BRING IT [FROM THESE] IT WAS VALID. HOW WAS IT PREPARED? IN THE FIRST YEAR IT WAS BROKEN UP AND IN THE SECOND YEAR IT WAS SOWN SEVENTY DAYS BEFORE PASSOVER; THUS IT WOULD PRODUCE FINE FLOUR IN ABUNDANCE. HOW WAS IT TESTED? THE TEMPLE-TREASURER USED TO THRUST HIS HAND INTO IT; IF SOME DUST CAME UP IN [HIS HAND] IT WAS INVALID, UNTIL IT WAS SIFTED [ONCE MORE]. IF IT HAD BECOME MAGOTTY IT IS INVALID.

GEMARA. *How WAS IT PREPARED? IN THE FIRST YEAR IT WAS BROKEN UP etc. The question was raised: What is meant by this? [Does it mean that] it was broken up in the first year and in the second year it was again broken up and then sown, or that it was broken up in the first year and in the second year it was sown without having been broken up again? — Come and hear: R. Jose said, They would have brought it even from the wheat of Karzaim and of Kefar Ahim if only they had been nearer to Jerusalem; since they may bring the ‘Omer-offering only from the fields in the south, and which had been broken up for the purpose, for upon these fields the sun rises and upon these the sun sets. How was [the field] prepared? In the first year it was broken up and in the second year it was ploughed twice, and it was sown seventy days before the Passover so that it might be close upon the [increasing strength of the] sun; thus it would bring forth stalks one span long and ears two spans long. It was then reaped, bound into sheaves, threshed, winnowed, cleansed, ground, and sifted, and then brought to the Temple-treasurer. The Temple-treasurer would thrust his hand into it; if some dust came up in his hand he would say to him [who brought it]. ‘Go and sift it a second time’ — In the name of R. Nathan it is said, The Temple-treasurer used to smear his hand with oil and thrust it into the flour until he had brought up all the dust. Now it expressly stated above, ‘[And in the second year] it was ploughed twice’! — But even as you would have it, [is not this Baraitha in conflict with our Mishnah]? For our Mishnah does not say ‘twice’, (85b) whilst this Baraitha expressly says ‘twice’! — This is no difficulty, for in the one case the field had been tilled [in the first year], and in the other it had not been tilled. How is it then [with regard to our original question]? — Come and hear, for it was taught: Half of [the field] was broken up and the other half sown, and [in the following year] half of it was broken up and the other half sown.*

R. Johanan said. The ‘Omer-offering was brought only from [the produce of] fields in the south of the Land of Israel, upon which the sun rises and upon which the sun sets. Half of the field was broken up while the other half was sown.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

It was taught: Abba Saul said, The ‘Omer-offering was usually brought from the [produce of the] valley of Beth Makleh. ¹⁹⁶ which was an area that produced three se’ahs; it lay in the south and the sun rose upon it and the sun set upon it. Half of it was broken up while the other half was sown, and [in the following year] half of it was broken up and the other half was sown.

{Comment: The omer was to be reaped from a field close to Jerusalem, with optimal sun, water, absence of manure fertilizing and trees. It was not taken at random, but prepared over a two year period. The valley of the House of Makleh in the southern part of the Kidron valley was the usual source of the barley.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (65a) Mishnah 10:3. WHAT WAS THE PROCEDURE? ¹⁹⁷THE MESSENGERS OF THE BETH DIN {Sanhedrin} USED TO GO OUT ON THE DAY ¹⁹⁸ BEFORE THE FESTIVAL ¹⁹⁹AND TIE THE UNREAPED CORN IN BUNCHES TO MAKE IT THE EASIER TO REAP. ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWNS NEAR BY ASSEMBLED THERE, SO THAT IT MIGHT BE REAPED WITH MUCH DISPLAY. AS SOON AS IT BECAME DARK ²⁰⁰ HE CALLED OUT, ‘HAS THE SUN SET’? AND THEY ANSWERED. ‘YES.’ HAS THE SUN SET’? AND THEY ANSWERED, ‘YES. ’ WITH THIS SICKLE’? AND THEY ANSWERED, ‘YES’. ‘WITH THIS SICKLE’? AND THEY ANSWERED, YES’. ‘INTO THIS BASKET’? AND THEY ANSWERED, ‘YES’. INTO THIS BASKET’? AND THEY ANSWERED. ‘YES’. ON THE SABBATH HE CALLED OUT FURTHER, ON THIS SABBATH’? AND THEY ANSWERED. ‘YES’. ‘ON THIS SABBATH’? AND THEY ANSWERED. ‘YES’. ‘SHALL I REAP’? AND THEY ANSWERED, REAP’. ‘SHALL I REAP’? AND THEY ANSWERED, ‘REAP’. HE REPEATED EVERY MATTER THREE TIMES, AND THEY ANSWERED, ‘YES.’ ‘YES.’ ‘YES’. AND WHY WAS ALL THIS? BECAUSE OF THE BOETHUSIANS WHO MAINTAINED THAT THE REAPING OF THE ‘OMER WAS NOT TO TAKE PLACE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE [FIRST DAY OF THE] FESTIVAL.

¹⁹⁶ Beth Maklah = House of Makleh, Footnote: In the valley of Kidron; cf. Tosef. Men. X.

¹⁹⁷ For harvesting the **First Fruits**

¹⁹⁸ Translated as the “*afternoon before*” by Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 753, on Menahot 10:3.

¹⁹⁹ Probably late on the 13th of Nisan or the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, i.e., Thursday, the day of the Last Supper.

²⁰⁰ Translated “*on the night of the sixteenth of Nisa*” by Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 753, on Menahot 10:3.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

GEMARA. ...For the Boethusians ²⁰¹ held that the Feast of Weeks must always be on the day after the Sabbath. But R. Johanan b. Zakkai entered into discussion with them saying, 'Fools that you are! whence do you derive it'?

... R. Jose says. **On the morrow after the Sabbath means on the morrow after the Festival.** You say that it means on the morrow after the Festival, but perhaps it is not so, but rather on the morrow after the Sabbath of Creation! I will prove it to you. Does Scripture say, '**On the morrow after the Sabbath that is in the Passover week**'? It merely says, 'On the morrow after the Sabbath'; and as the year is full of Sabbaths, then go and find out which Sabbath is meant. Moreover, 'Sabbath' is written below, and 'Sabbath' is written above; just as in the former case it refers to the Festival, and indeed to the beginning of the Festival, so in the latter case, too, **it refers to the Festival, and indeed to the beginning of the Festival...**

{Comment: *On the morrow after the sabbath*, i.e., the second day of Pesach. The first day, 15th of Nisan, Yom Tov, is called a sabbath שַׁבָּת or rest day because ordinary work is forbidden on it. The word ordinarily refers to the weekly Sabbath. But according to the arguments of the rabbis in this Gemara, this cannot be the case here, because it does not specify which of the Sabbaths is meant. Philo and Josephus above have already verified that the sabbath indicated was the festival sabbath, not the weekly sabbath. This term became one of the major points of controversy between the Pharisaic Sages and the Sadducean Boethusians. The latter interpreted the "Sabbath" term literally, as referring to Sunday, thus claiming that the Omer always had to be brought on a Sunday *the morrow of the rest day*. In the year of Christ's crucifixion, according to our Patristic chronology, the sabbath of the festival coincided with the weekly Sabbath (Friday night at dusk to Saturday at dusk)-- hence a Great Sabbath! So, in either case, the day would have been the same. So the *morrow after the sabbath* began Saturday night at dusk. If instead we

²⁰¹ "One of the most prominent houses within the priestly oligarchy {of Israel} was the family of Boethos, which had risen to greatness under Herod {the Great} and set its imprint on domestic affairs for several generations. Its history reflects all the characteristics of the social development of Palestine in those days. The Boethos family formed part of the stratum that had achieved prominence together with Herod, and its interests were intertwined with those of the Herodians. Like many of the great families of those days, the house of Boethos was not of Palestinian origin but came from the Diaspora -- from Alexandria in Egypt -- and several of its members later became High Priests...The new priestly oligarchy that had developed under Herod and the Roman governors was essentially Sadducean; the appellatives "Boethusian" and "Sadducee" were almost synonymous...Next to the house of Boethos, the High Priests of the house of Hanan were the most faithful spokesmen of the Sadducean persuasion. Because of the decisive influence of their Pharisaic opponents ('Their power among the masses was so great that their word was law even if they spoke against the king or against the High Priest' [Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.288], the Sadducees had no choice, even while they held the highest offices, but to make many concessions to Pharisaic opinion." From Ben-Sasson HH, *A History of the Jewish People*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1976, pp. 266-270.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

followed Lightfoot's and Edersheim's chronologies of Holy Week, then it would follow that Friday night at dusk to Saturday night at dusk would have been the day of offering of the First-Fruits to the Lord. Unfortunately, this makes Jesus one whole day late in presenting Himself as the First-Fruits from the dead to His Father on Sunday morning. When we keep the Patristic chronology, then Jesus is the First-Fruits at the proper time of the raising up of the omer. Moreover, having taken captivity captive, i.e., the Old Covenant Saints, He brought the First-Fruits of the dead as an offering to His Father. His timeliness is important, for Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MEGILLAH²⁰² (20b) Mishnah 2:5. THE WHOLE OF THE DAY IS A PROPER TIME FOR THE READING OF THE MEGILLAH AND FOR THE RECITING OF HALLEL AND FOR THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR AND FOR TAKING UP THE LULAB AND FOR THE MUSAF PRAYER AND FOR THE ADDITIONAL SACRIFICES AND FOR CONFESSION OVER THE OXEN AND FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT MADE OVER THE TITHE AND FOR THE CONFESSION OF SINS ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, FOR LAYING ON OF HANDS, FOR SLAUGHTERING [THE SACRIFICES], FOR WAVING, FOR BRINGING NEAR [THE VESSEL WITH THE MEAL-OFFERING TO THE ALTAR], FOR TAKING A HANDFUL, AND FOR PLACING IT ON THE FIRE, FOR PINCHING OFF [THE HEAD OF A BIRD-OFFERING] AND FOR RECEIVING THE BLOOD, AND FOR SPRINKLING, AND FOR MAKING THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE DRINK AND FOR BREAKING THE NECK OF THE HEIFER AND FOR PURIFYING THE LEPER. 2:6 THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT IS PROPER TIME FOR REAPING THE OMER, AND FOR BURNING FAT AND LIMBS [ON THE ALTAR]. THIS IS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE: ANY COMMANDMENT WHICH IS TO BE PERFORMED BY DAY MAY BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE DAY, AND ANY COMMANDMENT WHICH IS TO BE PERFORMED BY NIGHT MAY BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT.

GEMARA. ...THE WHOLE NIGHT IS A PROPER TIME FOR REAPING THE 'OMER. Since a Master has said that reaping and counting are to be performed by night and the bringing by day.

{Comment: In the year of Christ's crucifixion the omer was reaped Saturday night, the 16th of Nisan. Typologically speaking this was the night that Christ, who is to judge all men, as representative of the heavenly Sanhedrin, was reaping the souls of the Old Testament saints (including His own) for presentation to His Father in a few hours! He and then they were to be the First-Fruits of the dead!}

²⁰² Megillah = Lit. "scroll" (particularly the times, places, manner of reading the scroll of Esther)

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (63b) Mishnah 10:1: R. ISHMAEL SAYS, ON THE SABBATH THE OMER WAS TAKEN OUT OF THREE SE' AHS²⁰³ [OF BARLEY]. AND ON A WEEKDAY OUT OF FIVE. BUT THE SAGES SAY, WHETHER ON THE SABBATH OR ON A WEEKDAY IT WAS TAKEN OUT OF THREE SE' AHS. R. HANINA THE VICE-HIGH PRIEST SAYS, ON THE SABBATH IT WAS REAPED BY ONE MAN WITH ONE SICKLE INTO ONE BASKET, AND ON A WEEKDAY IT WAS REAPED BY THREE MEN INTO THREE BASKETS AND WITH THREE SICKLES. BUT THE SAGES SAY, WHETHER ON THE SABBATH OR ON A WEEKDAY IT WAS REAPED BY THREE MEN INTO THREE BASKETS AND WITH THREE SICKLES.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (63b) GEMARA 10:1. The opinion of the Rabbis is quite clear, for they hold that a tenth of the finest [flour] can be obtained out of three se'ahs, and therefore it is all one whether it was a Sabbath or a weekday.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (66a) Mishnah 10:4. THEY REAPED IT, PUT IT INTO THE BASKETS, AND BROUGHT IT TO THE TEMPLE COURT; THEN THEY PARCHED IT WITH FIRE IN ORDER TO FULFIL THE PRECEPT THAT IT SHOULD BE PARCHED [WITH FIRE]. SO R. MEIR. BUT THE SAGES SAY, THEY FIRST BEAT IT WITH REEDS OR STEMS OF PLANTS THAT THE GRAINS SHOULD NOT BE CRUSHED, AND THEN THEY PUT IT INTO A PIPE THAT WAS PERFORATED SO THAT THE FIRE MIGHT TAKE HOLD OF ALL OF IT. THEY SPREAD IT OUT IN THE TEMPLE COURT SO THAT THE WIND MIGHT BLOW OVER IT. THEN THEY PUT IT INTO A GRISTMILL AND TOOK OUT OF IT A TENTH [OF AN EPHAH OF FLOUR] WHICH WAS SIFTED THROUGH THIRTEEN SIEVES. WHAT WAS LEFT OVER WAS REDEEMED AND MIGHT BE EATEN BY ANY ONE; IT WAS LIABLE TO THE DOUGH-OFFERING BUT EXEMPT FROM TITHES. R. AKIBA DECLARES IT LIABLE BOTH TO THE DOUGH-OFFERING AND TO TITHES.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (67b) Mishnah 10:4. HE THEN CAME TO THE TENTH, PUT IN OIL AND ITS FRANKINCENSE, POURED IN THE OIL, MINGLED IT, WAVED IT, BROUGHT IT NEAR [TO THE ALTAR], TOOK FROM IT THE HANDFUL AND BURNT IT; AND THE REMAINDER WAS EATEN

²⁰³ Footnote: Which amount to one ephah. This quantity was sifted again and again so as to produce the tenth of choicest flour.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

BY THE PRIESTS. AFTER THE OMER WAS OFFERED THEY USED TO GO OUT AND FIND THE MARKET OF JERUSALEM ALREADY FULL OF MEAL AND PARCHED CORN [OF THE NEW PRODUCE]; THIS, HOWEVER, DID NOT MEET WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE SAGES. SO R. MEIR. R. JUDAH SAYS, THEY DID SO WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE SAGES.

{Comment: After harvesting the 3 se'ahs barley corn, the finest sifted flour was prepared early in the morning of the 16th of Nisan. It was mixed with oil and sprinkled with frankincense, then offered (after the morning tamid) through waving. It was brought near to the altar where a tenth of the dough was burned, the rest being eaten by the priests.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MENACHOTH (68b) Mishnah 10:5. THE 'OMER RENDERED [THE NEW CORN] PERMITTED THROUGHOUT THE LAND, AND THE TWO LOAVES RENDERED IT PERMITTED IN THE TEMPLE. ONE MAY NOT OFFER MEAL-OFFERINGS, FIRST-FRUITS, OR MEAL-OFFERINGS THAT ACCOMPANY ANIMAL OFFERINGS, BEFORE THE 'OMER; AND IF ONE DID SO, IT WAS INVALID...

{Comment: The “Omer” corresponding in typology to Jesus Christ had to be offered before the First-Fruits of the Israelites could be offered. So it is in the resurrection, Christ is offered to the Father first and accepted by Him, then the early harvest of the Old Testament Saints and the later harvests of the New Testament saints are offered to the Father and acceptable as well!}

Chronology of the Festival of First-Fruits According to Lightfoot and Edersheim:

Although Lightfoot miscalculated the date of the Last Supper, he apparently “recovered” when it came to the day of First-Fruits. On closer reading, however, he is not consistent with his own alleged chronology:

“Ver. 20 Ἐπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. *The firstfruits of them that slept.*] Although the resurrection of Christ, compared with some firstfruits, hath very good harmony with them, yet especially it agrees with the offering of the *sheaf*, commonly called עֹמֶר, not only as to the thing itself, but as to the circumstance of time. **For, first, there was the Passover, and the day following was a sabbatic day; and on the day following that were the firstfruits offered. So “Christ our passover was sacrificed.” The day following his crucifixion was the sabbath,**

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

and the day following that, He, *the firstfruits of them that slept* , rose again.”²⁰⁴

Here Lightfoot first describes the correct chronology for First-Fruits as the day following the sabbatic day, which was the day following the Passover. Previously, since he had argued that Jesus celebrated the Passover Seder, he professed that Jesus was crucified on the festival sabbath, i.e., the day after the Passover Seder. However, now he states that the day following Jesus’ crucifixion was the sabbath so that he can have Jesus be our first-fruits to God. His duplicity has been unmasked! Rather than be caught wrong on either account, he exegetes each passage differently to serve his own purposes -- to show that Jesus celebrated a Passover seder, and, in typology, was the First-Fruits of them that slept. (There can be no doubt that he is using the standard rabbinic interpretation of the day for first-fruits and not that of the Boethusians (see page 169).

In The Temple: Its Ministries and Services, in contrast to Lightfoot, Edersheim gives a brilliant synopsis of the chronology for First-Fruits:

“The expression, ‘the morrow after the Sabbath,’ has sometimes been misunderstood as implying that the presentation of the so-called ‘first sheaf’ was to be always made on the day following the weekly Sabbath of the Passover-week. This view, adopted by the ‘Boëthusians’ and the Sadducees in the time of Christ, and by the Karaite Jews and certain modern interpreters, rests on a misinterpretation of the word “Sabbath.” As in analogous allusions to other feasts in the same chapter, it means not the weekly Sabbath, but the day of the festival. The testimony of Josephus [*Antiq.* iii, 10, 5,6], of Philo [*Op.* ii, 194.] and of Jewish tradition, leaves no room to doubt that in this instance we are to understand by the ‘Sabbath’ the 15th of Nisan, on whatever day of the week it might fall. Already, on the 14th of Nisan, the spot whence the first sheaf was to be reaped had been marked out by delegates from the Sanhedrim, by tying together in bundles, while still standing, the barley that was to be cut down. Though, for obvious reasons, it was customary to choose for this purpose the sheltered Ashes-valley²⁰⁵ across Kedron, there was no

²⁰⁴ Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew -- I Corinthians, Vol. 4, on 1 Cor. 15:20, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, p. 269.

²⁰⁵ There is no reference to the Ashes-valley in current English translations of the Mishnah, Babylonian Talmud or in the tractate Menachot in the Tosefta: *And sages say, “All the same are the Sabbath and the weekday: By 3 [men] into three baskets and with three sickles. The ‘omer’ was brought from the valley of Bet Miqlach in Qidron valley* in “Menahot,” 10:20-21, Neusner J, The Tosefta: Qodoshim -- The Order of Holy Things, KTAV Publishing House, Inc., New York, NY. 1979, p 147. Unfortunately, there is no tractate

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

restriction on that point, provided the barley had grown in an ordinary field -- of course in Palestine itself -- and not in garden or orchard land, and that the soil had not been manured nor yet artificially watered.”²⁰⁶}

However, he does not discuss its relevance to the Passover chronology in this work. On the other hand, in The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, he reveals his hand clearly. In his narrative on the burial of Jesus in the Garden tomb late Friday afternoon, Edersheim writes:

The proximity of the holy Sabbath, and the consequent need of haste, may have suggested or determined the proposal of Joseph to lay the Body of Jesus in his own rock-hewn new tomb, wherein no one had yet been laid...

Only a few faithful ones, notably among them Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the mother of Joses, stood over against the tomb, watching at some distance where and how the Body of Jesus was laid...and as they {Joseph and Nicodemus} laid Him to rest in the niche of the rock-hewn new tomb. And as they went out, they rolled as was the custom, a ‘great stone’ -- the *Golel* -- to close the entrance to the tomb, probably leaning against it for support, as was the practice, a smaller stone -- the so-called *Dopheq*. It would be where the one stone was laid against the other, that on the next day, Sabbath though it was, the Jewish authorities would have affixed the seal, so that the slightest disturbance might become apparent.

‘It was probably about the same time, that a noisy throng prepared to follow delegates from the Sanhedrin to the ceremony of cutting the Passover-sheaf...This Passover-sheaf was reaped in public the evening before it was offered, and it was to witness this ceremony that the crowd had gathered around the elders. Already on the 14th Nisan the spot whence the first sheaf was to be reaped had been marked out, by tying together in bundles, while still standing, the barley that was to be cut

Menachot in the Jerusalem Talmud for further elucidation. Edersheim did not reference his source in either of his books. However, Lightfoot writes, “The sheaf of first-fruits was reaped from the Ashes’-valley of the brook Kedron. The first day of the feast of the Passover, certain persons, deputed from the Sanhedrim, went forth into that valley, a great company attending them...” in Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, p. 84. Lightfoot references the Mishnah tractate Menachot 10 and Tosapht. Perhaps Lightfoot had access to a different source text than I. Or perhaps Edersheim’s source is Lightfoot directly!²⁰⁶ Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministries and Services, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, pp. 257-258.

CHAPTER X: THE JEWISH PRACTICE OF CELEBRATING THE FIRST-FRUITS

down, according to custom, in the sheltered Ashes Valley across Kidron...This is not the place to follow the ceremony farther -- how the corn was threshed out, parched, ground, and one omer of the flour mixed with oil and frankincense, waved before the lord in the Temple on the second Paschal day (or 16th of Nisan). but, as this festive procession started, amidst loud demonstrations, a small band of mourners turned from having laid their dead Master in His resting-place. The contrast is as sad as it is suggestive. **And yet, not in the Temple, nor by the priest, but in the silence of that garden-tomb, was the first Omer of the new Paschal flour to be waved before the Lord.**"²⁰⁷

What a contrast to the Patristic chronology where Jesus Christ, our victorious High Priest according to the order of Melchezedek, presented Himself in the Heavenly Temple as the First-Fruits of the dead to His Father on that great morning of the Resurrection, the 16th of Nisan. Having destroyed Death by His own death, having taken captivity captive (reaped the righteous from the valley of the shadow of death), having presented the Old Testament saints to His Father as part of the harvest which had previously taken root, He has made us acceptable to the Father in Himself, the Beloved. This is a much different "Omer" and Savior than the one Edersheim has left in the tomb in silence. "The contrast is as sad as it is suggestive." We have been robbed of our acceptance by our Father in Heaven by such a defective chronology! Let us return to the chronology of the Fathers so we can return to our Father in Heaven and be acceptable to Him, receiving as the Prodigal son a robe, a ring, and a seat at the Banquet in Heaven. Let us join with Clement of Alexandria in proclaiming Jesus risen from the dead as our First-Fruits:

*With this precise determination of the days both the whole Scriptures agree, and the Gospels harmonize. The resurrection also attests it. He certainly rose on the third day, which fell on the first day of the weeks of harvest, on which the law prescribed that the priest should offer up the sheaf."*²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986, p. 617-619.

²⁰⁸ Clement of Alexandria, in Coxe AC (translator), "Fragments," in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 581.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

Chapter XI: The Last Supper: Chaburah Meal, Seder, or Special Dinner?

Dom Gregory Dix wrote that the Last Supper “was probably *not* the Passover supper of that year, but the evening meal twenty-four hours before the actual Passover.”²⁰⁹ Instead, he proposed it to be a “chaburah חַבְרָה meal.” He considered a chaburah to be a little private group or informal society of friends חַבְרִים (chaburim) banded together for the purposes of special devotion and charity. It was distinguished from other societal organizations by its unusually close bond between each member (a chaber) and the leader as well as an exceptionally independent attitude from that of the prevailing religious authorities. Unfortunately, Dom Dix used secondary sources for most of his Jewish resources. Even he questioned the validity of such a concept, since the function as well as the existence of such organizations in the first century was a matter of conjecture.

Correlating his chaburah concept directly with the Hebrew/Aramaic of the Talmud, we can further refine the idea of the chaburah. A “chaber” חַבֵּר (from the Hebrew verb חָבַר meaning to join or unite). In the context of the Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud, a chaber is a “*fellow, associate, opposed to am ha-arez; one scrupulous in the observance of the law, particularly in relation to ritual cleanness and the separation of the priestly and Levitical dues {tithes}.*”²¹⁰ In other words, he was a devout follower of the Mosaic Law, and probably of the Traditions of the Elders, as we shall see below. It has been suggested that the chaburahs חַבְרֹתָא (chaberot = pleural of chaburah) resulted from the unsettled state of Palestine during the Maccabean wars which led to a general neglect of tithes and Levitical purity by the masses (the so-called ‘am ha-’arez = ‘people of the land’). In reaction, to the profoundly unclean moral state of Israel, these associations (chaberot) were born. The members (chaberim) were pledged strictly to observe these laws.²¹¹ All priests, Levites, their wives, children, members of their households, and their servants were presumed to be considered chaberim, as will be seen in the following:

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate SANHEDRIN (90b) GEMARA to Mishnah 10:1. The school of R. Ishmael taught: To Aaron [means to one] like Aaron: just as Aaron was a *haber*, so his sons must be *haberim*.

²⁰⁹ Dix G, The Shape of the Liturgy, Adam & Charles Black, Ltd., London, 1982, p. 50.

²¹⁰ Freedman H, (Epstein I, editor,) in “Glossary,” Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Socino Press, London, 1987.

²¹¹ CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, “Kiddushin” 65a Footnote 11 in The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate AVODAH ZARAH ²¹² (39a) GEMARA to Mishnah 2:6. Thus said Samuel: The wife of a ḥaber is like a ḥaber; for our Rabbis have taught: **The wife of a ḥaber is like a ḥaber, the slave of a ḥaber is like a ḥaber,** and when a ḥaber dies his wife, children and members of his household remain in that state of confidence until they give grounds for suspicion.*

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate BECHOROTH ²¹³ (30a) Mishnah 4:10. ONE WHO IS SUSPECTED OF IGNORING THE SABBATICAL YEAR IS NOT SUSPECTED OF IGNORING [ALSO] THE TITHES. ONE WHO IS SUSPECTED OF IGNORING TITHES IS NOT SUSPECTED OF IGNORING [ALSO] THE SABBATICAL YEAR. ONE WHO IS SUSPECTED OF IGNORING BOTH IS SUSPECTED OF IGNORING THE RULES OF LEVITICAL PURITY. AND IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ONE TO BE SUSPECTED OF IGNORING THE RULES OF LEVITICAL PURITY AND YET NOT SUSPECTED OF IGNORING THE TWO LAWS [CITED ABOVE]. THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE: ONE WHO IS SUSPECTED OF IGNORING A RELIGIOUS LAW MUST NOT GIVE JUDGMENT ON IT OR TESTIFY CONCERNING IT.

*Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate BECHOROTH (30b) GEMARA ...R. Meir, as it has been taught: **An ‘am ha-arez who accepted the obligations of a ḥaber and who is suspected of ignoring one religious law is suspected of disregarding the whole Torah. But the Sages say: He is only suspected of ignoring that particular religious law.** And a proselyte, who accepted the teachings of the Torah, though he is suspected of ignoring only one religious law, is suspected of disregarding the whole Torah, and he is considered as a non-observant Israelite. The difference would be that if he betrothes a woman, [even after his relapse], his betrothal is valid, [the woman thus requiring a divorce.]*

***Our Rabbis taught: If one is prepared to accept the obligation of a ḥaber except one religious law, we must not receive him as a ḥaber.** If a heathen is prepared to accept the Torah except one religious law, we must not receive him [as an Israelite]. R. Jose son of R. Judah says: Even [if the exception be] one point of the special minutiae of the Scribes' enactments. And similarly if a son of a Levite was prepared to accept the duties of the community of Levites except one religious law, we must not receive him [as a Levite]. If a priest was prepared to accept the duties of the priesthood except one religious law, we must not receive him [as a priest], as it is said, He [among the sons of Aaron] that offereth the blood etc., implying the [entire] service that is transmitted to the*

²¹² Avodah Zarah = Lit. “worship,” “idolatry”

²¹³ Bechoroth = Lit. “firstborn”

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

sons of Aaron and that any priest who does not acknowledge this has no share in [the privileges of] the priesthood.

Our Rabbis taught: If one applies to become a ḥaber, if we saw him practising these privately at his house, we receive him and subsequently instruct him, but if not, we first instruct him and then receive him [as a ḥaber]. But R. Simeon b. Yohai says: Both in the first case and the second, we receive him [as a ḥaber] and he learns incidentally as he goes on.

Our Rabbis taught: We accept a ḥaber if he promises to observe cleanness of hands and afterwards we accept him as one who will observe the other rules of levitical purity. If he said: I only promise to observe cleanness of hands, we receive him [as a ḥaber, as his promise is important in connection with levitical purity]. If, however, he promised to observe the rules of levitical purity but not cleanness of hands, then even his promise to observe the rules of levitical purity is not regarded as a genuine promise.

Our Rabbis taught: How long is the period before we receive him [as a ḥaber]? Beth Shammai say: As regards [the purity of his] liquids, [whose uncleanness is of a light character], the period is thirty days, but as regards the purity of [his] garment, the period is twelve months; whereas Beth Hillel Say: Both in the one case as well as in the other, the period is twelve months. If this be so, then you have here a ruling where Beth Shammai is more lenient and Beth Hillel is the stricter? — Rather [read]: Beth Hillel Say: Both in the one case as well as in the other, the period is thirty days.

(Mnemonic: A Ḥaber, Scholar, Purple-blue, Repent, Taxcollector.) Our Rabbis taught: One who desires to accept the obligations of a ḥaber is required to do so in the presence of three ḥaberim, whereas his sons and the members of his family are not required to accept [these obligations] in the presence of three ḥaberim. But R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: His sons and the members of his family are also required to accept [these obligations] in the presence of three ḥaberim, because the case of a ḥaber who accepts [these obligations] is not on a par with the case of the son of a ḥaber who accepts [them].

Our Rabbis taught: One who desires to accept the obligations of a ḥaber is required to accept them in the presence of three ḥaberim, and even a talmid hakam [a scholar] is required to accept the obligations in the presence of three ḥaberim. An elder, a member of a scholars' council, is not required to accept [these obligations] in the

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

presence of three haberim, having already accepted them from the time when he took his place at the council. Abba Saul Says: Even a talmid hakam is not required to accept the obligations of a haber in the presence of three haberim. And not only this, but even others may accept the obligations of a haber in his presence. Said R. Johanan: In the days of the son of R. Hanina b. Antigonus was this teaching taught. For R. Judah and R. Jose were in doubt concerning a matter of levitical cleanness. They sent a pair of scholars to the son of R. Hanina b. Antigonus. They went and asked him to inquire into the matter. They found him carrying levitically prepared food. He seated some of his own disciples with them, while he stood up to look in to the question. They came and informed R. Judah and R. Jose [of his conduct towards them]. R. Judah said to them: His father held scholars in contempt and he also holds scholars in contempt. R. Jose replied to him: Let the dignity of the elder lie undisturbed in its place, but from the day that the Temple was destroyed, the priests guarded their dignity by not entrusting matters of levitical cleanness to everybody.

Our Rabbis taught: [The wife of a haber is considered as a haber]. If a haber dies, his wife and the members of the family retain their status until there is reason to suspect them. And similarly a court-yard in which tekeleth [purple-blue] was sold retains its status until it is disqualified. Our Rabbis taught: The wife of an 'am ha-arez who was married to a haber, likewise a daughter of an 'am ha-arez who was married to a haber, and similarly the slave of an 'am ha-arez who was sold to a haber — all of these must first accept the obligations of a haber. But the wife of a haber who was married to an 'am ha-arez, likewise the daughter of a haber who was married to an 'am ha-arez and similarly the slave of a haber who was sold to an 'am ha-arez, need not first accept the obligations of a haber. R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: Even the latter require first to accept the obligations of a haber. For R. Simeon b. Eleazar reported in the name of R. Meir: It happened with a certain woman who was married to a haber that she fastened the straps of the tefillin [phylacteries] on his hand and when afterwards married to a publican, she knotted the custom seals for him.

In conclusion, one sees that the haberim were essentially a caste of scrupulous follower of the law (the written and oral Torahs). The Priests, Levites, Scribes, Elders, and Pharisees with their families would have been the prime members of this caste. In contrast, Jesus and His caste of Galilean disciples would have been a striking contrast to these legalists. The latter's "moral" dignity would be easily shattered by this itinerant group of unlettered fishermen, tax collectors, zealots, and by the throngs of amei ha-arez who followed them wherever they went.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

In the case of Jesus and His disciples, they are perhaps better considered as Rabbi רבִּי (teacher, master) and His talmidim תלמידים (students, disciples) -- a talmid תלמיד being a disciple or student. Perhaps the Last Supper could be considered a “chaburah” meal, but it is better considered a very special last dinner, a mystical supper between the Master Teacher and His disciples.

Dom Dix also discusses at length the customs which governed chaburah suppers based on the general rabbinic laws governing such gatherings. These legalistic customs really applied to all dinners, not just religious association dinners., and in their best sense and usage, **demonstrate that life in ancient Israel was truly sacramental in spirit**, although not always in practice. Thus, the blessings and rituals seen in the Last Supper were common to all Israel on all days, not just on Passover. Although Lightfoot and Edersheim, as well as their modern counterparts, seize upon these sacramental blessings and behaviors as evidence of the Last Supper being a Pesach Seder, the following passages from the Babylonian Talmud Tractates Berachoth (“Blessings”), Mo’ed Katan (“Minor Festival”), Shabbat (the “Sabbath”), and Baba Metzia (“Middle Gate”--laws about property, ownership, laborers) clearly demonstrate that life was sacramental, that blessings were said by students and their Rabbi’s at any and every meal. Thus, the blessings given by Jesus at the Last Supper were rather ordinary and customary. Nothing points to a Passover Seder. Indeed, as previously discussed (page 134), the key characteristics of a Passover Seder are all conspicuously absent. Jesus and His disciples celebrated a simple, yet profound last supper together. It was in this simple context that He forever transformed the meaning of the bread and the wine with His instituting of the New Covenant and the Eucharist.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH ²¹⁴ (35a): Mishnah 6:1. WHAT BLESSINGS ARE SAID OVER FRUIT? OVER FRUIT OF THE TREE ONE SAYS, WHO CREATEST THE FRUIT OF THE TREE, EXCEPT FOR WINE, OVER WHICH ONE SAYS, WHO CREATEST THE FRUIT OF THE VINE. OVER THAT WHICH GROWS FROM THE GROUND ONE SAYS: WHO CREATEST THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND, EXCEPT OVER BREAD, FOR WHICH ONE SAYS, WHO BRINGEST FORTH BREAD FROM THE EARTH. OVER VEGETABLES ONE SAYS, WHO CREATEST THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND; R. JUDAH, HOWEVER, SAYS: WHO CREATEST DIVERS KINDS OF HERBS.

{Comment: In a sacramental society like Israel of Jesus’ day, blessings were commonly said at all meals for all foods.}

²¹⁴ Berachoth = Lit. “benedictions, blessings”

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (37a) GEMARA Once R. Gamaliel and the elders were reclining in an upper chamber in Jericho, and dates were brought in and they ate, and R. Gamaliel gave permission to R. Akiba to say grace. and R. Akiba said quickly the one blessing which includes three. Said R. Gamaliel to him: Akiba, how long will you poke your head into quarrels? He replied: Master, although you say this way and your colleagues say the other way, you have taught us, master, that where an individual joins issue with the majority, the halachah is determined by the majority. R. Judah said in his [R. Gamaliel's] name: [After partaking of] any food from the seven species

{Comment: To recline, eat, and to say grace with one's disciples or colleagues does not imply it is the Passover Seder.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (42a): Mishnah 6:5 A BLESSING SAID OVER THE WINE TAKEN BEFORE THE MEAL SERVES ALSO FOR THE WINE TAKEN AFTER THE MEAL. A BLESSING OVER THE HORS D'OEUVRES TAKEN BEFORE THE MEAL SERVES FOR THE SWEETS TAKEN AFTER THE MEAL. A BLESSING OVER BREAD SERVES FOR THE SWEETS BUT A BLESSING OVER THE HORS D'OEUVRES DOES NOT SERVE FOR THE BREAD. BETH SHAMMAI SAY: NEITHER [DOES IT SERVE] FOR A COOKED DISH.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (42a): Mishnah 6:6 IF [THOSE AT THE TABLE] ARE SITTING UPRIGHT, EACH ONE SAYS GRACE FOR HIMSELF; IF THEY HAVE RECLINED, ONE SAYS GRACE FOR ALL. (42b) IF WINE IS BROUGHT TO THEM IN THE COURSE OF THE MEAL, EACH ONE SAYS A BENEDICTION FOR HIMSELF; IF AFTER THE MEAL, ONE SAYS IT FOR ALL. THE SAME ONE SAYS [THE BENEDICTION] OVER THE PERFUME, ALTHOUGH THE PERFUME IS NOT BROUGHT IN TILL AFTER THE MEAL.

{Comment: A blessing is commonly said over wine at the beginning of a meal and over bread. When a group reclines for a meal, one person says grace for all at the meal. When wine is brought during a meal each says their own blessing, if after a meal, then one says it for all. This corresponds nicely with the more complete chronology in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew and Mark only discuss the last cup of wine, John discusses none of the them.

Luke 22:14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, {undoubtedly before dinner}“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 {Then, during or near the end of dinner} Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, {obviously after supper} saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. }

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (43a) GEMARA: ...IF THEY HAVE RECLINED, ONE SAYS GRACE: Rab said: The rule is that only bread requires reclining, but wine does not require reclining. ²¹⁵R. Johanan, however, says that wine also requires reclining. Some report thus: Rab said, This applies only to bread, for which reclining is of effect, ²¹⁶ but for wine reclining is not of effect. R. Johanan, however, says that for wine also reclining is of effect.

The following was cited in objection [to Rab]: ‘What is the procedure for reclining? The guests ²¹⁷enter and sit on stools and chairs till they are all assembled. When water is brought, each one washes one hand. ²¹⁸ When wine is brought, each one says a blessing for himself. When they go up [on to the couches] and recline, and water is brought to them, although each one of them has already washed one hand, he now again washes both hands. When wine is brought to them, although each one has said a blessing for himself, one now says a blessing on behalf of all. ²¹⁹ Now according to the version which makes Rab say that ‘this applies only to bread which requires reclining, but wine does not require reclining’. there is a contradiction between his view and the first part of this statement? ²²⁰ — Guests are different, since they intend to shift their place. ²²¹ According to the version which makes Rab say that this applies only to bread for which reclining is of effect, but for wine reclining is of no effect, there is a contradiction with the second part? ²²² — The case is different there because, since reclining is of effect for bread, it is also of effect for wine. ²²³

²¹⁵ Footnote: To constitute a party, and even without it one may say the blessing on behalf of all.

²¹⁶ Footnote: For the purpose of constituting a party.

²¹⁷ Footnote: Probably a party of Haberim (v. Glos.) is referred to.

²¹⁸ Footnote: To take the wine which is to be offered before the meal.

²¹⁹ Footnote: Since they now form a party.

²²⁰ Footnote: Which says that, till they have reclined, each one says a blessing for himself over wine.

²²¹ Footnote: I.e., to go up from the stools on to the couches.

²²² Footnote: **Which says that having reclined one says a blessing on behalf of all also for wine.**

²²³ Footnote: Since the guests on this occasion have been invited to partake of bread, the reclining is of effect also for the wine.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

*Ben Zoma was asked: Why was it laid down that if wine is brought in the course of the meal, each one says a blessing for himself, but if after the meal, one may say a blessing for all? He replied: Because [during meals] the gullet is not empty.*²²⁴

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (45a) Mishnah 7:1. IF THREE PERSONS HAVE EATEN TOGETHER, IT IS THEIR DUTY TO INVITE [ONE ANOTHER TO SAY GRACE]...

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (46b) GEMARA Said the Exilarch to R. Shesheth: Although you are venerable Rabbis, yet the Persians are better versed than you in the etiquette of a meal. When there are two couches [in the set], the senior guest takes his place first and then the junior one above him.²²⁵ **When there are three couches, the senior occupies the middle one, the next to him in rank takes the place above him, and the third one below him.**²²⁶ R. Shesheth said to him: So when he wants to talk to him,²²⁷ **he has to stretch himself and sit upright to do so!**²²⁸ He replied: This does not matter to the Persians, because they speak with gesticulation. [R. Shesheth asked the Exilarch:] **With whom do they commence the washing of the hands before the meal? — He replied: With the senior one. Is then the senior one to sit still [he exclaimed] and watch his hands until they have all washed? — He replied: They bring a table before him immediately.**²²⁹ **With whom do they begin the washing after the meal [he asked him]? — He replied: With the junior one present. And is the senior one to sit with greasy hands until all have washed? — He replied: They do not remove the table from before him till water is brought to him. R. Shesheth then said: I only know a Baraita, in which it is taught: ‘What is the order of reclining? When there are two couches in a set, the senior one reclines first, and then the junior takes his place below him. When there are three couches, the senior takes his place first, the second next above him, and then the third one below him. Washing before the meal commences with the senior one, washing after the meal, if there are five, commences with the senior, and if there are a hundred it commences with the junior until five are left, and then they start from the senior one. The saying of grace is assigned to the one to whom the washing thus reverts’.**²³⁰ **This supports Rab; for R. Hiyya b. Ashi said in the name of Rab: Whoever washes his hands first at the end of the meal has the right to say grace. Rab and R. Hiyya were once dining with Rabbi. Rabbi said to Rab: Get up and**

²²⁴ Footnote: The guests might be eating at the moment when the blessing was pronounced and would not be able to answer Amen (Tosaf).

²²⁵ Footnote: I.e., head to head

²²⁶ Footnote: I.e., with his head to the other’s feet.

²²⁷ Footnote: **When the senior wishes to speak to the one who is above him.**

²²⁸ Footnote: If he wants to face him.

²²⁹ Footnote: It was usual to place a small table before each guest.

²³⁰ Footnote: I.e., either the senior one, or the one to whom he delegates the honour

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

wash your hands. R. Hiyya saw him trembling and said to him: Son of princes, he is telling you to think over the grace.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (47a) GEMARA. ...The disciples of Rab were once dining together when R. Aha entered. They said: A great man has come who can say grace for us. He said to them: Do you think that the greatest present says the grace? One who was there from the beginning must say grace! The law, however, is that the greatest says grace even though he comes in at the end.

{Comment: Reclining on couches in specific hierarchical patterns, washing of hands, and the saying of grace were a common feature of chaburah meals not just the Passover Seder. For the Last Supper, Jesus being the greatest by virtue of His divine essence and by His own words and actions, in serving others, would say the grace after meals.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (48a) GEMARA ...For thus said R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of Johanan: A man cannot say grace on behalf of others until he has eaten at least the size of an olive of corn food with them. Even as it was taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: If one went up [on the couch] and reclined with them, even though he only dipped [a little bit] with them in brine and ate only one fig with them, he can be combined with them [for zimmun]. Now he can be combined with them, but he cannot say grace on behalf of others until he eats the quantity of an olive of corn food. It has also been stated: R. Hanah b. Judah said in the name of Raba: For thus said R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of Johanan: A man cannot say grace on behalf of others until he has eaten at least the size of an olive of corn food with them. Even as it was taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: If one went up [on the couch] and reclined with them, even though he only dipped [a little bit] with them in brine and ate only one fig with them, he can be combined with them [for zimmun]. Now he can be combined with them, but he cannot say grace on behalf of others until he eats the quantity of an olive of corn food. It has also been stated: R. Hanah b. Judah said in the name of Raba:

{Comment: Here, in reference to a dinner with dipping of an olive of corn food (not of the bitter herbs of the Seder), one sees that one can dip on days other than Passover.}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BERACHOTH (51b) Mishnah 8:1. THESE ARE THE POINTS [OF DIFFERENCE] BETWEEN BETH SHAMMAI AND BETH HILLEL IN RELATION TO A MEAL. BETH SHAMMAI SAY THAT THE BENEDICTION IS FIRST SAID OVER THE DAY AND THEN OVER THE WINE,

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

WHILE BETH HILLEL SAY THAT THE BENEDICTION IS FIRST SAID OVER THE WINE AND THEN OVER THE DAY.

8:2 BETH SHAMMAI SAY THAT WASHING THE HANDS PRECEDES THE FILLING OF THE CUP, WHILE BETH HILLEL SAY THAT THE FILLING OF THE CUP PRECEDES THE WASHING OF THE HANDS...

8:7 IF ONE HAS EATEN AND FORGOTTEN TO SAY GRACE, BETH SHAMMAI SAY THAT HE MUST RETURN TO THE PLACE WHERE HE ATE AND SAY THE GRACE, WHILE BETH HILLEL SAY THAT HE SHOULD SAY IT IN THE PLACE WHERE HE REMEMBERED. UNTIL WHEN CAN HE SAY THE GRACE? UNTIL SUFFICIENT TIME HAS PASSED FOR THE FOOD IN HIS STOMACH TO BE DIGESTED.

8:8 IF WINE IS SERVED TO THEM AFTER THE FOOD, AND THAT IS THE ONLY CUP THERE, BETH SHAMMAI SAY THAT A BLESSING IS FIRST SAID OVER THE WINE AND THEN [THE GRACE] OVER THE FOOD, WHILE BETH HILLEL SAY THAT A BLESSING IS FIRST SAID OVER THE FOOD AND THEN OVER THE WINE. ONE SAYS AMEN AFTER A BLESSING SAID BY AN ISRAELITE BUT NOT AFTER A BLESSING SAID BY A CUTHEAN, UNLESS THE WHOLE OF IT HAS BEEN HEARD.²³¹

{Comment: In a sacramental culture, one in which God is considered part of all things, blessings for food are said even after the fact -- when one has forgotten to do so at the time. (Mishnah 8:8 does not apply to the Last Supper since there were at least 2 cups of wine.)}

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate MO'ED KATAN ²³² (23b) GEMARA ...but on Sabbath he takes meals reclining, eats meat and drinks wine, recites grace, invites others [to join him] and others invite him and it is incumbent on him to recite the Shema' and to say the Tefillah and to perform all the religious duties commanded in the Torah.

{Comment: Reclining to eat, drinking wine, and saying grace is seen here in the context of one who is mourning for dead in his household (not for the Passover Seder).}

²³¹ Epstein I, editor, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, Socino Press, London, 1970, p 43a, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

²³² Mo'ed Katan = Lit. "minor festival, minor appointed time"

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate SHABBATH ²³³ (108b) Mishnah 14:2. ONE MAY NOT PREPARE [PICKLING] BRINE ON THE SABBATH, BUT ONE MAY PREPARE SALT WATER AND DIP HIS BREAD INTO IT OR PUT IT INTO A STEW.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate SHABBATH (111b) Mishnah 14:4. IF ONE'S TEETH PAIN HIM, HE MUST NOT SIP VINEGAR THROUGH THEM, BUT MAY DIP [HIS BREAD IN VINEGAR] IN THE USUAL MANNER, AND IF HE IS CURED, HE IS CURED.

Babylonian Talmud — Tractate BABA METZIA ²³⁴ (89a) GEMARA (following Mishnah 7:2): Come and hear: An employer may give his employees wine to drink, that they should not eat many grapes; [on the other hand,] the labourers may dip their bread in brine, that they should eat many grapes!

{Comment: These three excerpts show that bread may be dipped in situations other than at Passover, e.g., on the Sabbath, when one's teeth are sore on the Sabbath, and as part of the compensation due laborers. A computerized boolean search of "dipping" + "bread" or "dipping" + "matzah" failed to reveal any Talmudic verse related specifically to Passover. Only the bitter herbs were dipped during Passover. This suggests that in ancient times, dipping of bread was unrelated to Passover, but could occur as a part of a common or Sabbath meal. Dipping of matzah is not mentioned in the entire Mishnah or Babylonian Talmud. As we have previously seen (page 132), the Greek text clearly declares the dipped item to be a morsel of bread, not the lettuce of the bitter herbs. Consequently, one must conclude, again, that the Last Supper was not a Passover Seder.}

**THE ABSENCE OF FAMILY MEMBERS AT THE LAST SUPPER:
MARY, SALOME, AND MARY THE WIFE OF CLOPAS**

In the Spring of the year, year after year, Jewish families gather together in a spirit of love, fellowship, and devotion to God to celebrate one of the most beautiful and meaningful holidays of their tradition--Pesach, the Passover. Gone are the Temple, the active Levitical and Aaronic priesthoods, the sacrifices of bulls, rams, lambs, and goats. Present are the families, the unleavened bread, the maror and charoseth, the shank and the egg, the afikomen, and especially the traditional Haggadah (Liturgical Text) with its

²³³ Shabbath = Lit. "Sabbath"

²³⁴ Baba Metzia or Bava Metzia = Lit. "middle gate" deals with laws of acquisition and transfer of property

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

histories, instructions, songs, and psalms. All are active participants from the women preparing the food and lighting the candles to kindle the flame of the festival and Sabbath, the men telling the history of the Egyptian Passover and asking the “4 questions,” and their sons answering their questions--all rejoicing in the Lord and their own deliverance with food, song, and 4 glasses of wine.²³⁵

From the beginning Passover has been a family (or household affair). From Exodus 12:3-4 ...*they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household.* **4** *If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one.* One never celebrated alone, but always in family groups together with circumcised servants, friends, and neighbors.

In the Tractate Pesachim of the Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud one notes Rabbi Judah’s opinion on the matter:

Babylonian Talmud -- Tractate PESACHIM (91a) Mishnah.
ONE MAY NOT SLAUGHTER THE PASSOVER OFFERING FOR A SINGLE PERSON: THIS IS R. JUDAH’S VIEW; BUT R. JOSE PERMITS IT. AND EVEN A COMPANY OF A HUNDRED WHO CANNOT EAT AS MUCH AS AN OLIVE [JOINTLY], ONE MAY NOT KILL FOR THEM. AND ONE MAY NOT FORM A COMPANY OF WOMEN AND SLAVES AND MINORS.

GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: How do we know that one may not slaughter the Passover-offering for a single person? Because it is said, Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover-offering for one: this is R. Judah’s opinion. But R. Jose maintained: A single person and he is able to eat it, one may slaughter on his behalf; ten who are unable to eat it, one must not slaughter on their behalf.

R. ‘Ukba b. Hinena of Parishna pointed out a contradiction to Raba: Did then R. Judah Say: One may not kill the Paschal lamb for a single person? But the following contradicts it: [As to] a woman; at the First [Passover] one may slaughter for her separately, but at the second one makes her an addition to others: this is the view of R. Judah. — Said he to him, Do not Say, ‘for her separately,’ but ‘for them separately.’ Yet may we form a company consisting entirely of women? Surely we learned, ONE MAY NOT FORM A COMPANY OF WOMEN AND SLAVES AND MINORS. Does that not mean women separately and slaves separately

²³⁵ Eckstein Y, What You Should Know About Jews and Judaism, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1984, p.98.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

and minors separately? — No, he replied, [it means] women and slaves and minors [together]. Women and slaves, on account of obscenity; minors and slaves, on account of licentiousness...

With whom does the following dictum of R. Eleazar agree. [viz.]: ‘[The observance of the Passover-offering by] a woman at the First [Passover] is obligatory, while at the Second it is voluntary, and it overrides the Sabbath.’ If voluntary, why does it override the Sabbath? Rather say: ‘at the Second it is voluntary, while at the First it is obligatory and overrides the Sabbath.’ With whom [does it agree]? With R. Judah.²³⁶

Here the Mishnah and Gemara establish that:

- (1) women were required to keep the 1st Passover,
- (2) that a single person could not register by himself for a Passover sacrifice, but
- (3) that groups of women with or without minors were allowed.

The rather lengthy discussion in the Gemara on this subject appears to be more theoretical than practical. The general practice was for families or groups of families to celebrate together.

Who were the women followers of Jesus present in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion (and presumably present to celebrate the Passover)? From the Gospels one may determine: Mary the Theotokos (mother of Jesus Christ), Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas (the mother of James the younger [also known as ‘the less’] and Joses [presumably Judas, Simon, and his sisters, also]) who is also the sister(-in-law) of Mary the Theotokos, and lastly, Salome the mother of disciples John and James.

*Matt 27: 56 Among them were **Mary Magdalene**, and **Mary** the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*

(Mark 6: 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?)

*Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were **Mary Magdalene**, and **Mary** the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and **Salome**. 41 These used to follow him and*

²³⁶ Epstein I, editor, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Socino Press, London, 1983, p. 91a, and also in CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library, Socino Edition, The Socino Talmud, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

*John 19:25 And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, **and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas**, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.*

Holy Tradition recognizes Salome to be the wife of Zebedee and mother of the Apostles James and John. She is also considered to be the daughter of Joseph, the Betrothed of Mary the Theotokos, by a former marriage. Clopas is the brother of Joseph, the Betrothed, and married another Mary--one of the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb. Of the latter were born James, Joses, Symeon, Jude, and some sisters--the so-called "brothers and sisters"²³⁷ (actually cousins) of the Lord Jesus Christ.²³⁸ In other words, three of the 4 women were sisters-in-law and niece. No wonder they were together at the

²³⁷ There are three major theories regarding the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus. First, is the "full-brother" hypothesis strongly advocated by the heretic Helvidius in Rome in 380 and widely popular in the Protestant Church. Second, is the "half-brother" hypothesis, which regards the brothers and sisters of Jesus as the children of Joseph by a former wife. (This has the oldest tradition in its favor, but comes from the acocryphal *Gospel of James*, chapter ix, recording that Joseph was a widower and had children before marrying Mary.) It is the established theory of the Greek Church. A third theory, the "cousin" theory originating with Jerome in A.D.383 to preserve the virginity of Mary in opposition to Helvedius. Later, Augustine championed this theory. It is now the established theory in the Roman Catholic Church. It regards Mary, the wife of Clopas as the sister of the virgin Mary, and the mother of the James, Joses, Judas, Simon, and his sisters. (From Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol I Apostolic Christianity, A.D.1-100, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids MI, (1910), 1994, pp. 272-274.) The Holy Tradition mentioned here is from Heggisipus and from St. Demetri of Rostov's Lives of the Saints, among others.

²³⁸ In his The Church History, Book III, Chapter 11:1-6, Eusebius writes, "After the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them also were still alive) to take counsel as to who was worthy to succeed James. They all with one consent pronounced Symeon, the son of Clopas, of whom the Gospel also makes mention, to be worthy of the episcopal throne of that parish. He was a cousin, as they say of the Saviour. For Hegessippus records that Clopas was a brother of Joseph." In Schaff P Wace H (editors), Nicean and Post Nicean Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 146

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

Cross, together preparing spices after the burial, and together hastening to anoint the Lord's body in the garden tomb early on Sunday morning.

If the Last Supper were a Pesach Seder and only Jesus and His twelve disciples were in attendance, then Jesus' mother Mary, her sister Mary the wife of Clopas (and mother of James and Joses), as well as James' and John's mother Salome were left to fend for themselves for Pesach. This would appear to our mortal eyes as a failure to honor one's parents at a very family oriented festival. As we have seen from the Mishnah, the Passover sacrifice was obligatory for women at the 1st Passover, but would not be slaughtered for a single registrant. Of course the women could have registered as a group with or without Mary Magdalene. However,

- (1). if all these women followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and ministered to Him and His disciples out of their own means; and
- (2). if they included Mother, aunt, and cousin to Him; mother, Aunt, and aunt to John the Beloved Disciple and his brother James; and
- (3). if the other Mary's sons (so-called "brothers of the Lord") James, Joses, Symeon, and Jude didn't believe in Jesus and didn't follow Him at this time;

then, given the family nature of Passover from the beginning, it seems unreasonable to believe that Jesus and two of His closest disciples and relatives would not have celebrated the Passover with their mothers and aunt. Secondly, each group was to consist of at least 10 people, and not to consist of so many that each should be able to partake of at least a small part of the Pascal lamb ²³⁹ (the chagigah of the 14th of Nisan making up the deficit in meat to satisfy the hunger). Without Jesus and the disciples, could they generate a group of 10? Mary, Mary (Clopas), Mary Magdalene, Salome, James, Joses, Judas, Symeon, plus the sisters and other extended family members -- the answer is probably, yes! However, it is the absence of these family members at the Last Supper which casts further doubt on it being a Passover Seder (see page 132).

Lastly, David Stern (a Jewish Messianic Christian living in Israel) in his book The Jewish New Testament Commentary in the 26th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Stern admits that there are those who disagree with the Last Supper being a Pesach Seder:

The Last Supper (vv. 17-30 of this chapter) is understood by most scholars to have been a Passover meal or *Seder* (v.17N). Many *Pesach*

²³⁹ *Under all circumstances do [people] register with [a Passover offering] so long as there is an olive's bulk of meat for each and every one of them.* Pesachim 8:3, in Neusner J, The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, p. 245.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

themes are deepened, reinforced and given new levels of meaning by the events in the life of Yeshua the Messiah and by his words on this night. **However, Joseph Shulam has suggested that it may have been not the Seder but a *se'udat-mitzvah*, the celebratory “banquet accompanying performance of a commandment” such as a wedding or *b'rit-milah*.**

Here is the background for his argument. When a rabbi and his students finish studying a tractate of the Talmud, they celebrate with a *se'udat-mitzvah* (also called a *se'udat-siyum*, “banquet of completion,” i.e., graduation). The Fast of the firstborn, expressing gratitude for the saving of Israel’s firstborn sons from the tenth plague (compare Lk 2:22-24&N), has been prescribed for the day before *Pesach*, Nisan 14, at least since Mishnaic times. When it is necessary to eat a *se'udat-mitzvah*, this takes precedence over a fast. With a modicum of foresight a rabbi can plan to complete a tractate on Nisan 14 and thus avoid having to fast; doing so is not construed as cheating, and in fact it has become the custom.

The tradition of the Fast of the Firstborn dates at least from Mishnaic times. But Shulam reasons, if it goes back a couple centuries more to the time of Yeshua, and if the *se'udat-siyum*, custom applied in the first century to the completing of any course of study, then Yeshua might have arranged to have himself and his *talmidim* finish reading a book of the *Tanakh* on Nisan 14. Or, since Yeshua knew he was to die, he may have regarded it as appropriate to complete his disciples’ earthly “course of study” with a banquet. This solution would also resolve the perceived conflict between Yochannan and the Synoptic Gospels over the timing of the Last Supper.²⁴⁰

Hence, Shulam, in essence, agrees with Dom Gregory Dix and this author’s view of the Last Supper, not being a Pesach Seder.

Summary:

In conclusion, there is nothing in the Gospel accounts regarding the Last Supper that specifically points to it being a Passover Seder. Rather, the reclining, order of seating, blessings by the “greatest,” the drinking of the wine, eating of the bread, the dipping of the bread in a bowl (of brine, vinegar, wine), the washing, etc., were all

²⁴⁰ Stern DH, The Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, MD, 1992, p. 77.

**CHAPTER XI: THE LAST SUPPER: A CHABURAH MEAL,
A PASSOVER SEDER WITHOUT FAMILY,
OR A DINNER BETWEEN THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES ?**

normal parts of sacramental life as practiced in ancient Israel in Jesus' day. Admittedly, there were a couple of innovations: the foot-washing instead of (or in addition to) hand washing, and the transformation of the bread and wine into the Eucharist. These could have happened at any time they were together, but especially at the end when Jesus wished to communicate so much to the disciples in so short a time. Furthermore, every one of the parts of the Passover Seder that distinguish the Seder from common meals (i.e., the rest of the family members, the questioning by the son "Why is this night different from every other night...", remembrance of the Egyptian Exodus, the matzah, the bitter herbs, the Pesach lamb, the 4 cups of wine, the hallel) are singularly absent in the Gospel accounts. [An active imagination, especially in one with a traditional Jewish cultural background, can readily interpolate them into the synoptic accounts of the Last Supper.] Thus, as the Fathers have stated, the Last Supper occurred on the evening before the Passover Seder. When Jesus states in Luke 22:15, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," He was looking ahead 24 hours to celebrating that joyous meal desired by all Israel. He could have continued His heartfelt remorse with this: "But nevertheless, not My will, but the will of My Father in Heaven be done." In other words, that ceremonial annual earthly Passover Seder was not to be. Instead, there was to be a Heavenly Passover in which Christ Jesus was to be the true Passover Lamb, hung on a tree at Golgotha at the same time as the passover lambs were being slain and hung on the hooks in the Temple -- as so many of the Church Fathers have testified!!!

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

Chapter XII: The Last Supper in the Contemporary Jewish Messianic Movement

As mentioned in the Introduction, the contemporary Jewish Messianic movements have made great use of Passover Seders portraying Jesus' Last Supper as being a true Pesach Seder. In their opinion, this helps to restore the essential Jewishness of Jesus and his disciples and to the New Testament scriptures. However, such an interpretation represents a radical departure in interpretation from that of the Church Fathers, both pre- and post-Nicene and results in a shifted chronology for the Paschal week. The latter causes significant problems for typologic interpretation of the Feast of First-Fruits as we have seen. We shall now see that their current English language publications reinforce their innovative chronology.

Comparison of the Scriptures: The Jewish New Testament²⁴¹

The Jewish New Testament is a new cultural translation of the scriptures of the New Testament by a Messianic Jew, David Stern, living in Israel for his Jewish brethren who has attempted to restore its original Jewishness by using "neutral" (Jewish politically correct) terms and Hebrew names of people and places, by highlighting Jewish cultural features and festivals by their Jewish designations, and by correcting "mistranslations" resulting from an anti-Jewish theological bias. Although an admirable first attempt in many ways, being a translation of "dynamic equivalence," his work is more a Jewish-Christian cultural commentary than a new translation.

In his introduction he affirms that the Last Supper was "rooted in the Jewish Passover." What he meant by that is not further explained, however, his interpretation of the Synoptic gospel accounts of the Last Supper leave little doubt that he essentially follows the Lightfoot and Edersheim Passover Seder chronology. In contrast, he maintains the traditional difference in chronology dictated by St. John's Gospel and does not change *the Pesach* of John 18:28 to *the Chagigah*. Rarely in his translation of the Gospels, the "dynamic equivalence" can take on a much different meaning from the original Greek. Herein is his bias revealed as we shall see. A short comparison between a few verses in the NRSV translation with Stern's "dynamic equivalents" within **[bold brackets]** like this, will quickly give one a general understanding of his approach to translation. Dynamic equivalents that have significantly different meanings are underlined.

²⁴¹ Stern DH, (translator), Jewish New Testament, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. Jerusalem, Israel, 1989.

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

*Matt 26:1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 “You know that after two days the Passover [**Pesach**] is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”*

*Matt 26:17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread [**for Matzah**] the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover [**your Seder**]?” 18 He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover [**celebrating Pesach**] at your house with my disciples.’ ” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover [**Pesach**] meal...23 He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand [**matzah**] into the bowl with me will betray me...26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread [**piece of matzah**], and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took a cup [**of wine**], and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” 30 When they had sung a hymn [**the Hallel**], they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

{Comment: In Matthew, David Stern interprets the Last Supper as a Seder. Consequently, he substitutes matzah for hand, piece of matzah for loaf of bread, and the Hallel for a hymn. From Lightfoot’s and Edersheim’s points of view, perfectly acceptable. From the point of view of the Church Fathers and literal translation -- defective to the point of being Judaizing.}

*Mark 14:1 It was two days before the Passover [**Pesach**] and the festival of Unleavened Bread [**Matzah**]. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; 12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread [**for Matzah**], when the Passover lamb [**for Pesach**] is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover [**your Seder**]?” 13 So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover [**Pesach meal**] with my disciples?’ ...16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal [**Seder**]... 20 He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread [**matzah**] into the bowl with me. 22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread [**piece of matzah**], and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ... 26 When they had sung the hymn [**the Hallel**], they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

{Comment: Mark's gospel is interpreted by Stern in the same fashion as Matthew's.}

Luke 22:1 Now the festival of Unleavened Bread [Matzah], which is called the Passover Pesach, was near...7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread [matzah], on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal [our Seder] for us that we may eat it." 9 They asked him, "Where do you want us to make preparations for it?"...11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover [Pesach meal]with my disciples?" '...13 So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal [Seder]...15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover [Seder] with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it [celebrate it again] until it is fulfilled [given its full meaning] in the kingdom of God."...19 Then he took a loaf of bread [piece of matzah], and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

{Comment: Luke's gospel is interpreted in the same fashion as Matthew's and Mark's. Unfortunately, in so doing the meaning of verse 16 becomes distorted from the original Greek. Whereas the original Greek, especially in the Textus Receptus/Majority Text, emphatically states that under no circumstances would Jesus eat that Passover that He desired to eat with them -- until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. The word *again* is not to be found in the text. It is an interpolation required by the theology of the translator, since the literal reading of the text is opposed to his belief about the Last Supper being a Seder.}

John 13:18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread [bread] has lifted his heel against me.'

{Comment: As St. John discusses the Supper in which Judas is unmasked as a betrayer, he makes reference to bread in several places. It is most instructive to compare the different versions of the word translated as *bread* in Chapter 13. First of all in verse 18 since it is a quote from Psalm 41:

John 13:18 Ὁ τρώγων μου τὸν ἄρτον ἐπήρεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὴν πτέρναν αὐτοῦ.

Psalm 41:10 (9) LXX: Καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἀνθρώπος τῆς εἰρηνῆς μου ἐφ' ὃν ἠλπισα, ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου ἐμεγαλυνεὲν ἐπ' ἐμὲ πτερνισμόν

:בְּעֵינַי עָקַבְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־בָּרַחַתִּי בֶּן־אֶחָי אֲכַל לֶחֶמִי הַגְּדִיל עָלַי עֵקֵב: ^{41:10}

The word ἄρτος in the Gospel of John and in the Septuagint version of Psalm 41:9 of the Old Testament correspond to the Hebrew word לֶחֶמִי in the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 41:10.

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

It essentially means bread, a loaf of bread, bread of offering, or food. The Hebrew word for which it served as a translation is used similarly as bread, food, bread of offering, bread of first fruits. However, neither in the LXX or the Tanakh²⁴² are these words used for matzah! Stern left it as *bread* in his translation undoubtedly because it is a quotation of an Old Testament verse which is usually translated as *bread* -- and the word means bread in the general sense of the word, not matzah! However in the following verses describing the continuation of the same scene he switches from *piece of bread* {“τὸ ψωμίον” = small piece of ordinary bread} to *matzah* .}

John 13:26 Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread [matzah] when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread [matzah], he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After he received the piece of bread [matzah], Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” ...30 So, after receiving the piece of bread [matzah], he immediately went out. And it was night.

{Comment: Thus, he has dynamically changed the meaning of the piece of regular bread to a piece of matzah, thus intentionally transforming this supper into a Passover Seder. This is a theological bias (whether correct or not) that is unsupported by the text itself.}

John 18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover [**Pesach meal**]

John 19:14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover [**Pesach**]; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!”

John 19:31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity [**since it was an especially important Shabbat**].

{Comment: There is no particular reason rabbinically why this Sabbath should have had any greater importance than any other -- except as we and Dr. Farrar have suggested, that because it was the Sabbath of the Festival as well as the weekly Sabbath.}

In conclusion, we can legitimately state that there is a definite bias in Mr. Stern’s translation of these texts which presupposes that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder.

²⁴² Tanakh = Jewish Scriptures, i.e., the Torah, Nevi’im (prophets), & Ketubim (writings)

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

The Jewish New Testament Commentary²⁴³

In addition to translating the Scriptures David Stern has also provided a commentary on the New Testament from his Jewish perspective. Commenting on John 18:28, Stern can be seen to have accepted the Lightfoot and Edersheim chronology hook, line, and sinker!

28 They didn't want to become ritually defiled. This defilement is not the same as that spoken of at 11:55 but results from entering the home of a gentile, in this case the Governor's Headquarters. The *Torah* does not mention such a defilement; it is a rabbinic addition (see Ac 10:28N²⁴⁴).

And thus unable to eat the *Pesach* meal, literally, "unable to eat the *Pesach*." Some scholars believe "the *Pesach*" refers to the Passover lamb and conclude that Yochanan, unlike the Synoptic Gospels, places the *Seder* (the first evening of Passover) on Friday evening after the execution of Yeshua in the afternoon. I do not believe that Yochanan's Gospel reports a different date for the crucifixion from the Synoptics (but see 13:29&N); rather, the meal of 13:1 was the *Seder*, and it took place on Thursday night; but the *Pesach*" in this verse refers to other food eaten during *Pesach*, specifically the *chagigah* (festival sacrifice), which was consumed with great joy and celebration on the afternoon following the *Seder*. This is the *Pesach* meal which the Judeans gathered outside Pilate's palace would have been unable to eat had they entered, because their defilement would have lasted till sundown. If "the *Pesach*" meant the Passover lamb, defilement in the morning might not have been a problem, since the *Seder* meal took place after sundown.²⁴⁵

Regarding in John 19:31 the especially important Shabbat or great Sabbath, Stern has some interesting comments, although these are not useful for establishing a chronology:

²⁴³ Stern DH, The Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, MD, 1992, pp.927.

²⁴⁴ Stern references the Tractate Oholot 18:7 of the Mishnah as the source of the defilement: *Dwelling places of gentiles [literally Canaanites meaning Gentiles in the Land of Israel] are [ritually] unclean.*

²⁴⁵ Stern DH, The Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, MD, 1992, pp. 206-207.

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

An especially important *Shabbat*, or possible: *Shabbat HaGadol*” (the “Great Sabbath”); since the Greek text reads, “great was the day of that *Shabbat*.” but what is today called *Shabbat HaGadol* is the *Shabbat* immediately preceding Passover week, not the one that falls during its seven days, as is the case here; and I am unaware that the terminology was different in Yeshua’s day. Obviously the *Shabbat* of *Pesach* week, when millions of Jews were in Jerusalem on pilgrimage, would be an important one. The modern synagogue ritual for this *Shabbat* calls for reading Ezekiel 37:1-14, the vision of the Valley of Dry bones, as the *haftarah* (= “conclusion,” i.e., the concluding Scripture reading, from the Prophets); the passage links the *Pesach* with Messianic times by speaking of a future redemption for Israel just as Passover itself celebrates a past one.

Lastly, with regard to the chronology of the Last Supper, in his commentary on the 26th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Stern admits that there are those who disagree with the Last Supper being a *Pesach Seder*:

The Last Supper (vv. 17-30 of this chapter) is understood by most scholars to have been a Passover meal or *Seder* (v.17N). Many *Pesach* themes are deepened, reinforced and given new levels of meaning by the events in the life of Yeshua the Messiah and by his words on this night. **However, Joseph Shulam has suggested that it may have been not the *Seder* but a *se’udat-mitzvah*, the celebratory “banquet accompanying performance of a commandment” such as a wedding or *b’rit-milah*.**

Here is the background for his argument. When a rabbi and his students finish studying a tractate of the Talmud, they celebrate with a *se’udat-mitzvah* (also called a *se’udat-siyum*, “banquet of completion,” i.e., graduation). The Fast of the firstborn, expressing gratitude for the saving of Israel’s firstborn sons from the tenth plaque (compare Lk 2:22-24&N), has been prescribed for the day before *Pesach*, Nisan 14, at least since Mishnaic times. When it is necessary to eat a *se’udat-mitzvah*, this takes precedence over a fast. With a modicum of foresight a rabbi can plan to complete a tractate on Nisan 14 and thus avoid having to fast; doing so is not construed as cheating, and in fact it has become the custom.

The tradition of the Fast of the Firstborn dates at least from Mishnaic times. But Shulam reasons, if it goes back a couple centuries

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

more to the time of Yeshua, and if the *se'udat-siyum*, custom applied in the first century to the completing of any course of study, then Yeshua might have arranged to have himself and his *talmidim* finish reading a book of the *Tanakh* on Nisan 14. Or, since Yeshua knew he was to die, he may have regarded it as appropriate to complete his disciples' earthly "course of study" with a banquet. This solution would also resolve the perceived conflict between Yochannan and the Synoptic Gospels over the timing of the Last Supper (see Yn 13:29&N, 1828N).

However, most of *The Jewish New Testament Commentary* notes on the Last Supper are based on the assumption that the event was in fact a Passover *Seder*.²⁴⁶

We have previously commented on the parallels between Joseph Shulam's concept of the Last Supper and those of the Church Fathers and this author (see page 192). Unfortunately, since Stern does not reference his source, one cannot be sure whether Shulam is a Messianic Jewish Christian or a follower of Judaism.

God's Appointed Times: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays

In a recently published work by the Pastor of a large Jewish Messianic Congregation Kehilat Ariel in San Diego, California, Barny Kasdan briefly reviews 9 Jewish Biblical Holidays then proceeds to describe how his congregation celebrates these in a Messianic Christian context. This is not written as a scholarly work, nor was it designed to be. It is an introductory guide for a Messianic Christian Community.

For the Passover, Mr. Kasdan definitely has Jesus eating the Last Supper with His disciples, complete with matzah, bitter herbs and 4 cups of wine. As a congregation, they celebrate an outreach community Messianic Passover Seder at twilight on the 15th of Nisan, the traditional time, then the following evening celebrate a private Passover Seder with their families.²⁴⁷ No specific mention is made of the chronology of the Last Supper in this chapter. However, in the following chapter on the Feast of First-Fruits, he has an interesting twist! In order to have Jesus as the antitype punctually fulfill His missions as the Passover Lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world and as the First-Fruits to God from

²⁴⁶ Stern DH, The Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, MD, 1992, p. 77.

²⁴⁷ Kasdan B, God's Appointed Times: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays, Lederer Messianic Publications, Baltimore, MD, 1993, pp. 25-38.

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

the dead, Mr. Kasdan follows a unique course in comparison to Lightfoot and Edersheim. Indeed, he takes a course condemned by both. And for sure, he is aware of the Edersheim arguments, since he quotes Edersheim:

The traditional observance of this feast points us to the resurrection of Messiah. It is a harvest festival and the barley sheaves are waved before the Lord. Think of it: The grain that had come from the earth was now lifted up high for all to see! Yeshua himself alluded to his resurrection in similar terms when he said:

The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Yes, indeed! I tell you that unless a grain of wheat that falls to the ground dies, it stays just a grain; but if it dies, it produces a big harvest....As for me, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself (John 12:23-24, 32).

Coincidentally, this parable was spoken to his Jewish disciples as they had come to celebrate the passover, just before Sfirat Haomer²⁴⁸ (John 12:1, 20). The resurrection of the Messiah from the dead is perfectly symbolized in the wave offering of the first fruits.

The connection does not stop there. Besides the rather obvious typology through the customs of Sfirat Haomer, the actual timing of the holiday verifies this fulfillment. You will recall the controversy that developed among the early rabbis over the phrase “after the Sabbath.” the Sadducees held to the seventh-day Sabbath view while the Pharisees thought Leviticus 23:11 alluded to the Sabbath of Passover. We may wonder which of the two is correct and how it relates to the resurrection of Yeshua. In a strange way that only God could arrange, both views fit the historical situation of the Gospels.

The most widely accepted traditional view says that Yeshua celebrated his last seder with his disciples on the evening of 14 Nisan, a Thursday night that particular year. He was arrested that night and stood before the Roman authorities. He was finally placed on the execution cross at 9:00 a.m. on Friday and gave up his spirit at 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, just before the weekly Sabbath. His body was quickly buried by his sympathizers, left in the tomb through that next day

²⁴⁸ Sfirat Haomer = “counting of the sheaf”

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

until, at their earliest opportunity, the women came to the tomb to find it open.

According to Jewish reckoning, therefore, Yeshua was in the tomb three days: part of Friday until sundown, sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, and day three starting at sundown Saturday. Although his empty tomb was discovered at daybreak Sunday morning, according to Jewish reckoning Yeshua could have been raised from the dead any time after sundown on Saturday. Personally, I wonder if God, our father, would not take the first possible opportunity to raise his son after Saturday sundown instead of waiting for Sunday morning.

As we trace this chronology, we can see the sovereign hand of God in regard to the timing of Sfirat Haomer. It was imperative for Messiah to die exactly on Passover in order to fulfill the prophecies. So too Messiah must be risen from the dead on First Fruits.

At first glance there may appear to be a problem with this since there was controversy over the dating of the holy day by the first-century rabbis. But a closer look reveals that Yeshua of Nazareth fulfilled both of these interpretations in the particular year of his death and resurrection.

Yeshua was raised on the third day of Passover (16 Nisan), which fulfilled the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah. Amazingly, he also fulfilled the Sadducean interpretation at the same time. In the particular year of his death, Sfirat Haomer would have started on the Sunday after Passover. Consequently, the year of Yeshua's death and resurrection was one of the few in which both rabbinical theories could be correct at the same time! Indeed, God's sovereign plan should be seen by all. Blessed be he who has revealed the risen Messiah Yeshua, the fulfillment of Sfirat Haomer!²⁴⁹

{Comment: Pastor Kasdan has truly hit upon the key point: ***It was imperative for Messiah to die exactly on Passover in order to fulfill the prophecies.*** In his simplicity, he has come to the same general conclusion as proposed in this thesis: Jesus rose from the dead on Sfirat Haomer. He is the First-Fruits to God risen from the dead. In order to accommodate this chronology, one that unites the rabbinic and Sadducean concepts of the Sabbath, he also concludes that the 16th of Nisan must begin Saturday at dusk. This

²⁴⁹ Kasdan B, God's Appointed Times: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays, Lederer Messianic Publications, Baltimore, MD, 1993, pp. 43-45.

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

forces him to accept the premise that Thursday night at dusk was the beginning of the 14th of Nisan. Since Thursday night was the night of the Last Supper, it was not the traditional Passover Seder celebrated by Israel, which would come the following evening. Truly, Jesus was crucified on the afternoon of Friday the 14th of Nisan. Unfortunately, Pastor Kasdan goes on to state that *Yeshua celebrated his last seder with his disciples on the evening of 14 Nisan, a Thursday night that particular year*. I.e., that Jesus celebrated the Passover Seder a day before the rest of Israel. Yes, this has been a widely accepted view in some circles, but has been strongly if not bitterly condemned by Lightfoot and Edersheim among others.

...Let them tell me now, who suppose that Christ ate his Passover one day sooner than the Jews did theirs, how these things could be performed by him or his disciples in the Temple, since it was looked upon as a heinous offense among the people not to kill or eat the Passover in the due time. ²⁵⁰

Consider again, the patristic view of Claudius Appolinaris (see p.34):

There are, then some who through ignorance raise disputes about these things (though their conduct is pardonable: for ignorance is no subject for blame -- it rather needs further instruction), and say that on the fourteenth day the Lord ate the lamb with the disciples, and that on the great day of the feast of unleavened bread He Himself suffered; and they quote Matthew as speaking in accordance with their view. Wherefore their opinion is contrary to the law, and the Gospels seem to be at variance with them...

The fourteenth day, the true Passover of the Lord; the great sacrifice, the Son of god instead of the lamb, who was bound, who bound the strong, and who was judged, thought Judge of living and dead, and who was delivered into the hands of sinners to be crucified, who was lifted up on the horns of the unicorn, and who was pierced in His holy side, who poured forth from His side the two purifying elements, water and blood, word and spirit, and who was buried on the day of the passover, the stone being place upon the tomb. ²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989, p. 342.

²⁵¹ Claudius Appolinaris, in "Remains of the Second and Third Centuries," Pratten BP, (translator) in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 772-773. Source of this extract is the preface to the Chronicon Paschale. Since the Chronicon Paschale is a anonymous Byzantine fragmentary chronological work covering the years A.D. 284-628, the preface is specific to the edition used by the author. The only English language edition Whitby M &

CHAPTER XII: THE LAST SUPPER IN THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

How could one legally, ethically, morally, or rabbinically eat a Passover lamb a day before they were to be sacrificed in the Temple, especially, when one has to declare the sacrifice to be the Pesach lamb? The Pesach lambs had to be ritually sacrificed in a prescribed manner by the priests. It was only sacrificed on 2 days, the Passover, and the Second Passover 1 month later for those away on a trip or who were in levitical impurity. It could not be sacrificed 1 day earlier and truly have been a Pesach lamb. To have sacrificed a lamb and then used it for an early Paschal lamb would have been deceptive, and would have required deliberate lying. Only a tithe offering would be handled by the priests in a similar manner as a Pesach lamb, i.e., a lamb, no semichah, emurim salted and burned on the Altar, blood poured on the Altar wall, and the rest eaten by the offerer. Of course, the offerer had to be the owner of the newborn animal. Jesus was a carpenter prior to His ministry. Many of His disciples were fisherman -- none a shepherd by trade! No! It was not a Pesach lamb that Jesus and His disciples ate at the Last Supper (there is no mention of any meat at the dinner itself). Consequently, the dinner was not a Pesach Seder. If it was not a Pesach Seder, then it was not a seder at all. If Jesus was without sin, then He fulfilled the Torah to the letter! No deception could have been involved. [Could anyone one accuse Him of sin? No!] Consequently, for the interpreter, the best course of action is to accept the fact that the Last Supper was a special, non-seder meal, between the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples. Then all events will fall into place perfectly as has been shown throughout this paper.

With regard to Pastor Kasdan's remarks on the controversy between the Sadducees and the Pharisees on the dating of the Feast of First-Fruits, regardless of the controversy, the practice of the day was that of the Pharisees as has been previously demonstrated by the historical writings of Philo and Josephus (see page 167), as well as the discussions from the rabbinic writings.

Summary:

The contemporary Jewish Messianic movement has been shown to be biased in favor of Jesus celebrating a true Jewish Passover Seder according to the Law the night before he was crucified. This is not only seen in their practice of community life, but also in Biblical translation and Biblical commentary.

Whitby M, Chronicon Paschale 284-628 A.D., Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, England, 1989, does not contain this material.

CHAPTER XIII: A REFUTATION OF EDERSHEIM'S OTHER ARGUMENTS REGARDING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

Chapter XIII: Refutation of Edersheim's Other Arguments on the Chronology of the Passover

In Alfred Edersheim's book The Temple: Its Services and Ministries, there is an appendix entitled "Did the Lord Institute His 'Supper' on the Paschal Night? Therein he discusses at length his reasons for disagreeing with Dr. Farrar's opinion that the Last Supper was not the Paschal Supper. Dr. Farrar had been the author of a landmark book, The Life of Christ which contained a special *Excursus* appended to his book which gave his detailed reasoning for his opinion.²⁵² Because some of Edersheim's additional arguments in this appendix could cast doubt on our proposed patristic and rabbinic chronology, these latter arguments will be rebutted in this section.

Edersheim's first ploy is to state that the account of the Last Supper by both the Synoptists and St. John seemed to him utterly inconsistent with the idea of an ordinary supper. He considers the language of the Synoptists to be so straightforward and simple as to be irreconcilable with that view. In rebuttal to the former, it was shown in the previous chapter that all the details necessary for distinguishing a seder from a special dinner between a teacher and his disciples in a sacramental society such as Israel in the Second Temple period are entirely missing. In fact, aside from the washing of the feet and the institution of the Eucharist, all the actions of Jesus and His disciples are easily found described within the rabbinic writings regarding blessings and meals. With regard to the latter, that the language of the Synoptists is so straightforward as to preclude the opinion that the Last Supper was not a Passover Seder, we will return to the Gospel of Luke:

Luke 22:14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "**I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**" {16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἔν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. }

As previously discussed using the critical Greek text (United Bible Society 4th Edition, Aland 26th edition), Jesus eagerly desired to eat this Passover with the disciples. However, He then clearly states that He will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom

²⁵² Unfortunately, Edersheim does not fully reference the work in question nor give the full name of the author. There are at least two different authors named Farrar with works entitled Life of Christ written in the 19th century. Of the two available to this author, neither has this excursus, and both tend to follow the Edersheim chronology.

CHAPTER XIII: A REFUTATION OF EDERSHEIM'S OTHER ARGUMENTS REGARDING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

of God. It will only be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God, when He, the Passover Lamb, is slain for the sins of the world. In other words, Jesus is telling us directly that this is not the Passover Seder, He did not eat the lamb, He is the Lamb. This is not the evening of Passover, but the previous evening. Yes, He desired and would have liked to eat the unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and Passover lamb of the Seder with the disciples, and celebrate that most traditional and memorable holiday of Israel, but instead He sanctifies the dinner of the previous evening. This is the most explicit witness to the Patristic chronology among the synoptic gospels. Furthermore, in the standard Byzantine Text of the Greek Orthodox Church, i.e., the Majority Text and specifically in the Textus Receptus it is even more emphatic in the Greek: Luke 22:16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ φάγω ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.^{253 254} Literally, “For I say to you that never in any way I eat of it, until when it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Edersheim then contests the idea that the crucifixion took place at the same time as the passover sacrifices in the Temple because it seemed inconceivable to him that “on so busy an afternoon, there should have been at the time when they must have been most engaged, around the cross that multitude of reviling Jews, ‘likewise also the chief priests, mocking Him, with the scribes.’”²⁵⁵ An interesting point to be sure. But is it any less conceivable that they would be doing so on the following day, the Yom Tov, the special festal sabbath when everyone was to not only bring the Chagigah of the 15th of Nisan but also their burnt offering of appearance! These were to be brought by everyone. Hence, the Yom Tov must have been even busier than the eve of Passover in regard to sacrificial offerings. There were millions of Jews present in Jerusalem, and the passover lambs were sacrificed in three waves with only 1 or 2 of its registrants present in the Temple, the other 8 or 9 registrants were out on the streets of the city. On Yom Tov, they would all be coursing through the Temple. Secondly, the scribes and Pharisees need not have been in the Temple at all on the eve of Pascha unless they were the sacrificing registrants. On Yom Tove, they would have to bring their Chagigah of the 15th like the rest of Israel. Thirdly, the priests truly would be busy in the Temple on the eve of Pascha presiding over the Paschal sacrifices. However, if their meeting with Pilate took place early in the morning as St. John states, and if the cry to crucify Jesus began at the 3rd hour as Mark

²⁵³ Green JP, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Vol. IV, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1985, p. 235. Green uses the Textus Receptus, not an Alexandrian text, based on that reconstructed by Scrivener FHA, the New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorized Version, Cambridge University Press, 1894.

²⁵⁴ Aland B, Aland K, Karavidopoulos J, Martini CM, Metzger BM, , The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft, Giglia-Druck (Printers), Stuttgart, Germany, 1993, pp. 294-295.

²⁵⁵ Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were At the Time of Christ, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p. 392.

CHAPTER XIII: A REFUTATION OF EDERSHEIM'S OTHER ARGUMENTS REGARDING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

and St. John's exemplar in Ephesus stated, then the initial outpouring of fury on Jesus by the chief priests would have been over long before the afternoon tamid was slain in the Temple. If it were the 6th hour as the other Synoptists and our current texts of St. John state, then they still had roughly an hour and one-half before the paschal lambs would commence being slain – i.e., plenty of time to assume their positions in the Temple. Interestingly, even though the chief priests, scribes, and elders are portrayed casting insults at and reviling Christ as He lay suspended on the cross, once the 6th hour came and there was darkness over the land, neither St. John nor the Synoptists record their presence! They had departed to their appointed tasks in the Temple! Only the throngs of pilgrims (including Jesus' followers) and Roman soldiers remained at Golgotha. Lastly, only after the 9th hour, do Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus appear in the narratives to claim Jesus' body with Pilate's approval.

Edersheim next argument follows with "What, fairly speaking, is the inference from the Synoptical Gospels?" He contents that everything that Matthew, Mark, and Luke state from the first day of unleavened bread to Jesus' desire to eat this supper with His disciples points conclusively to his chronology. In rebuttal we again call Luke's Gospel Chapter 22:14-16 to the witness stand (as discussed above) plus Appolinaris (page 34), Clement (page 39), Peter of Alexandria (page 48), John Chrysostom (page 66), and the Blessed Theophylact (page 76). What is inconceivable to Edersheim is clearly apparent to these giants of the Church.

What about John 14:26-29 where Judas leaves in the middle of the Last Supper, the disciples supposing that he was sent to buy something for the feast or to give alms to the poor? Edersheim goes to great lengths in other places in both his books to prove that the sanctity of the Yom Tov is less than that of the weekly Sabbath, and that it was rabbinically allowable to buy things on the festal sabbath or to give alms. Is it not even more acceptable rabbinically to buy things on the previous night? This really needs no comment at all.

What about the meeting of the Sanhedrin and the violent arrest on this night of peculiar solemnity? Edersheim states that the fanatical hatred of the chief priests and the necessities of the case would account for their behavior! Yet, how much more in accordance with Scripture (they didn't wish to seize Him during the Passover lest there be a riot among the people) and in accordance with rabbinic law (having to complete their work before noon on the eve of Passover) would it have been to arrest Jesus on the previous night and turn Him over to the Romans before midday. Again, Edersheim's arguments appear contrived or forced in the light of the more natural chronology of the Fathers of the Church.

CHAPTER XIII: A REFUTATION OF EDERSHEIM'S OTHER ARGUMENTS REGARDING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

What about the apparent discrepancies between the Synoptists and John's Gospel? Edersheim concentrates here on John 18:28 -- not wanting to become defiled and the eating of the Passover. His proposal to harmonize the accounts is the 'chagigah of the 15th of Nisan.' However, we have already laid bare the deficiencies of this strained theory in Chapter IX.

Now comes a most feeble attempt by Edersheim:

According to St. John, the following Sabbath was 'a high day,' or 'a great day;' on which Dr. Farrar comments: 'Evidently because it was at once a Sabbath, and the first day of the Paschal Feast.' Why not the second day of the feast, when the first *omer* was presented in the temple?²⁵⁶

In our discussion of John 19:31 (see page 98), there was no precedent in the Mishnah or the Babylonian Talmud for any Sabbath being called great. Indeed, rather than being a great Sabbath as Edersheim proposes based on the elevation of the *omer*, the second day of the festival was rabbinically considered a day of lesser holiness:

"To distinguish between that part of the Succos and Pesach festivals which are of greater sanctity [i.e., the first and last days(s)] and the days of lesser sanctity [i.e., the intermediate days] we use the expressions יום טוב [*Yom Tov*], *holiday* [lit., *good day*], for the former, and חול המועד [*Chol HaMoed*], *intermediate days* [lit., *ordinary day of the festival*], for the latter."²⁵⁷

In rebuttal from modern Orthodox Rabbi's:

"(In Eretz Yisrael, only the first and last days of the festivals are full holy days -- Chol HaMoed thus consists of the second through the sixth day of Pesach...The name Chol HaMoed alludes to the fact that, unlike the beginning and concluding days which have a degree of holiness so great that nearly all forms of labor are forbidden, the intermediate days are relatively חול, ordinary, in that many forms of work are permitted on these days. Against some forms of work, however, there is a

²⁵⁶ Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As they Were At the Time of Christ, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p. 396.

²⁵⁷ Rosenberg AY, "Tractate 'Chagigah,'" in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Moed Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp.3.

CHAPTER XIII: A REFUTATION OF EDERSHEIM'S OTHER ARGUMENTS REGARDING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

prohibition, the definition of which is a major theme of our tractate.

Because these intermediate days are of lesser sanctity than the first and last days of the festival, the tractate which discusses them is called

מועד קטן *Moed Katan* [lit. *minor festival*].²⁵⁸

Here is a direct refutation of Edersheim, implied from an introduction to the Mishnah tractate “Moed Katan” which immediately precedes the tractate “Chagigah!” Again it is hard to believe that Edersheim was not aware of these days of lesser holiness. Only as a last ditched effort to shore up his crumbling chronologic hypothesis should he have resorted to such a feeble argument as to consider the second day greater than the first -- even more so to resort to basing it on the celebrating of First-Fruits with the raising of the *omer* . How could it be a great day when Jesus was still languishing in the tomb according to Edersheim’s chronology (see page 176). Truly, Farrar had seized upon the truth. It was a great sabbath because it was both the weekly Sabbath and the Sabbath of the Festival.

The remainder of Edersheim’s augments in this Appendix of his really bear no further comment. They have essentially all been dealt with earlier in this paper.

Summary:

In summary, we can say that there is little support for Edersheim’s chronology, and much to support the chronology of the Fathers in the Scriptures and in the rabbinic writings. The next section summaries all of the previous information gleaned from the Fathers of the Church, the Scriptures, the Mishnah, and the Babylonian Talmud, and places them in a chronologic table specific to the Passion week of Christ.

²⁵⁸ Rosenberg AY, “Tractate ‘Moed Katan,’” in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Seder Moed, Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989, pp.2.

CHAPTER XIV: PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY OF PESACH & THE LAST SUPPER

Chapter XIV: Chronology of Pesach and Last Supper (Biblical, Patristic, and Rabbinic)

Date	Part of Day	Events and Offerings
13 Abib / Nisan	Wednesday Evening	Day Before the 8-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread
	Thursday Morning	Day Before the 8-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread
	Thursday Afternoon	Day Before the 8-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread. The messengers of the Beth Din (Sanhedrin) used to go out to the valley of Beth Makleh in the south of the Kidron valley on the day before the festival and tie the unreaped ripe barley corn in bunches to make it the easier to reap for the Festival of First-Fruits. Jesus' disciples ask and are told to prepare the Passover.
14 Abib / Nisan	Thursday Evening = Eve of Passover & Eve of Sabbath	Officials from the Sanhedrin identify the Omer for First Fruits and tie it in bundles. Dusk signals the official start of 8-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread; the search with a lamp for any leaven begins. The Last Supper begins, Jesus washes His disciples feet, later dips bread and gives to Judas. Judas ("the leaven" John 13:27) is sent quickly away and Jesus celebrates the first Eucharist with His 11 remaining disciples. After His prayer in Gethemane, Jesus is betrayal by Judas. After His identification and arrest by officials of the Sanhedrin (officials from chief priests, scribes, elders, and pharisees) He is taken to the High Priest's residence, then interrogated first by Annas, later by Caiphas.

CHAPTER XIV: PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY OF PESACH & THE LAST SUPPER

	Friday Morning	The Jews routinely finish their work (permitted till 6th hour in Judah, but Beth Hillel permitted work only till daybreak). They remove any remaining leaven in their households. The last meal permitted with leaven occurs at the 5th hour. Any remaining leaven is burnt at the 6th hour = 1200 noon. The Chief Priests and Council finish their interrogation and bring Jesus before Pilate in the early morning. Jesus is condemned to crucifixion.
	Friday Afternoon	The afternoon tamid (obligatory perpetual sacrifice) is slaughtered at 6 1/2 hours (1230) and offered at 7 1/2 hours (1330) on the eve of the Sabbath, the Pesach-offerings and non-obligatory Pesach chagigah for the 14th of Nisan after it. During Jesus' Passion on the Cross, the Heavens darken between 6th and 9th hours with chief priests apparently no longer present. After Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the body of Jesus to bury it in a nearby tomb. Jesus is buried by Joseph and Nikodemos before sunset. The myrrh-bearing women prepare spices.
15 Abib / Nisan	Friday Evening = Yom Tov = 1st day of Festival of Unleavened Bread = "Sabbath" of the Festival and actual Sabbath = "Great Sabbath"	The official beginning of Pesach proper -- families as a group roast the Pesach lamb whole, then they celebrate the Pesach Seder with their family or group. This day is considered a solemn assembly in which no occupational work is done, i.e., a special "Sabbath." Meanwhile Jesus' body rests in the Tomb while the women disciples rest as they should on the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XIV: PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY OF PESACH & THE LAST SUPPER

	Saturday = Great Sabbath Morning	The morning tamid , the obligatory burnt offerings of appearance (olat re'eyah), and obligatory peace offering of the festival (shalmei chagigah) , and optional peace offering of joy (shalmei simchah) all to be accompanied by meal and libation of wine offerings (minchas nesachim) are presented in the Temple. Jesus lies dead in the tomb. The Chief Priests come before Pilate asking for a Roman detachment to guard the tomb to ensure His disciples wouldn't steal His body.
	Saturday = Great Sabbath Afternoon	Obligatory burnt offerings of appearance (olat re'eyah), and obligatory peace offering of the festival (shalmei chagigah) , optional peace offering of joy (shalmei simchah), and afternoon tamid all to be accompanied by meal and libation of wine offerings (minchas nesachim).
16 Abib / Nisan	Saturday Evening = 2nd day of festival = Chol HaMoed (Literally the ordinary part of the festival) Festival of First-Fruits	The harvest of the Omer of barley is begun at dusk and proceeds into the night. From the Omer a Kohen (priest) prepares the First-Fruits Minchah offering with oil and sprinkles it with frankincense. Meanwhile the women disciples prepare (oil of) myrrh and spices and to anoint and "sprinkle" Jesus' body.
16 Abib / Nisan	Sunday Morning = 2nd day of festival = Festival of First-Fruits	In the Temple after the morning tamid a portion of the First Fruits Minchah offering was burned at the Altar along with a special olah offering. The First-Fruits Minchah was elevated and waved before the LORD , and then eaten by the priest. CHRIST, THE FIRST-FRUITS, IS RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD. Various appearances are made by Christ to the myrrh-bearing women and they report it to His Disciples.
16 Abib / Nisan	Sunday Afternoon = 2nd day of festival = Festival of First-Fruits	Late olat re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed. Jesus appears to the two disciples (Cleopas and Simon) on the road to Emmaus.

CHAPTER XIV: PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY OF PESACH & THE LAST SUPPER

17 Abib / Nisan	Sunday Evening = 3rd day of festival = Chol HaMoed (Literally the ordinary part of the festival)	In the evening Jesus appears to His gathered disciples and commissions them to remit and retain sins after breathing on them and giving them the Holy Spirit.
17 Abib / Nisan	Monday = 3rd day of festival = Chol HaMoed (Literally the ordinary part of the festival)	Late olas re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed.
18 Abib / Nisan	Tuesday = 4th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olas re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed.
19 Abib / Nisan	Wednesday = 5th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olas re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed.
20 Abib / Nisan	Thursday = 6th day of festival = Chol HaMoed	Late olas re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed.
21 Abib / Nisan	Friday = 7th day of festival = Yom Tov , a strict Sabbath	Late olas re'eyah, shalmei chagigah. Shalmei simchah as needed.

From this tabulation of the Biblical, Patristic, and Rabbinic testimonies, one could derive a basic harmony of the Gospels for the events of the last few days of Jesus' life. One such harmony (and a brilliant one at that) which is readily available was that composed by Tatian in the mid- to late second century. His work is reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV: HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER: A PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY

Chapter XV: Harmonization of the Gospels on Passover

Having thoroughly refuted Lightfoot's and Edersheim's chronologies of the Passover week, and soundly reaffirmed the traditional Patristic and Rabbinic chronologies, how are the Gospel accounts to be reconciled? Can we truly have a harmony of the Gospels? Historically, the earliest attempt at harmonizing the Gospels was the Diatessaron by Tatian (ca. A.D. 110-172), composed sometime between A.D. 153-170. The next was the Ἀρμονία of Ammonius of Alexandria, the teacher of Origen, based a harmony on the Gospel of Matthew. It destroyed the continuity of the separate narratives as have all harmonies based on Matthew.²⁵⁹ Eusebius of Caesarea adopted a series of divisions similar to Ammonius in his attempts to show parallelism between the Gospel writers. St. Augustin's apologetic work Harmony of the Gospels attempted to explain the apparent discrepancies between the versions. Unfortunately he did not deal with the date of the Last Supper. But neither did he mention the word Passover in conjunction with the dinner.²⁶⁰ Further harmonies awaited the Reformation with its Western rationalism and denial of Patristic authority. Although one could generate a harmony for Passover in Jesus' last year of ministry based on the evidence presented so far, it is much easier to consider Tatian's, being the most ancient, --of the Patristic age, --having been a standard text for the Syriac speaking church for its first 3 centuries, and lastly, --having been considered a most sophisticated work.

Tatian's Diatessaron:

Tatian was born some time between A.D. 110-120 in the land of the Assyrians and was educated both in Syriac and Greek culture. One of his most interesting works was a harmony of the 4 Gospels known as the Diatessaron. It was the most popular form of the Gospels in the Syriac language and became the standard Gospel text of the Syriac speaking Church for over 2 centuries until the time of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in upper Syria (A.D. 427-457). Theodoret suppressed it and had it totally replaced in the Syriac Churches by the 4 separate Gospels. Jerome describes Tatian in the following terms:

²⁵⁹ Riddle MB, "Introduction" to Salmond SDF, (translator), St. Augustin: the Harmony of the Gospels, in Schaff P, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.69.

²⁶⁰ Riddle MB, Footnote to, Augustin (of Hippo), St. Augustin: the Harmony of the Gospels, Salmond SDF, (translator), in Schaff P, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p.176.

CHAPTER XV: HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER: A PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY

*“Tatian who, while teaching oratory, won not a little glory in the rhetorical art, was a follower of Justin Martyr and was distinguished so long as he did not leave his master’s side. But afterwards, inflated by a swelling of eloquence, he founded a new heresy which is called that of the Encratites, the heresy which Severus afterwards augmented in such wise that heretics of this party are called Severians to the present day. Tatian wrote besides innumerable volumes, one of which, a most successful book Against the Nations, is extant, and this is considered the most significant of all his works. He flourished in the reign of Marcus Antoninus Verus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus.”*²⁶¹

Tatian the Assyrian c. AD 120- AD 180



Once a great and fiery follower of Justin Martyr, Tatian later fell into disrepute by founding the heresy of Entratities and following teaching of the gnostic leader Valentinius. However, his Diatessaron continued to be highly admired. Although it is unknown whether the original manuscript of the Diatessaron was penned in Syriac or Greek [both have their adherents], Tatian was fluent in both. Regardless, both his critics and admirers agree that his harmony is most meticulously composed--a careful synthesis of all 4 Gospels eliminating needless repetition of parallel passages and attempting to

²⁶¹ Jerome and Gennadius, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Richardson RC (trs), in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 369.

CHAPTER XV: HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER: A PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY

iron out divergences and contradictions in the words and order of deeds of Jesus.²⁶² Although early manuscripts and fragments are known in Armenian and Syriac, the only widely available version is the translation of an 11th century Arabic manuscript published in the Ante-Nicene Fathers Series.²⁶³ Supplemental material translated from Syriac is found in Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron. For example:

“They seized him and led him to the door. They gave him into the hands of Pilate, but they themselves did not enter into the tribunal, so as not to be defiled, and to be able to eat the lamb in purity.” O pharisees! You have heard [it said], ‘This is the Lamb of God, this is he who’ through his sacrifice, ‘takes away the sins of the world.’ Was it therefore, necessary that, on the day when the lamb of your salvation was sacrificed, that too should have been [the day on which] the Lamb of our salvation was [likewise] sacrificed?”²⁶⁴

In quoting Tatian's Diatessaron and commenting upon the passage, St. Ephrem suggests that Tatian considered the “passover” in John 18:28 to be the lamb, not the Pascha. Furthermore, [although unfortunately without the text in the original language] the word lamb here suggests either the paschal lamb itself or the chagigah of the 14th which comes with the Pascha and is as the Pascha. It is “the lamb” from the flock, not “the chagigah” of the 15th of Nisan which could also come from the herd. Secondly, it is interesting that Tatian's text as quoted by St. Ephrem not only contains “not to be defiled,” but also adds above and beyond the Biblical text “in purity.” Here is a double concern for purity. This indirectly reinforces our thesis, for who would be more concerned about purity than the high priests--doubly concerned about it more than they? No one. They were concerned for having at least the purity of a Tebul Yom before sunset in order to eat the pesach lamb after sunset and concerned for having the purity of “terumah” since the previous sunset in order to feast on the “terumah” of the chagigah lamb which comes with the pesach lamb -- lest they be cut off from the Covenant people of Israel for uncleanly eating of the Lord's gift to the sons of Aaron. Yes, they murderously cast out Him whom they considered seditious “leaven,” Yeshu, from Israel before the 6th hour, so as to be able as a pack to wolf down the choice morsels of the terumah at the 9th hour. St. Ephrem hereby champions the 14th of Nisan as the day for

²⁶² McCarthy C, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2: Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS709 with Introduction and Notes, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1993, p. 7.

²⁶³ Tatian, “The Diatessaron of Tatian,” Hogg HW (trs), in Menzies A, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp.35-138.

²⁶⁴ McCarthy C, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2: Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS709 with Introduction and Notes, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1993, p. 300.

CHAPTER XV: HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER: A PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY

the crucifixion, the day he had previously noted (see page 53) in his own commentary on Exodus. With this date as a starting point, one can then fill in the details in the table in the next chapter according to Tatian's ordering of the events in the Gospels. Highlights of his Last Supper chronology include:

1. Tatian has the disciples asking Jesus where He wanted them to prepare the passover before He actually sends them out telling them where He wished to celebrate the passover.
2. Tatian divides John 13 so that the washing of the feet occurs on the evening previous to the Last Supper. {Comment: This is the only point where he would differ from me. In conformity with the liturgical writings of the Lenten Triodion²⁶⁵ of the Orthodox Church, I would put all of John 13 in the Last Supper so that Jesus washed the feet of Judas that very evening.}
3. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas in John 13 21:30 is considered to be at the same meal as that of Matthew 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21, and Luke 22:21-22. During the Last Supper Jesus' dipped the morsel of bread and gave it to Judas telling him to quickly do what he desired to do. Judas leaves the Last Supper at this point and is not present for Christ's introduction of the Eucharist.
3. Tatian calls the preparation day [in John 19:31] "Friday" and the approaching evening "the sabbath (for that sabbath was a great day)."

²⁶⁵ Small Compline on Great and Holy Thursday in Mother Mary, Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, The Lenten Triodion, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, PA, 1994, p. 560.

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

Chapter XVI: Diatessaron-Based Harmony of the Gospels on Passover (Rabbinic

Date	Part of Day	Diatessaron (D Chapter: Verses) + Corresponding Gospel Verses
12 Nisan	Tuesday Evening	<p>D 44:1-9</p> <p>Matt 26:1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified. 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5 But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."</p> <p>Luke 22:3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray them.</p> <p>Matt 26:14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. At that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.</p>

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

<p>13 Nisan</p>	<p>Wednesday Evening</p>	<p>D 44:11-30 [Flashback following D 44:10]</p> <p>John 13:1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from the Father and was going to the Father, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him... John 13:18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. It is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. 20 Whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives the Father who has sent me."</p> <p>{Comment: This section could also go with the rest of John 13 and be considered the Last Supper. The latter is the author's preferred chronology and is consistent with the tradition of the Orthodox Church for Holy Week.}</p> <p>Luke 22:27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 "You are those who have stood by me during my trials, and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom 30 so that you may sit at my table in my kingdom"</p>
-----------------------------------	------------------------------	--

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

	<p>Thursday Afternoon</p>	<p>D 44:10 D 44:34-40</p> <p>Mark 14:12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb {? τὸ πάσχα} sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparation to eat the Passover?”</p> <p>Luke 22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it 9 They asked him, “Where do you want us to make preparation?” “Listen,” he said to them, “when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will follow him into the house he enters 11a and say to the owner of the house, Matt 26:18b ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover { τὸ πάσχα } with my disciples.’ ”</p> <p>Luke 22 11b ‘The teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?” ’ 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparation there.”</p> <p>Mark 14:16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had said to them. They prepared the Passover meal.</p>
--	-------------------------------	---

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

<p>14 Nisan</p>	<p>Thursday Evening = Eve of Passover = Preparation of the Passover</p>	<p>D44:41-50 through D49-18 And when the evening was come, and the time arrived reclined, and the 12 apostles with him. And he said to them, With desire I have desired to eat the passover with you before I suffer: I say unto you, that henceforth I shall not eat it, until I see the kingdom of God.</p> <p>Jesus said that, and was agitated in his spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, of you, he that eateth with me, shall betray me. And they were very sorrowful; and they began to say to him, one after another of them, Can it be I, Lord?. He answered and said unto them, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, will betray me. And lo, the hand of him that is with me is on the table. And the son of man goeth, as it is written of him...and he shall be betrayed among themselves, who that might be who was to do this.</p> <p>And one of his disciples was sitting in his bosom, he whom Jesus loved...And Jesus loved him, and gave to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the bread, Satan entered him. And he said unto him, What thou desirest to do, hasten the doing of it...Judas the betrayer answered him, I, my Master: Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said. And Judas took the bread straightway, and gave it to him: and it was still night.</p> <p>And Jesus said, Now is the Son of man being glorified...</p> <p>And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and divided; and he gave to his disciples, and said unto them, Take and eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and blessed, and gave them and said Take and drink of it, all of you..</p> <p>Luke 22:14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."</p> <p>John 13:21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I say unto you, he that dips his hand with me in the dish, will betray me." Matt 26: 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to say to one another, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23 He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me.</p> <p>Luke 22:21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.</p>
-----------------------------------	---	---

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

<p>Friday Morning Preparation of the Passover</p>	<p>D49:43-44 And all of their assembly arose and took Jesus, and brought him bound to the praetorium, and delivered him up to Pilate the judge; but they entered not into the tribunal, <u>they might not be defiled when they should eat the passover</u>...[Arabic word for passover here, compare Ephrem's Commentary: <i>They seized him and led him to the door. They bound his hands of Pilate, but they themselves did not enter into the tribunal, so as not to be defiled to eat the lamb in purity</i> . This corresponds well with our concept of the passover chronology of Nisan.] ...D50:51</p> <p>Luke 23:1 Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. Mark 15:1 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. John 18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to eat the Passover. Mark 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.</p>
---	--

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

	<p>Friday Afternoon Preparation of the Passover Passion and Burial</p>	<p>D51:1... D52:14 And the Jews, because of the Friday, said, Let these bodies not remain on the sabbath, for it is the morning of the sabbath (for that sabbath was a great day...) D52: 24-25 And when the evening of the Friday was come, because of the entering of the sabbath, there came a rich man, a noble of Ramah, a city of Judah, named Joseph...D52:39</p> <p>Matt 27:45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. Luke 23:44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.</p> <p>John 19:31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left in the tomb on the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity...</p> <p>Mark 15:42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is the first day of the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself expecting the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Luke 23:50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, 51 had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. John 19:38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though he was secret because of his fear of the Jews,</p> <p>Matt 27: 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. Luke 23:56a Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.</p>
<p>15 Nisan</p>	<p>Friday Evening Sabbath</p>	<p>D52:39 And on the day which was the sabbath day they desisted according to the commandment. Luke 23:56b On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.</p>

**CHAPTER XVI: DIATESSARON-BASED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS ON PASSOVER:
BASED ON THE PATRISTIC AND RABBINIC CHRONOLOGY**

	Saturday Morning Sabbath	D52:39-55 And on the day which was the sabbath day they desisted according to the c chief priests and the Pharisees gathered unto Pilate, and said unto him... Matt 27:62 The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and th before Pilate 63 and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was st days I will rise again.’ 64 Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the t his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from last deception would be worse than the first.” 65 Pilate said to them, “You have a gua make it as secure as you can.” 66 So they went with the guard and made the tomb se stone.
16 Nisan	Saturday Evening	D52:45 And in the evening of the sabbath, which is the morning of the first <i>day</i> ... Mark 16:1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Ja bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.
	Sunday Morning 1st Day of the Week: Resurrection First-Fruits	D52:45 through 53:39 ...and in the dawning while the darkness yet remained, came M the other Mary and other women to see the tomb. Matt 28:1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdal Mary went to see the tomb.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

Chapter XVII: Implications of a Patristic Chronology for Passover for the 21st Century Church

PATRISTIC WRITINGS AGAINST JEWISH PRACTICES IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASCHA IN THE CHURCH

Before we consider the implications of the Patristic understanding of the Passover for the contemporary Church, it is instructive to review a couple of instances in the Nicene and Post Nicene Church where Jewish influence and customs appeared to be subversive to the good order and discipline of the Church.

Constantine the Great: Ruling of on the Date of Pascha in a Letter Drafted Upon the Conclusion of the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325:

Chapter 14 Unanimous Declaration of the Council concerning Faith, and the Celebration of Easter.

The result was that they were not only united as concerning the faith, but that the time for the celebration of the salutary feast of Easter was agreed on by all. Those points also which were sanctioned by the resolution of the whole body were committed to writing, and received the signature of each several member. Then the emperor, believing that he had thus obtained a second victory over the adversary of the Church, proceeded to solemnize a triumphal festival in honor of God.²⁶⁶

Chapter 17: Constantine's Letter to the Churches respecting the Council at Nicea.

Constantinus Augustus, to the Churches.

Having had full proof, in the general prosperity of the empire, how great the favor of God has been towards us, I have judged that it ought to be the first object of my endeavors, that unity of faith, sincerity of love, and community of feeling in regard to the worship of Almighty God might be preserved among the highly favored multitude who compose the Catholic Church. And, inasmuch as this object could not be effectually and certainly secured, unless all, or at least the greater number of the bishops were to meet together, and a discussion of all particulars relating

²⁶⁶ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, Book III, Chapter 14, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

to our most holy religion to take place; for this reason as numerous an assembly as possible has been convened, at which I myself was present, as one among yourselves (and far be it from me to deny that which is my greatest joy, that I am your fellow-servant) and every question received due and full examination until that judgment which God, who sees all things, could approve, and which tended to unity and concord, was brought to light so that no room was left for further discussion or controversy in relation to the faith.²⁶⁷

Chapter XVIII He speaks of their Unanimity respecting the Feast of Easter, and against the Practice of the Jews.

*At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present, that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day. For what can be more becoming or honorable to us than that this feast from which we date our hopes of immortality, should be observed unfailingly by all alike, according to once ascertained order and arrangement? **And first of all, it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. For we have it in our power, if we abandon their custom to prolong the due observance of this ordinance preserved from the very day of the passion until this present time. Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way. A course at once legitimate and honorable lies open to our most holy religion. Beloved brethren, let us with one consent adopt this course, and withdraw ourselves from all participation in their baseness. For their boast is absurd indeed, that it is not in our power without instruction from them to observe these things. For how should they be capable of forming a sound judgment, who since their parricidal guilt in slaying their Lord, have been subject to the direction, not of reason, but of ungoverned passion, and are swayed by every impulse of the mad spirit that is in them? Hence it is that on this point as well as others they have no perception of the truth, so that, being altogether ignorant of the true adjustment of this question, they sometimes celebrate Easter twice in the***

²⁶⁷ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, Book III, Chapter 17, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

*same year. Why then should we follow those who are confessedly in grievous error? Surely we shall never consent to keep this feast a second time in the same year. But supposing these reasons were not of sufficient weight, still it would be incumbent on your Sagacities to strive and pray continually that the purity of your soul may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men. We must consider, too, importance, and respecting such religious festival, is wrong. For our Saviour has left us one feast in commemoration of the day of our deliverance, I mean the day of his most holy passion; and he has willed that his Catholic Church should be one, the members of which however scattered in many and diverse places, are yet cherished by one pervading spirit, that is, by the will of God. And let your Holinesses' sagacity reflect how grievous and scandalous is that on the self-same days some should be engaged in fasting, others in festive enjoyment, and again, that after the days of Easter some should be present at banquets and amusements, while others are fulfilling the appointed fasts. It is, then, plainly the will of divine providence (as I suppose you all clearly see), that this usage should receive filling correction, and be reduced to one uniform rule.*²⁶⁸

Chapter 19: Exhortation to follow the Example of the Greater Part of the World

*Since, therefore, it was needful that this matter should be rectified, so that we might have nothing in common with that nation of parricides who slew their Lord: and since that arrangement is consistent with propriety which is observed by all the churches of the western, southern, and northern parts of the world, and by some of the eastern also: for these reasons all are unanimous on this present occasion in thinking it worthy of adoption. And I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your Sagacities, in the hope that your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome, and in Africa; throughout Italy, and in Egypt, in Spain, the Gauls, Britain, Libya, and the whole of Greece; in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus, and in Cilicia, with entire unity of judgment. And you will consider that only that the number of churches is far greater in the regions I have enumerated than in any other but also that **it is most fitting that all should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand,***

²⁶⁸ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, Book III, Chapter 18, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

*and in avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews. In fine, that I may express my meaning in as few words as possible, it has been determined by the common judgment of all, that the most holy feast of Easter should be kept on one and the same day. For on the one hand a discrepancy of opinion on so sacred a question is unbecoming, and on the other it is surely best to act on a decision which is free from strange folly and error.*²⁶⁹

Chapter 20: Exhortation to obey the Decrees of the Council

*Receive, then, with all willingness this truly Divine injunction, and regard it as in truth the gift of God. For whatever is determined in the holy assemblies of the bishops is to be regarded as indicative of the Divine will. As soon, therefore, as you have communicated these proceedings to all our beloved brethren, you are bound from that time forward to adopt for yourselves and to enjoin on others the arrangement above mentioned, and the due observance of this most sacred day; that whenever I come into the presence of your love, which I have long desired, I may have it in my power to celebrate the holy feast with you on the same day, and my rejoice with you on all accounts, when I behold the cruel power of Satan removed by Divine aid through the agency of our endeavors, while your faith, and peace, and concord every flourish. God preserve you beloved brethren.*²⁷⁰

{Comment: Constantine considers the Church victorious after the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, because the practice of the church as a whole had become uniform with regard to the celebration of the Pasch. No longer would seemingly conflicting celebrations be occurring side by side, where some might be fasting while others were joyously feasting.²⁷¹ Although this appears to us today to be a direct attack on Jewish practices, it is actually in response to the Quartadecimarian (Τεσσαρεσκαίδεκατιται) controversy (see page 30) in which certain segments of the eastern Church followed the practice of St. John the Apostle in celebrating (in anticipation) the resurrection on the evening of the 14/15th of Nisan (following the fast and remembrance of the crucifixion on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan) by having a Christian feast in the evening. There was perhaps a small contingent who truly celebrated the Jewish Passover Seder and ate lamb

²⁶⁹ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, Book III, Chapter 19, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

²⁷⁰ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, Book III, Chapter 20, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

²⁷¹ Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100 - 325, Wm. B. Eardmanns Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 206-219.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

considering it to the Last Supper of Jesus and His disciples (as have Lightfoot and Edersheim).

The second aspect of Constantine's attack on the Jews is quite justifiable in the eyes of the Church. For in order to celebrate the Pasch in the eastern Quartadecimarian fashion, one needed to know the precise astronomical and agricultural dating of the 14th of Nisan. However, after the crushing defeat of the Jews during the revolt of Simon Bar Kochba (A.D. 135), the Jews were cast out of the land of Israel. Consequently, they lost touch with their agricultural roots in the land and the exact timing relative to the early barley harvest -- the first-fruits! Consequently, the method of determining the date became more difficult and a variety of different calculations came into being. Furthermore, the Jewish authorities twice changed the system for establishing the date of Passover, once at the beginning of the 3rd century which did not take the vernal equinox into account, and again at the beginning of the 4th century which resulted in all the possible dates falling in the month of March, i.e., usually falling before the vernal equinox.²⁷² Thus, the Church, if it followed the "perjured Jewish practices" of dating the Passover, would be held hostage to their whims -- an intolerable state for the Church. Rather, the Church decided that it should calculate its own feast day and celebrate it in a uniform and orderly manner, i.e., to maintain unity in the Church in the bonds of peace. This is the essence of Constantine's letter and his rejoicing in the Church breaking free of the bonds of Judaism. In other words, the practices of the Synagogue in Constantine's day did not reflect the practices of the 1st century. Similarly, today, one must be careful in adopting Rabbinic practices without critical scrutiny of their date of origin, purpose, and consequences. }

Canons of the Blessed and Holy Fathers Assembled at Antioch in Syria

Confirming the decree of the Council of Nicea that co-celebration of Pascha with the Jews was forbidden, the Synod of Antioch in Encæniis, meeting in A.D. 341, adopted canons which were subsequently accepted into the canons of the universal church. Among them, Canon I directly addresses Jewish syncretism:

*Whosoever shall presume to set aside the decree of the holy and great Synod which was assembled at Nice in the presence of the pious Emperor Constantine, beloved of God, concerning the holy and salutary feast of Easter; if they shall obstinately persist in opposing what was [then] rightly ordained, let them be excommunicated and cast out of the church; this is said concerning the laity. **But if any one of those who***

²⁷² L'Huillier PL, The Church of the Ancient Councils, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1996, p. 20-21.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

preside in the church, whether he be bishop, presbyter, or deacon, shall presume after this decree, to exercise his own private judgment to the subversion of the people and to the disturbance of the churches, by observing Easter [at the same time] with the Jews, the holy Synod decrees that he shall thenceforth be an alien from the church, as one who not only heaps sins upon himself, but who is also the cause of destruction and subversion to many; and it deposes not only such persons themselves from their ministry, but those also who after their deposition shall presume to communicate with them. And the deposed shall be deprived even of that external honour, of which the holy Canon and God's priesthood partake.²⁷³

In this edition of the Canons, one notes that the words “at the same time” have been inserted within brackets, indicating that they were not in the original text. Consequently, if removed, the Canon seems to indicate Judaizing members of the episcopate, i.e., those who celebrate a Pesach Seder with the Jews, as opposed to those who celebrate Pascha with the Orthodox on the same date and at the same time as the Jews. Is it the date which is important, or the avoidance of Judaizing which is important? This author suspects that the latter is the intent. If the former is the correct view, then the following comments are most interesting:

It is curious that as a matter of fact the entire clergy and people of the West fell under the anathema of this canon in 1825, when they observed Easter on the same day as the Jews. This was owing to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, and this misfortune while that calendar is followed it is almost impossible to prevent..²⁷⁴

However, Archbishop Peter L'Huillier writes:

*The refusal to celebrate Pascha “with the Jews” (μετὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων) meant that, in the ancient canonical texts, we were not to celebrate this feast by basing its date on the method of calculation of the Jews. **But, contrary to what was believed later, this refusal in no way was aimed at avoiding an accidental celebrating of Pascha and Passover***

²⁷³ Schaff P and Wace H, “Synod of Antioch in Encæniis A.D. 341,” in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 108.

²⁷⁴ Van Espen, Notes to: Schaff P and Wace H, “Synod of Antioch in Encæniis A.D. 341,” in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 108.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

*together. This is clearly shown by the fact that during the fourth century after Nicea, Christian and Jewish Paschas coincided several times. St. Athanasius, speaking of those who followed the Jewish method of calculating the date of Pascha and who were later called the Protapaschites, did not say that they celebrated this feast on the same day as the Jews but only during the same period. In the Middle Ages, when it became impossible to celebrate the Jewish and Christian Paschas together because of the loss of time in the Julian calendar, the idea that a concelebration of the feasts had been forbidden by church law was generally accepted; this idea, however was based on a literal but erroneous understanding of the expression μετὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων.*²⁷⁵

Another set of early Canons, the Apostolic Canons, state a similar idea in slightly different terms:

*Canon VII. If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, shall celebrate the holy day of Easter before the vernal equinox, with the Jews, let him be deposed.*²⁷⁶

*Cannon LXIV. If any clergyman or layman shall enter into a synagogue of the Jews or heretics to pray, let the former be deposed and let the latter be excommunicated.*²⁷⁷

Cannon LXX. If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any one of the list of clergy, keeps fast or festival with the Jews, or receives from them any of the gifts of their feasts, as unleavened bread, or any such things, let him be deposed. If he be a layman, let him be excommunicated. [Referenced content is missing.]

Timing of the celebration before the vernal equinox was proscribed (because the revised Jewish Calendar of that day placed Passover before the equinox) as was co-celebration of Passover with the Jews. A better idea of this whole subject is obtained by reading John Chrysostom's Discourses Against Judaizing Christians.

²⁷⁵ L'Huillier PL, The Church of the Ancient Councils, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1996, pp. 24-25.

²⁷⁶ Schaff P and Wace H, "The Apostolical Canons," in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 594.

²⁷⁷ Schaff P and Wace H, "The Apostolical Canons," in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 598.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

John Chrysostom's Discourses Against Judaizing Christians

No better introduction to Chrysostom's infamous "anti-Semitic" discourses can be found than that provided by Paul Harkins:

*By A.D. 386, the year of Chrysostom's ordination to the priesthood, the devout Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 375-95) had issued imperial legislation enforcing Christianity as the official religion. But both paganism and Judaism were far from dead...[In Antioch] Christians, despite their greater number, were living in a decidedly pluralistic metropolis. Everywhere they encountered the distractions and temptations of the pagan and Jewish world...**Their Christian commitment demanded of them not only that they lead a life different from these non-Christians but that they also live the better and more perfect life to which Christ had called all men.** Hence it was important to Chrysostom that he convince the weak ones in his flock that Christ is more than mere man, that he is the God who redeemed them and whom they must serve.*

*However, Chrysostom's problems with pagans and Jews were not altogether the same. First, the **pagans do not seem to have proselytized; the Jews did.** Second, **the Christians found much about Judaism and synagogue worship that was attractive to them,** and Chrysostom spoke of those who followed these attractions as sick with the Judaizing disease. **The desire of some Christians to celebrate Easter as a Passover, to regard Lent as a preparation for the Pasch, and to fast on the Jewish fast days caused him the gravest concern.** Chrysostom seems to have feared the Jewish influence on Christians more than the pagan...*

The Judaizing movement had become a strongly divisive force in the Church at Antioch. Chrysostom speaks of the demi-Christians who participated in it as "sick with the Judaizing disease," or "sick with the Galatians' disease." As far as can be reckoned from Chrysostom's words, the Judaizing sickness raged especially among women and slaves, who should be kept at home and away from the synagogues.

The synagogues were certainly centers for the celebration of the Jewish feasts, and participation by the demi-Christians was one of the principal symptoms of the Judaizing disease.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Harkins, PW, translator, "Introduction" to Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1977, pp.xxv-xxix.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

{Comment: Just as Christians today are rediscovering their “Jewish roots” so did the Christians of Chrysostom’s day. Yes, there are many things attractive in the Synagogue and in the Jewish people. After all, they are *beloved for the sake of the fathers* (Rom. 11:28) *to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Torah, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers, and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came.* (Rom 9:4-5). But their practices should not be adopted uncritically! If it were dangerous 16 centuries ago to uncritically adopt Jewish practices (which were probably closer to 2nd Temple practices), is it any less dangerous today?}

Chrysostom’s Discourses Against Judaizing Christians

Do you consider that the Jews are wiser than the Fathers who came from everywhere in the world? How can you do that when the Jews have been driven from their ancestral commonwealth and way of life and have no sacred festival to celebrate? I hear many say that the Pasch and the feast of unleavened bread are one. But there is no feast of unleavened bread among them, nor is there a Pasch. Why is there no feast of unleavened bread among them? Hear the words of the Lawgiver: “You may not sacrifice the Passover in any one of the cities which the Lord your God gives you, but only in the place in which His name shall be invoked.” And Moses was here speaking of Jerusalem.

Do you see how God confined the festival to one city, and later destroyed the city so that, even if it was against their wills He might lead them away from that way of life. ²⁷⁹

{Comment: If the Jewish festival practices were so crucial, why was their Temple destroyed and why were they dispersed over the face of the globe? Chrysostom makes a poignant remark in stating that the Passover was only supposed to be celebrated in one place -- i.e., Jerusalem. Essentially, all the Biblical feasts in Leviticus require the Temple, every one: the Sabbath, the New Moon, Passover, First-Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Succot. And why? -- For the sacrifices! Only Purim (in the book of Esther), a festival enjoined upon the Jews remaining in Persia during the earliest days of the Second Temple period, doesn’t require the Temple. [Chanukah commemorating the cleansing of the Second Temple after the defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes is intimately connected with the Temple, but is not a Jewish Biblical

²⁷⁹ Chrysostom J, Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, Harkins, PW, (translator), Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 57.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

celebration in the same sense, but is a national historic, religious, and rabbinic celebration.]

After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the Jewish survivors, under Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai, reconstructed a Temple-less Judaism out of the ashes of defeat through their yeshivah²⁸⁰ at Yavneh.

Hosea 3:4 For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim.

For Israel was to go for a long time without a king, without royalty, without animal sacrifices, without cult pillars to pagan gods, without priests (ephod), and without man-made idols used to communicate with demons. The Rabbinic Judaism of the Synagogue was the result of this long process of reconstruction of the defeated rebellious nation and the deconstruction of its religious culture (particularly the Temple cult and the prophetic and Messianic sense of Scripture).}

Further Implications for the 21 Century Church: Jewish-Christians

From the writings of Constantine the Great and St. John Chrysostom on the Pascha one can plainly see that their opinions were decidedly against following the practices of the Jews -- and rightfully so. At the same time, as mentioned in the introduction, the successful evangelical inroads of the Jewish Messianic movement through the use of Jewish Christian Passover Seders has caused alarm and condemnation especially from the Orthodox Jewish community -- precisely because of their success. For many of these Messianic Jews, this cultural presentation of the gospel is simply a way of keeping some of the Jewish cultural traditions alive or even supercharging them with new meaning though the typology of the Messiah Yeshua. Unfortunately, some Messianic Jews believe wrongly that Gentile Christianity (the historic church) departed from Biblical forms in the early days of the Church, and that their own God-given mission is to restore these Jewish customs to the Church -- customs which they believe that the Jews have preserved. In other words, i.e., in their words, since at least the time of Constantine, the Church has been apostate and the true Christians were either driven out or had to flee the Church for their own safety. [Presumably they believe the "Gates of Hell have prevailed against the Church," although not against individual Christians who preserved the faith all through the Middle Ages and Renaissance until the time of the Reformation!] Hence, their great emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus, the restoration of the Jewishness of the Gospel, and the restoration of Biblical holidays. They call for only

²⁸⁰ Yeshiva = school or academy

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

“Biblical” holidays (e.g., Pesach, Shavout, Sukkot -- i.e., those celebrated by the Synagogue today) and decry such Christian innovations as “Christmas.”²⁸¹ Is this not a form of modern day judaizing?

Thus, while there is nothing wrong with converted Jews maintaining a cultural continuity with their past, there are no grounds for the assumption that post-Christian Jewry has preserved the musical and liturgical forms of the Bible. Those forms were preserved in the church, and in her alone. Jews would do well to study the early Church, not the traditions of Eastern European cultures...

As a matter of fact, the leading features of Temple and Synagogue worship were brought straight into the church, as she spoiled the new enemies of God: apostate Jewry. The period of this spoiling was A.D. 30 to A. D. 70. Once the church had completed her integration of the spoils of the Old Covenant into her new, transfigured body, God destroyed the remnants of the Old Covenant completely. Modern Jewish rituals and music owe far more to racial and cultural inheritance from the peoples of Eastern Europe than they do to the Old Covenant...

*Louis Bouyer has shown at considerable length that the eucharistic prayer of the early church was a modification of the prayers of the Synagogue and Temple. Similarly, Eric Werner has shown that the plainchant of the Christian church preserves the style of music known among the Jews of the Old Testament period.*²⁸²

Since we have concluded from our investigation of the chronology of the Passover, that the Last Supper was not a Pesach Seder, one should not attempt to portray it as such for the purposes of evangelism of the Jews. Could one not then say that Jesus celebrated Passovers all His life and still use the Pesach Seder as an evangelistic tool? Absolutely yes! After all Bishop Peter of Alexandria has stated:

...according to His human nature, Himself also, with the people, in the years before His public ministry and during his public ministry, did celebrate the legal and shadowy Passover, eating the typical lamb. For “I came not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill them,” the Saviour Himself said in the Gospel.

²⁸¹ Moore PN, The End of History: Messianic Conspiracy, The Conspiracy, Inc, Atlanta, Georgia, 1996, p. 110-116.

²⁸² Chilton D, The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation, Dominion Press, Ft. Worth, Texas, 1987, pp. 620.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

But after His public ministry He did not eat of the lamb, but Himself suffered as the true Lamb in the Paschal feast...

*...On that day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Passover in the evening, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, being made the victim to those who were about to partake by faith of the mystery concerning Him, according to what is written by the blessed Paul: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;” and not as some, who, carried along by ignorance, confidently affirm that after He had eaten the Passover, He was betrayed; which we neither hear from the holy evangelists, nor has any of the blessed apostles handed it down to us. At the time, therefore, in which our Lord and God Jesus Christ suffered for us, according to the flesh, He did not eat of the legal Passover; but as I have said, **He Himself, as the true Lamb, was sacrificed for us in the feast of the typical Passover, on the day of the preparation, the fourteenth of the first lunar month. The typical Passover, therefore, then ceased, the true Passover being present:** “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” as has been before said and as that chosen vessel, the apostle Paul teaches.²⁸³*

To this we can again say, “Yes!” But rather than showing how Jesus, as a good Jew, celebrated a Passover Seder with His disciples in the Last Supper, evangelists and priests should teach the typology portrayed in the Egyptian Passover which has been memorialized in the Passover Seder and relate it to the person and earthly ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For example:

1. The antitype of the passover lamb is Jesus Christ, the prophesied Messiah, the true Passover Lamb sacrificed for us who passed over from this world to His Father and who also delivers us from the slavery of sin to the Promised Land of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, He is our Salvation, our Deliverance.
2. Secondly, Jesus Christ is the antitype of the “omer” sheaf offered to God as first-fruits of the land. He is the First-Fruits risen from the dead, having conquered Death by His own death. Thus, He is our Resurrection and Life.

²⁸³ Fragments from the writings of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in Apud Galland, Ex Chronico Paschal, as quoted in , Roberts A, Donaldson J, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, 6, p. 282.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

3. He is the antitype to the “chagigah of the 14th,” our Spiritual Food, our Bread of Life, our True Drink, that satisfies our every fleshly and spiritual appetite and quenches our every thirst, and fills us to fullness with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenlies.

4. Christ Jesus is the antitype of the “chagigah,” the peace offering. He is the Prince of Peace, who brings peace on earth among men of good will. He is the one who brings a peace that surpasses all understanding. He Himself is our Peace who has broken down every middle wall of separation.²⁸⁴

5. As the antitype of the daily Tamid, the daily burnt offering, Jesus has by a single offering [of Himself] “*repeatedly without end*” perfected those who are sanctified.²⁸⁵ He is our Sanctification. This antitype in particular, would help bridge the gap between the Seder and the Eucharist. For just as the Passover was to be perpetually remembered by Israel, so the bread and wine of communion are to be perpetually partaken of in remembrance of Christ Jesus. Daily celebration of the Eucharist then has added meaning!

6. The Yom Tov, the great day of the feast, the sabbath of the festival, i.e., a day of rest, is the antitype of the true Sabbath-Rest, for on that day Christ Jesus rested from all His labors, albeit in the grave, after accomplishing His work of the redemption of mankind that the Father had given Him. “It is finished!” was His cry!

...See, you have the sabbath of the first origin of the world being blessed; learn through that sabbath that this sabbath is the day of rest which God has blessed above all other days. For on this day the only begotten God truly rested from all his works, having kept sabbath in the flesh through the dispensation befitting death, and returning to what he was by his resurrection he raised again together with himself all that lay prostrate,

²⁸⁴ In the Second Temple, there was a physical middle wall of separation in the Outer Courtyard called the “Soreg.” This was a wooden fence 10 fists high (approximately 36”) consisting of woven wooden slats laid crosswise similar to room dividers. This completely surrounded the Courtyard of the Women, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. This fence marked the boundary beyond which no Gentile could pass. Stone markers engraved in both Greek and Latin were posted on the fence. Two such markers have been found. One reads, “No gentile is allowed within the wall surrounding the sanctuary nor the enclosed courtyard. Anyone apprehended doing so is at the risk of taking his own life into his own hands.” Reznick L, The Holy Temple Revisited, Jason Aronson, Inc., Northvale New Jersey, 1993, p. 79-82.

²⁸⁵ Makrakis A, An Orthodox-Protest Dialogue, Orthodox Christian Education Society, Chicago, IL, 1966, p. 43.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

becoming life and resurrection and sunrise and dawn and day for those in darkness and death's shadow. ²⁸⁶

7. By all these antitypes Christ Jesus is our “Korban,” the One who by depriving Himself of His Heavenly glory, and by becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross, has been glorified to the right hand of God His Father, and allows us to draw near to God in faith and in hope.

8. Lastly, the missing Sacrifices and Temple Worship are to be found most fulfilled in the Eucharist and in the Worship of Christ in the Orthodox Rite! A bold statement, but true as all illuminated Orthodox know. But that is the subject for another book and author.

In summary, Jesus Christ is our Passover from death into life, from slavery to sin into freedom in the Spirit, from spiritual darkness into spiritual light. He is our First-Fruits, our perpetual Tamid, our Peace Offering to the Father allowing us to draw near to God, the One whose passing over from this world to the Father's right hand opens the doorway for us to enter our eternal Sabbath rest in the Kingdom of Heaven! Such teachings as these would hopefully and prayerfully lead some of the remnant of Jacob away from their previous way of life to that revealed by Christ to His followers. As Chrysostom states:

Do you consider that the Jews are wiser than the Fathers who came from everywhere in the world? How can you do that when the Jews have been driven from their ancestral commonwealth and way of life and have no sacred festival to celebrate? ...

Do you see how God confined the festival to one city, and later destroyed the city so that, even if it was against their wills He might lead them away from that way of life. ²⁸⁷

Messianic Jewish Christians (and Orthodox evangelists to the Jews) may lead their Jewish brethren “away from that way of life” by building upon the foundation of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings and that which is useful in Jewish tradition, but they should avoid plagiarizing Rabbinic Judaism just for the sake of being culturally relevant, i.e., appearing to be “Jewish” -- but rather, they should correct it and fill it with the truth

²⁸⁶ St. Gregory of Nyssa, “On the Three-Day Period of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2nd Paschal Homily), SG Hall, translator, in Spira A, Klock C, the Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa: Translation and Commentary, Patristic Monograph Series, No. 9., Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., Cambridge, MA, 1981, pp. 31-32.

²⁸⁷ Chrysostom J, Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, Harkins, PW, (translator), Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 57.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

of the Gospel and the Life of the Kingdom as revealed in the one true Church, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Traditional Church of True/Genuine Orthodox Christians. Unfortunately, in this age of apostasy, heresy, relative truth, resurgent neo-paganism, modernism, and ecumenism, it is hard to find the hard and narrow path that truly leads to illumination and divinization. There is difficulty in avoiding religious “superiority” or syncretism, while at the same time allowing for cultural religious expression among Jewish followers of Christ. For none of us are saved by following the Law, but rather through faith in Christ.

Implications for the 21 Century Church: Reunification with the Roman Catholic Church

Having determined that the Last Supper was not a Pesach Seder, but rather took place 24 hours earlier as Dom Gregory Dix also ascertained (see page 177), and noting that it was on that same evening that the Jews began their search for leaven, but were allowed to continue eating it to at least the 5th hour (11:00 AM) of the next day (see page 111); one must conclude that both leavened bread or matzah could have been broken by Jesus as being His body broken for us. However, searching of the Babylonian Talmud for instances of where matzah was dipped, in contrast to ordinary bread (see pages 89 and 187), failed to reveal any passages in support of this. The fact that the Greek New Testament Text uses the words ἄρτον and ψωμίον instead of the usual word for matzah ἄζύμοις is most significant, given the Jewish searching for and removal of leaven from their midst. For all leaven was to be removed from Israel for the celebration of Passover:

*Deut. 16:1 Observe the month of Abib by keeping the passover for the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 You shall offer the passover sacrifice for the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his name. 3 **You must not eat with it anything leavened. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it —the bread of affliction** —because you came out of the land of Egypt in great haste, so that all the days of your life you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt. 4 **No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days...***

*1Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not a good thing. **Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?** 7 **Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened.** For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate*

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.]

During the Last Supper after the dipping of the morsel of (leavened) bread and eating of it, the divine light of Jesus Christ sought out and found the leaven of sin and Satan in Judas and had him cleansed out of the midst of His disciples, so that they could be a new batch of dough and truly be “unleavened” The rest of the (leavened) bread was consumed by all at the dinner in accordance with the precepts of the Mishnah and Talmud in Tractate Pesachim well before its deadline passed. The leaven, Satan in Judas the betrayer, was removed from the new Israel, while the fetal Church underwent the pangs of birth. So in the opinion of this author, on the basis of the evidence examined, the bread of the Last Supper was unleavened bread. The Orthodox Church has maintained the tradition of using unleavened bread for the Eucharist in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church which introduced azymes into the Liturgy of the West in about the eighth century.^{288, 289} Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1000-1059) was one of the first to mention the use of azymes by the Romans as one of the “Latin Heresies.” It was subsequently consistently viewed by the Greeks as a substantive theological issue between the two Churches and frequently placed at the same level of importance as “the Filioque.”²⁹⁰

The arguments brought against the Latin practice by Cerularius’ friends and contemporaries -- Leo of Ohrid and Nicetas Stethatos -- and repeated by their successors can be reduced to three: (1) the use of unleavened bread is Judaic; (2) it contradicts the historic evidence as recorded in the Synoptis (Jesus took “bread”); and (3) its symbolic value

²⁸⁸ Holy Transfiguration Monastery (translators and editors) in footnote to, Patriarch Germanos, “Synodicon on the Holy Spirit: The Anathemas,” in Saint Photios, On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit, Studion Publishers, Inc., USA, 1983, p. 143.

²⁸⁹ According to the Persian sage St. Aphraates, the Church in Persia, developing in relative isolation from its sister churches to the West, had its own unique tradition: “The Christians eat unleavened bread, ‘keeping the feast with pure fasting, constant prayer, earnest glorification, and the melody of psalmody, as is fitting, giving the seal [of chrismation] and baptism in its rite and the consecrated blessings at their times’ from the fourteenth of Nisan (whereon the Lord initiated the mysteries of baptism -- in the washing of the apostles’ feet -- and Holy Communion) until the twenty-first, whereas ‘our great day is the day of Friday’, whenever it should fall within the period. Such paschal observances, so outwardly similar to the Hebraic, had no parallel in the West.” Source: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, (translators), “Epilogue,” The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, MA, 1984, p. 485.

²⁹⁰ “The Filioque” was a later interpolation into the Nicene-Constantinople Creed (original accepted by the entire unified Church in A.D. 325 and revised in A.D. 381) by the Roman Church first introduced locally in Spain in A.D. 688 as a defense against the Arian heresy and later adopted by the Frankish Roman Church as a whole. It added the words “and through the Son” to the end of the phrase [And I believe] “...in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father.”

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

is that of “death,” not of “life,” for yeast in the dough is like the soul in the body. The weakness of these arguments requires no demonstration. The second point in particular implies the solution of several exegetical and historical problems: Was the Last Supper a paschal meal? In that case unleavened bread would have been used. Or did Jesus deliberately violate the law in order to institute a “new” covenant? Can the word artos, which normally designates ordinary bread, also mean “unleavened bread”?

The third argument was also raised by Greek polemicists in the Christological context of anti-Armenian polemics. Nicetas Stethatos himself was involved in arguments against the Armenians, who, after the conquests of the Macedonian emperors of the tenth century, were in close contact with Byzantium. The Armenians were using unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and the Greeks drew a parallel between this practice and the Monophysite -- or, more precisely, Apollinarian -- Christology of the Armenians: bread, symbolizing Christ’s humanity, in order to reflect Chalcedonian orthodoxy, must be “animated” and dynamic, in full possession of the living energies of humanity. By imitating the Monophysite Armenians in their use of the “dead” azymes, the Latins themselves were falling into Apollinarianism, and denying that Christ, as man, had a soul. Thus, during the Middle Ages and afterward, in Greek and Slavic countries, Latins were considered as having fallen into the “Apollinarian heresy”: the charge appears, for example, in the writings of the monk Philotheus, the famous Russian sixteenth-century ideologist of “Moscow, the third Rome.”²⁹¹

Indeed, during the turbulent times following the Crusader conquest of Constantinople in A.D. 1204 (4th Crusade), in an effort to throw off the Latin yoke and preserve the Orthodox faith, a *Synodicon* was issued by Patriarch Germanos the New (1222-1240) which was to be read on the 2nd day of Pentecost which includes a strong anathema against the Latin practice of using azymes:

To those who offer azymes, i.e., unleavened bread, in sacrifice and who thereby scorn God the Word’s incarnation and symbolically advocate Apollinarios’ heresy -- for Apollinarios dogmatized that the Lord took upon Himself a heavenly body without soul or mind, and he also said that the Lord came forth from Mary only in appearance, as if passing through a tube; for in Adam, on account of the fall, sin of thought was inherent in

²⁹¹ Meyendorff J, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends And Doctrinal Themes*, Fordham University Press, New York, NY, 1979, pp. 95-96.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

the human mind, while sin of action was inherent in the flesh; therefore, if God the Word took upon Himself human nature, He would not be without sin; but He really was without sin, therefore, He did not take upon Himself human nature, but a pure and sinless, heavenly body, fashioned without soul or mind, aforetime in heaven, with the divinity of the Only-begotten filling up the place of soul and mind; wherefore, these texts were offered in proof: “No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven” and “being found in fashion as a man”; thence, the initiates of this Apollinarios celebrated a sacrifice of azymes, which contained neither leaven nor salt, corresponding, it is said, to the assumed soul-less body, for the leaven is mixed in for a figure of the soul, and the salt for the mind; wherefore they fashion their bread even a year beforehand and store it away and call it pure, and after the prayer, they decree that the bread is leavened, even as the heavenly body invented by them possessed a mind and soul after the union with the divinity, and that it is separated from the other breads of oblation offered for the saints, just as that heavenly body is consubstantial with the saints -- to those, therefore, who offer unleavened breads, i.e., azymes, for sacrifice and who deny the incarnation of God the Word, ANATHEMA.²⁹²

In the words of a *Sigillion* issued by Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople among many other bishops in council in 1583 in response to overtures by Pope Gregory XIII of Rome to accept the Gregorian Calendar also addressed the issue of unleavened bread:

III) Whosoever says that our Lord Jesus Christ at the Mystical Last Supper used unleavened bread as do the Hebrews and not leavened bread, that is raised bread, let him be far from us and under the anathema as one who thinks like a Jew and as one who introduces the doctrines of Appollinarios and of the Armenians into our Church, on which account let him be anathematized a second time.²⁹³

For the return of those in the Roman Catholic Church to the communion of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Traditional True/Genuine Orthodox Churches on a canonical basis, the understanding of the Eucharist based on a true understanding of the chronology of pascha and the historic practice in the Second Temple of the Feast of Pesach/Passover is just one of a host of critically significant and

²⁹² Patriarch Germanos, “Synodicon on the Holy Spirit: The Anathemas,” in Saint Photios, On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit, Studion Publishers, Inc., USA, 1983, p. 14-144.

²⁹³ Kalomiros A, “Is the Papacy a Church?” in Kalomiros A, Against False Union, St. Nectarios Press, Seattle, Washington, 1990, p.93.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

fundamental issues. Herein, has been given a strong (albeit rational) historical, cultural, and hermenutical basis of support for the liturgical practices of using leavened bread for the Eucharist in the Orthodox Church.

Furthermore, the chronology of Pascha, in particular the dating of Pascha to the first full moon following the ripening of the barley harvest, defines the month of Abib and sets the date for the presentation of the omer in the Temple, i.e., the Festival of First-Fruits. Using the Gregorian calendar that Gregory XIII implemented in the West, Pascha is calculated as the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Noteworthy, in the environs of Jerusalem, barley never ripens before the vernal equinox. Nor is it always ripe by the first full moon following the vernal equinox. Thus, the sole use of an astronomical basis by the Gregorian calculation for Pascha is flawed.²⁹⁴ Consequently, for true unity between East and West, as well as new and old calendarist groups among the Orthodox, sober reflection and consideration of Biblical and Rabbinic chronology, agricultural cycles in Jerusalem, astronomical data, and canons of the Orthodox church would be useful to bring order to the current chaos. In the recent meeting of the World Council of Churches and the Middle Eastern Council of Churches on March 5-10, 1997 in Aleppo, Syria, it was proposed that Pascha fall on the first Sunday following the vernal equinox using the meridian of Jerusalem.²⁹⁵ Unfortunately, based on our chronology for First-Fruits and Pascha derived from Rabbinic sources, by use of this new geographical-astronomical but non-agricultural method, this newly calculated “Pascha” may fall before the actual barley harvest and hence be scheduled prior to the true Biblical month of Abib. Depending on the current rabbinic determination of Pesach, the Pascha could come before it. In contrast, the time-honored use of the Julian Calendar in the Tradition of the Orthodox Church typically places Pascha slightly further after the vernal equinox especially with the increasing drift of the Julian Calendar against the vernal equinox in recent centuries, and may perhaps be more consistent with the timing of the barley harvest. Its use or the use of a calendar which accounts for the agricultural cycle in the Jerusalem area might prove to be more accurate and reliable than the Aleppo proposal. But the calendar invented by Julius Caesar and adopted by the Church and the method of calculation of the Pascha since the time of St. Constantine the Great has served the Orthodox Christian world well for centuries.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

²⁹⁴ Perepiolkina L, “The Julian Calendar: An Icon of Time in Russia and Throughout the Orthodox World,” in The Orthodox Church Calendar: In Defence of the Julian Calendar, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1996.

²⁹⁵ World Council of Churches and Middle East Council of Churches, “Towards a Common Date for Easter: WCC/MECC Consultation, Aleppo, Syria, March 5-10, 1977,” in St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly, 1997, 41(2-3):235-248.

CHAPTER XVII: IMPLICATIONS OF A PATRISTIC CHRONOLOGY FOR PASSOVER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

This entire paper has been a prime example of how an interpretation of the Last Supper (to be a Passover Seder) based on human rational analysis instead of the received Tradition, has

1. led to a wrong understanding (“the Passover” is the chagigah of the 15th),
2. distorted facts (Jesus celebrated a Passover Seder on the evening of the 14th of Nisan instead of having a last supper with His disciples on the 13th of Nisan),
3. shattered doctrine (Christ our Chagigah is sacrificed for us, instead of Christ our Passover, Christ our First-Fruits), and
4. preserved if not created new schism (By the failure of the Evangelical Churches to recognize Holy Tradition of the Fathers of the Church, and by instead substituting their own human, Western, rational, and analytical traditions, further fragmentation has resulted among their sects -- there are now estimated to be over 23,000 protestant sects including Messianic Jewish Christians as separate groups/denominations, each with their own interpretation of Scripture and with their own traditions).

In contrast, the appropriate use of the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church as portrayed in this paper has hopefully led to a deeper and better understanding of the chronology of the Last Supper and allowed for a significantly better articulated Biblical and rabbinic exegesis of John 18:28, yet one totally consistent with the received Tradition. Jesus ate a last supper with His disciples after sunset on the 14th of Nisan one day before the Jewish Pesach Seder, was arrested later that evening, was interrogated by the Chief Priests and Elders throughout the night of the 14th of Nisan, was brought before Pilate by the Chief Priests and their Officers on the morning of the 14th of Nisan, and crucified later that day as the Pesach lambs were being slain in the Temple. He was buried before dusk, spent the following Sabbath day (15th of Nisan) at rest in the bowels of the earth, and arose early on Sunday morning (16th of Nisan) as the First-Fruits from the dead. The Chief Priests and their Officers refused to enter the Praetorium of Pilate on the morning of the 14th of Nisan because they feared defiling themselves by touching the garments of the unclean gentiles (feared/imagined unclean through seminal emissions) which would have rendered them unclean for the eating of Terumah, the breast and thigh of the Chagigah (Festival Peace-Offering of the 14th of Nisan), on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, the one afternoon when they could and by the traditions of the elders had to partake of the choice parts of the yearling lambs before sunset while the rest of Israel fasted until after sunset when family by family they would recline remembering their deliverance from Egypt by the Mighty Hand of God and eat their passover lambs!

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Bibliography

Aland B, Aland K, Karavidopoulos J, Martini CM, Metzger BM, , The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft, Giglia-Druck (Printers), Stuttgart, Germany, 1993.

Aland K, Aland B, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989.

Aphraates, Demonstration 12: On the Pascha, 6-8, as quoted in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993.

Augustin (of Hippo), St. Augustin: the Harmony of the Gospels, Salmond SDF (translator), in Schaff P, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Augustin (of Hippo), Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, , Gibb J, (translator), in Schaff P, (editor), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 7, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Basker BM (translator), Schiffman LM (editor), The Talmud of the Land of Israel, 13, Yerushalmi Pesachim, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Ben-Sasson HH, A History of the Jewish People, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1976.

Cabasilas N, Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, S.P.C.K., William Clowes (Beccles) Limited, London, Great Britain, 1983.

Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993.

Chilton D, The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation, Dominion Press, Ft. Worth, Texas, 1987.

Chrysostom J, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, in Schaff, P, (translator & editor), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 14, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Chrysostom J, Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Prevost G (translator), in Schaff P, editor, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1, vol. 10, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Chrysostom J, Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, Harkins, PW, (translator), Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1977.

Claudius Appolinaris, in “Remains of the Second and Third Centuries,” Pratten BP (translator) in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Clément O, The Roots of Christian Mysticism, New City, London, 1995.

Clement of Alexandria, in Coxe AC (translator), “Fragments,” in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Cyril of Alexandria, “Homily 141,” Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke, Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983.

Cyril of Jerusalem, “Catechesis XIII,” 24-25, in McCauley LP (translator), The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Vol. 2, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1979.

Danziger Y & Goldwurm H, “Summary of the Laws of Korbanos,” in Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989.

Dix G, The Shape of the Liturgy, Adam & Charles Black, Ltd., London, 1982.

Eckstein Y, What You Should Know About Jews and Judaism, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1984.

Edersheim A, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986.

Edersheim A, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were At the Time of Christ, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Elias J, Passover Haggadah with Translation and a New Commentary Based on Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Source, Artscroll Mesorah Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989.

Ephraem des Syriers, Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syriers Paschalhymnen (De Azymis, De Crucifixione, De Resurrectione, Beck E (editor), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 248-249, Scriptorum Syri Tome 108-9, Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, Louvain, 1964.

Ephraem the Syrian, Hymns on the Crucifixion, 3, 1-2, in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993.

Ephrem the Syrian, , “Commentary on Exodus,” in Mathews EG, Amar JP, (translators), Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose Works, (The Fathers of the Church Series Vol. 91), Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1994.

Epiphanius, “30. Against Ebionites,” in Williams F (translator) The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1-46), E.J. Brill, New York, 1987.

Epiphanius, “An Homily on the Burial of the Divine Body of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on Joseph of Arimathaea, and on the Lord’s Descent Into Hades which, After His Saving Passion, Wondrously Ensued on the Holy and Great Saturday,” in Lamentations of Matins of Holy and Great Saturday, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, MA, 1986, p. 35.

Eusebius of Caesarea, The Church History of Eusebius, McGiffert AC (translator), in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Eusebius of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine, in Schaff P and Wace H, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Eusebius of Caesarea, “On the Paschal Solemnity,” in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993.

Florovsky G, “The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church,” Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, (Vol 1., Collected Works of Georges Florovsky), Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, MA, 1972.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Freedman H, (Epstein I, editor,) in “Glossary,” Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Socino Press, London, 1987.

Fuchs D, Israel’s Holy Days in Type and Prophecy, Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ, 1985.

Patriarch Germanos the New, “The Synodicon on the Holy Spirit (read on the second day of Pentacost): The Anathemas,” in St. Photios, On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit, edited and translated by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Studion Publishers, Inc., USA, 1983.

Green JP, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Vol. IV, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1985.

Gregory of Nyssa, “On the Three-Day Period of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2nd Paschal Homily), SG Hall, translator, in Spira A, Klock C, the Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa: Translation and Commentary, Patristic Monograph Series, No. 9., Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., Cambridge, MA, 1981.

Hall SG, Melito of Sardis on Pascha, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1979.

Hippolytus, fragments from On the Pascha preserved by the author of the Chronicon Paschale, ex ed. Cangii, p.6 as quoted in Coxe AC (translator), Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Hodges ZC, Farstad AL, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, 2nd Edition, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN, 1985.

Holy Transfiguration Monastery (translators), “Epilogue,” The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, MA, 1984.

Irrenaeus, Against Heresies, Coxe AC (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Jerome, “The Principle Works of St. Jerome: Prefaces to the Commentaries: Matthew,” Fremantle WH, Lewis G, & Martley WG, (translators), in Schaff P & Wace H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 495.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jerome, "Homily 91: On the Exodus: The Vigil of Easter," in Ewald ML, The Homilies of St. Jerome, Vol 2: Homilies 60-96, Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1965.

Jerome, Gennadius, "Lives of Illustrious Men," Chapter 3, Richardson EC, (translator), in Schaff P & Wace H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 362.

Josephus F, Antiquities of the Jews, in Whiston W (translator), The Works of Flavius Josephus, Vol. II, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978.

Julius Africanus , Five Books of the Chronography, (extent fragments), Coxe AC (translator), in Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Justin (Fr.), "The Jesus Seminar: A Rejoinder for Orthodox Pastors: An address prepared by for the Clergy Conference of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America," held in Boston in October, 1995, downloaded from Holy Transfiguration Monastery, (Homepage = <http://www.cybercom.net/~htm/>).

Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Coxe AC (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Kaplan A, The Real Messiah: A Jewish Response to Missionaries, National Conference of Synagogue Youth/Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, New York, NY, 1985.

Kasdan B, God's Appointed Times: A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays, Lederer Messianic Publications, Baltimore, MD, 1993.

Kalomiros A, "Is the Papacy a Church?" in Kalomiros A, Against False Union, St. Nectarios Press, Seattle, Washington, 1990.

L'Huillier PL, The Church of the Ancient Councils, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1996.

Lightfoot J, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew--1 Corinthians, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1989.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Makrakis A, An Orthodox-Protest Dialogue, Orthodox Christian Education Society, Chicago, IL, 1966.

McCarthy C, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2: Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS709 with Introduction and Notes, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1993.

Meyendorff J, Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends And Doctrinal Themes, Fordham University Press, New York, NY, 1979.

Moore PN, The End of History: Messianic Conspiracy, The Conspiratory, Inc., Atlanta, GA, 1996.

Moses ben Maimon, Danby H (translator), The Code of Maimonides, Book 9: The Book of Offerings, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1963.

Mother Mary, Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, The Lenten Triodion, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, PA, 1994

Neusner J, (translator), The Mishnah: A New Translation, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1988, pp. 1162.

Neusner J, (translator), The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation, 9, Hallah, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991.

Neusner J, (translator) , The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation, 20, Hagigah and Moed Qatan, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1986.

Neusner J, (translator), The Tosefta: Qodoshim -- The Order of Holy Things, KTAV Publishing House, Inc., New York, NY, 1979Percival HR, The Seven Ecumenical Councils, in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 14., Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Percival HR, The Seven Ecumenical Councils, in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 14., Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Perepiolkina L, "The Julian Calendar: An Icon of Time in Russia and Throughout the Orthodox World," in The Orthodox Church Calendar: In Defence of the Julian Calendar, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1996.

Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in Apud Galland, Ex Chronico Paschal, (fragments), as quoted in Roberts A, Donaldson J, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Philo, The Special Laws, in Yonge CD, (translator), The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1993.

Pseudo-Cyprian, Computus for the Pascha, 2, in Cantalamessa R, Easter in the Early Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993.

Reznick L, The Holy Temple Revisited, Jason Aronson, Inc., Northvale New Jersey, 1993.

Riddle MB, "Introduction" to Salmond SDF, (translator), St. Augustin: the Harmony of the Gospels, in Schaff P, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Rosenberg AY, "Tractate 'Chagigah,'" in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Moed Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, NY, 1989.

Rosenberg AY, "Tractate 'Moed Katan,'" in Scherman N & Zlotowitz M, (editors), The Mishnah: Seder Moed, Vol IV, ArtScroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989.

Schachter J, Freedman H, (translators) , Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim, Epstein I, (editor), Socino Press, London, 1983.

Shachter J, (translator), Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin, Epstein I (editor), Socino Press, London, 1983.

Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol I Apostolic Christianity A.D.1-100, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids MI, 1994.

Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100 - 325, Wm. B. Eardmanns Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311 - 600, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994.

Schaff P, History of the Christian Church, Vol. VII: Modern Christianity The German Reformation, Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994.

Schaff P and Wace H, "Synod of Antioch in Encæniis A.D. 341," in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Scherman N, Goldwurm H, Vayikra (Leviticus: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, Vol. IIIa, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1989.

Scherman N, Zlotowitz M, The (Stone Edition) Chumash: the Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings, ArtScroll Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1994.

Shanks H, in "Queries and Comments," Biblical Archaeology Review, 1997; 23 (3 May/June):11.

Sigal G, The Jew and the Christian Missionary: A Jewish Response to Missionary Christianity, Ktav Publishing House, New York, NY, 1981.

The Socino Talmud, CD-ROM version, Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation & Judaica Press, Inc, 1991-1993.

Stern DH (translator), Jewish New Testament, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. Jerusalem, Israel, 1989.

Stern DH, The Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, MD, 1992.

Stylianopoulos T, The New Testament: An Orthodox Perspective. Vol One, Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1997.

Tatian, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," Hogg HW (translator), in Menzies A, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews, Coxe AC, (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, Coxe AC (translator), in Roberts A and Donaldson J (editors), Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1992.

Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1993.

Theophylact, The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, Chrysostom Press, Beck & Kriegel, P.C., Chelsea MI, 1997.

Thiede CP, and D'Ancona MD, Eyewitness to Jesus: Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., New York, NY, 1996.

Vincent of Lérins, The Commonitory, Heurtly CA (translator), in Schaff P, Wave H, (editors), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. 11, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

Whiteford J, Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology, Conciliar Press, Ben Lomond, CA, 1966, pp. 47.

Wigoder G, The Encyclopedia of Judaism, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1989.

World Council of Churches and Middle East Council of Churches, "Towards a Common Date for Easter: WCC/MECC Consultation, Aleppo, Syria, March 5-10, 1977," in St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 1997, 41(2-3):235-248.

INDEX