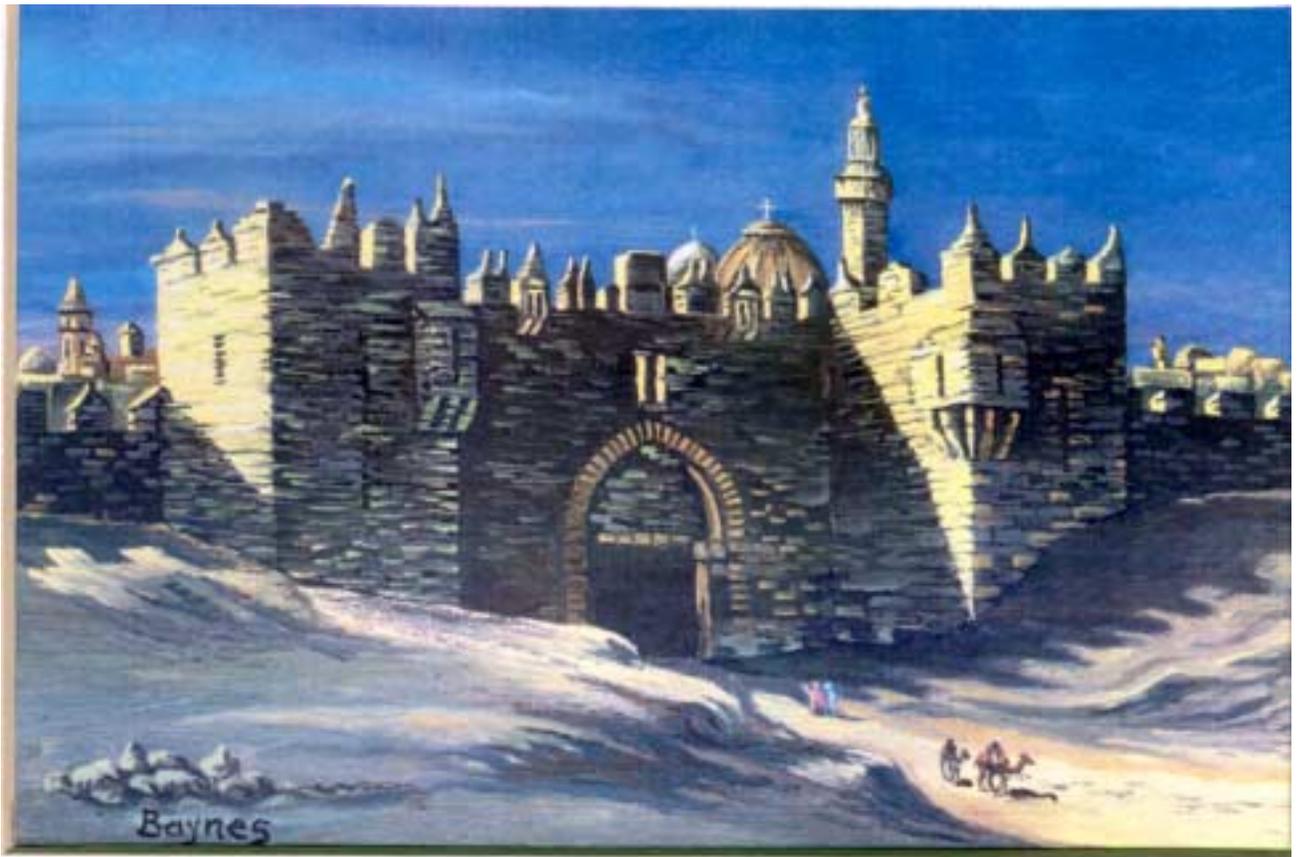


TRIUMPH
PROPHETIC
MINISTRIES

BIBLE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



The Passover in the city of Jerusalem

When Should Passover
Be Observed?

Lesson 14

An Open Letter from the Staff

When should the Passover be observed? Great controversy has arisen over this question during these last days. Some churches believe the original Passover was slain at the beginning of Nisan 14. The Jews have always held that it was killed in the end of the day, just before Nisan 15, and therefore was actually eaten on the 15th day of the month -- that is, in the beginning of the First Day of Unleavened Bread!

What is the TRUTH? Does it make any difference? Can we observe God's Holy Days on the wrong day, and still be blessed for it? What would have happened if ancient Israel had disobeyed God, and slew the Passover lambs on a different day than God instructed, and put the blood of the lambs on their door-posts on the day BEFORE the allocated time? Would God have spared their firstborn when the plagues came?

The Word of God says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of DEATH" (Proverbs 14:12).

God will not be mocked. As the apostle Paul states, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal.6:7, NKJV).

Let's study this question thoroughly, thoughtfully, and prayerfully. As Paul also writes, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim.2:15, NKJV).

TRIUMPH PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

BIBLE **CORRESPONDENCE COURSE** **LESSON 14**

Published at Altadena, California by Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Church of God).

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About Our Cover. . . The Passover is a unique festival of God. In ancient Israel, every family or group killed a lamb on the 14th of Nisan, at Jerusalem, roasted it, and ate it, in an act of tremendous symbolism.

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WHEN SHOULD THE PASSOVER REALLY BE OBSERVED?

Mystery of mysteries! Why is there so much confusion and controversy over the Passover? For thousands of years, the Jewish people – to whom the oracles of God were given (Rom.3:1-2) – have observed the Passover at the END of the fourteenth day of Nisan or Abib. Yet some churches during these end times insist that the Jews have it all wrong, and that the true Passover must be observed at the BEGINNING of the fourteenth of Nisan!

Where and how did this confusion originate? What is the source of this terrible state of controversy and ignorance? Are many, today, observing what they call the Passover on the wrong day, at the wrong time, and in the wrong manner?

The Passover is the FIRST of God's annual Holy Days. Therefore, it behooves us to study this question very carefully, to insure that we observe it FAITHFULLY and CORRECTLY!

Get out your pen or pencil, paper, and writing materials – or computer, if you use one – and let's get started!

God's Calling to Moses

1. When Moses was living in the land of Midian, did God appear to him in a burning bush? Exo.3:1-6. What did God tell Moses? Exo.3:7-10. Was God going to send Moses to deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian slavery? Same verses.

2. Did Moses think God should send somebody else? Exo.3:11. Did God say that He would be with him? Verse 12. Did God give Moses special "signs" to show the Israelites, so they would believe God had sent him? Exo.4:1-9. Was Moses still reluctant to become God's messenger? See

verse 10. What was God's answer? Exo.4:11-17.

COMMENT: Moses had no delusions of grandeur. He was a humble man – the meekest man on the earth (Num.12:3). Nevertheless, God called him to perform this mighty task, to lead Israel out of Egypt. He promised to be with him, and to enable him to accomplish the task.

The Plagues on Egypt

1. What was the first plague God sent upon the Egyptians for refusing to let His people Israel to go free? Exo.7:14-21. How long did this plague last? Verse 25.

2. What was the second plague God sent on the hapless Egyptians? Exo.8:1-6. Did Pharaoh repent? Verse 8. But was his repentance for real? Verse 15.

3. Did God then send a third plague upon the Egyptians? Exo.8:16-17. Did Pharaoh's magicians admit that this plague was really from God? Verses 18-19. But did Pharaoh's heart grow hard? Verse 19.

4. What was the fourth plague? Exodus 8:20-24. Did Pharaoh again profess repentance, and even ask Moses to pray for him? Verse 25-28. Did Moses give him a warning not to deal deceitfully with him? Verse 29. After God removed the plague of flies, did Pharaoh again "harden his heart"? Verse 32.

5. Was the fifth plague a terrible pestilence upon the livestock? Exo.9:1-6. But did any of the livestock of the Israelites suffer from this plague? Verses 6-7.

COMMENT: With this fifth plague, God began to make a difference

between the Egyptians and his people. Up to this time, all suffered from the plagues.

6. Was the next plague boils breaking out on man and beast? Exo.9:8-11. But did Pharaoh once again harden his heart in rebellion and refuse to let Israel go? Verse 12.

COMMENT: When the Scriptures say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, yet other times say Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exo.8:32), what is the difference? Simply put, God sent the plagues, but Pharaoh did not have the right attitude – he was a stubborn and wicked man – and therefore rather than melting his heart, the plagues served to harden his attitude in rebellion. It was not God's fault Pharaoh rebelled – that was his own choice. But God knew Pharaoh's heart – so He knew that these plagues would serve to illustrate God's mighty power of deliverance of His people and His ability to punish the wicked.

7. What was the seventh plague God sent upon the Egyptians? Was it a terrible hail storm? Exo.9:18-24. Did God increase the severity of the plagues? Exo.9:13-14. Was this plague of hail accompanied with thunder and lightning, fire, darting along the ground? Verse 23-24. Had anything like this occurred before? Verse 24. But did the hail fall upon God's people Israel? Verse 26. Did Pharaoh once again "repent"? Verses 27-28. But was this repentance feigned? Verse 34-35.

8. What was the eighth plague on the Egyptians -- locusts? Exo.10:3-6, 12-15. Did these plagues bring vast destruction upon all the land of Egypt? Verse 7, 15.

9. Was the ninth plague a terrible darkness upon all Egypt? Exo.10:21. How long did it last? Verse 22. Was Pharaoh's heart once again hardened? Verse 27.

The LAST Plague

1. What was the tenth and final plague God sent upon the Egyptians? Exo.11:1, 4-7. At this time, did God forewarn the children of Israel that they should go to their Egyptian neighbors and ask for articles of gold and silver? Verse 2. Did God give the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptian people? Verse 3.

2. Did God then tell Moses that the month which had just begun (with the new moon being sighted) was the first month of the year for Israel? Exo.12:1-2. Was this the month of "Abib"? Exo.13:4; 34:18; Deut.16:1.

COMMENT: This would have occurred on the first day of "Abib," as Hebrew months all begin with the first visible crescent of the New Moon. The term "Abib" refers to the green ears of barley, which had to be present for the month to occur.

3. At this time, did God tell Israel that each family was to select a lamb, and sacrifice it? On what day was the selection made? Exo.12:3-4. On what day was it to be slain? Verse 6. Were they to kill it in the "evening," or at "twilight"? Same verse.

4. Were they to put the blood of the lamb on their lintels and door-posts, and eat the lamb that very night? Exo.12:7-9. What were they to eat with it? Verse 8. Were they to eat it fully clothed, "in haste"? Verse 11.

5. What was God going to do that very night? Exo.12:12. What would He do when He saw the blood on the door-posts? Verse 13.

6. Did God then institute an annual celebration for His people to be observed forever? Exo.12:14. How long was this festival to last? Seven days? Exo.12:15-17.

COMMENT: Thus began the celebration of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. God slew the Egyptian firstborn that very night, and executed severe punishment upon the Egyptians.

7. Was this final plague enough to cause Pharaoh to finally let God's people go free to worship God? Exo.12:29-32. Did the Egyptian people also urge the Israelites to go, in haste, because they were afraid of what might happen to them otherwise? Verse 33.

8. Did the Israelites leave so hastily that the dough in their kneading bowls did not have time to become leavened? Exo.12:34.

COMMENT: How long does it take for dough to become "leavened"? The answer? A mere eighteen minutes, when exposed to the air, and the spores of leavening in the atmosphere!

Since the children of Israel had to leave Egypt very abruptly, so quickly, in fact, that their bread dough did not even have time to become leavened, this means that they could not have dilly-dallied, and hung around Egypt all the next day, before taking their leave of the place.

This fact, then, is a crushing blow to those people who insist that the Passover was eaten at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, and the Israelites spent the entire next day getting ready to leave, collecting valuables all day, and did not leave until the following evening!

Furthermore, think of it! If this were true, then God would have 2-5 million people exiting Egypt AT NIGHT – when visibility is very poor, and people and animals could stumble, fall, and suffer grievously, while attempting to march on foot *in the dark, throughout the night!*

9. Did the Egyptians facilitate their departure by giving them valuables – gold and silver and clothing? Exo.12:35-36. When did God first tell them to collect gifts and parting "severance pay" from the Egyptians? Exo.3:22.

COMMENT: These gifts could be described as "payment of past wages," which were due to the Israelites for all their

labor under slavery. It amounted to a vast sum. "Thus they plundered the Egyptians" (Exo.12:36, NKJV). Since God told Moses that the children of Israel would be given the valuables of the Egyptians back in Exodus 3:22, they could have been "collecting" these things for days and weeks before the final Exodus itself took place. Even so, there was no need whatsoever for them to hang around Egypt all day, the day of the Exodus, to do this!

Again – let's think these things through, and not follow the erroneous ideas of ignorant and argumentative men or various "ministers" who claim otherwise!

Jesus said, "You will know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH will set you free" (John 8:32, NIV).

What Is This Word "Evening"?

Much controversy has arisen over this word "even," "evening," or "twilight," as used in Exodus 12:6. What does it really mean? In Exodus 12:6, God commands Israel, "And you shall keep it [the Passover lamb] up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it *in the evening.*" Many have been perplexed by this expression.

The question is, does this period of time refer to the afternoon of Nisan 14, especially from 3:00-5:00 PM, as Jewish rabbis proclaim? Or does it refer to the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, which begins about 6:00 PM the previous evening, from the time the sun sets until dark sets in -- a period of about forty minutes or so?

In his book entitled *The Christian Passover*, Fred R. Coulter, former minister of the Worldwide Church of God, asserts that this expression is "the vital key to understanding." He claims that the Scriptural meaning of *ben ha arbayim* is the period of time after sunset, normally

referred to as dusk or twilight -- definitely NOT "late afternoon"! Coulter simply rejects out of hand Jewish explanations and exegesis on this expression, as well as the studies of most scholars. Coulter claims that the traditional Jewish explanation of this term, such as that of Rabbi Rashi, is wrong. He claims that entire Passover – killing and eating – must be on the same day. He asserts that the Passover lambs were to be killed and eaten on the night of the 14th, not the 15th! How you can kill a lamb, after sunset, and eat it by the time churches hold their “Passover” services, is impossible, though. If the lambs were killed about 6:30 pm, after sunset, on the 14th of Nisan, you would still have to ROAST them – which would take several hours more. This would place the Passover meal at 9:00-10:00 pm, at least.

Coulter claims that Exodus 16 is the KEY PROOF that he is right, and all the rabbis and scholars are wrong. What is this "proof" which he refers to?

The Mystery of the Word "Evening"

Asserts Fred Coulter, the Hebrew term generally translated "evening," or "even" -- *ba erev* -- means "sunset." Therefore, according to him, *all the common Bible translations are in error, as well as Strong's Concordance and every Hebrew lexicon in existence!* Coulter does not bother to "prove" that *ba erev* should be translated "sunset." He simply asserts it is so, saying so dogmatically, without providing any evidence whatsoever. Coulter declares that "the meaning of *ba erev* is *without controversy*," and further says it means "sunset." But is this really true?

The Jews and rabbis most emphatically do NOT agree with Coulter's claim that *ba erev* should be translated "sunset." This is a blatant untruth. Therefore, his assertion that his statement

that *ba erev* means "sunset" is "without controversy" is simply amazing, to put it mildly. According to the Jewish rabbis and all scholars, the term *ba erev* simply means "evening," in a general sense, which would include sunset, of course, but not be limited to it. Notice! Here is the proof to back up my statement:

Says the *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, of the term *erev*: "(1) evening (m. and fem., I Sam.29:5) . . . at evening . . . Dual, *arbayim*, the two evenings; only in the phrase, *ben ha arbayim*, between the two evenings, Exodus 16:12; 30:8, used as marking the space of time during which the paschal lamb was slain, Ex.12:6; Lev.23:5; Num.9:3; and the evening sacrifice was offered, Ex.29:39, 41; Num.28:4 . . ." (p.652).

Gesenius shows that the word *erev* simply means "evening," and makes no mention at all of its meaning "sunset." However, he points out that the expression *ben ha arbayim*, "between the two evenings," is controversial. He goes on: ". . . according to the opinion of the Karaites and Samaritans . . . the time between sunset and deep twilight. The Pharisees, however (see Josephus *Bellum Jud.* vi. 9, par30), and the Rabbinites considered the time when the sun began to descend to be called the FIRST EVENING (Arabic 'little evening'; when it begins to draw towards evening); and the SECOND EVENING to be the REAL SUNSET" (p.652, emphasis mine).

Coulter, having asserted that *ba erev* means "sunset," then proceeds to the next step in his explanation: He states that there is a "legitimate, Biblically sound, chronologically defined, Scripturally documented way to prove, beyond any shadow of doubt whatsoever, that *ben ha arbayim* originally meant the time period from sunset to dark" (p.37).

Coulter says this "proof" is in Exodus 16.

Is that really so? Let's take a careful, objective, analytical look at Exodus 16, and see for ourselves!

The Mystery of the Quail

1. What occurred on the 15th day of the second month, when Israel came out of Egypt? Exo.16:1-2. Did the people complain for lack of food? Verses 2-3. Did God promise to send "bread from heaven" for six days of the week? Exo.16:4-5.

2. What was to happen that "evening"? Exodus 16:6.

COMMENT: "And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, AT EVEN, then shall ye know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt." the words "AT EVEN," here, are *ba erev* in Hebrew.

3. What was to occur that "evening"? Exo.16:8. Was God going to give the Israelites "meat" to eat? Same verse. When was He going to do this? Verses 11-12.

COMMENT: Notice: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, AT EVEN [*ba erev*] the QUAILS came up, and covered the camp" (verse 13).

Thus God sent the quails at *ba erev*, or "evening." They were to be eaten "between the two evenings." Since they must arrive before they can be eaten, *ba erev* in this case must occur before *ben ha arbayim*. Coulter insists the quails came at "sunset," and since they were EATEN at *ben ha arbayim*, "between the two evenings," that "proves" that *ben ha arbayim* must refer to the time *after sunset, or dusk!*

The problem with this interpretation is that *ba erev* does not mean "sunset," as a point in time, but means "EVENING"! Let's prove this once and for all! Let's search the

Scriptures and see just what "evening" – *ba erev* – REALLY means! First of all, notice what authorities say on this issue.

Says *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*: "It [the *daylight portion* of the day] was divided into morning, noon, and *evening* (Psa.55:17; cf. Dan.6:10)" ("Day," p.214). This authority adds: "The festival [Passover] began on the 14th of Abib at EVENING, that is, in the beginning of the 15th day, with the sacrificial meal (Lev.23:5-6). A lamb or kid was slain *between the evenings, that is, TOWARD SUNSET* (Exo.12:6; Deut.16:6; cf. between the 9th and 11th hours . . ." ("Passover," p.705).

Letting The Bible Interpret "At Even"

Can the term *ba erev* mean late afternoon? Coulter says it means "sunset." However, if you look in a Bible Concordance such as *Strong's*, you will find this expression is translated "evening" 49 (7 x7) times in the Old Testament! It is *never* translated "sunset." Let us notice some of the places where it is used, and how it is used.

1. In Genesis 24, Abraham sends his faithful servant to find a wife for Isaac back in his own original country, so he will not marry a Canaanite woman. When the servant travels back to the land of Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor, he stops by a well. Then what happens? Gen.24:11. What time was this? Same verse.

COMMENT: What time would women go out to draw water? This would refer to late afternoon, not precisely at *sunset* when it is getting dark outside. Women would not wait until it is growing dark, or till dusk or twilight, before getting their water from the well. Remember, these were communal wells, and supplied water for the entire community, and would have been used by many women. They would

certainly allow themselves plenty of time so that they would not be lined up at the well, in the dark, waiting their turn to draw water.

2. What time was it when Goliath challenged the army of Israel? I Sam.17:4-16.

COMMENT: “And the Philistine drew near *morning and evening*, and presented himself forty days” (I Samuel 17:16). When did Goliath approach the Israelite army, to utter his defiant challenge? “Morning and *evening*.” Do you think he waited until sunset to make his boast? Logically, this challenge would have been uttered before the Israelite army mid-morning and mid-afternoon -- long before sunset!

3. What happens during the “evening” – that is, during *ba erev*? Jeremiah 6:4.

COMMENT: Jeremiah the prophet makes it very plain that the term “evening,” or *ba erev* in the Hebrew language MOST DEFINITELY can mean “afternoon.” Notice his words! “Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the *shadows of the evening are stretched out*” (Jeremiah 6:4).

When are *shadows* lengthened or stretched out? At high noon, there is no shadow cast. As the sun goes toward the western horizon, the shadows are lengthened out. As the sun nears the horizon, the shadows become their longest. *But after sunset, there are no shadows cast at all -- for it is the sun which casts shadows.* Therefore, here we find DEFINITE proof that the term *ba erev* or “evening” refers to the time of late afternoon, *before* sunset!

Evidence from Deuteronomy

Further proof that *ba erev* commonly refers to the late afternoon is found by comparing Scriptures referring to the slaying of the Passover lambs.

When, then, was the Passover to be killed? Exodus 12:6. “In the evening?” When was this? Deuteronomy 16:4.

COMMENT: The word for “evening” in Exodus 12:6 is *ben ha arbayim*, “between the two evenings.” But the word in Deuteronomy 16:4 is *ba erev*, “evening.” Thus both words can cover the same period of time! But neither means precisely at sunset! That would be ridiculous! Can you imagine every Israelite slaying his Passover lamb precisely AT SUNSET, a time lasting for only a few minutes each day? Preposterous!

Notice Deuteronomy 16:4. This verse shows that the Passover is a part of the days of Unleavened Bread, leading right into them. We read: “And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst *the first day AT EVEN*, remain all night until the morning.”

2. Since the Passover was killed “at even,” or “evening,” what time was this? Deut.16:6.

COMMENT: Now, notice verse 6 of this chapter. Here is the solution to the problem! Here Moses is told by God, “But in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover AT EVEN, *at the GOING DOWN of the sun . . .*”

Letting the Bible interpret the Bible, then this expression *ba erev* or “evening” when the Passover was killed, and the expression *ben ha arbayim*, which also denotes the time the Passover lambs were killed, was the same moment or time period described as “*the going down of the sun.*” Literally, the expression “at the going down of the sun” can only mean when the SUN IS IN THE PROCESS OF DESCENDING IN THE WESTERN SKY! That is, from the time the sun BEGINS to DESCEND, *at high noon, until SUNSET* -- when it has

completed its descent to the point where it is below the western horizon and has disappeared from sight!

Notice! It is the “going down” -- present progressive tense -- showing the action of the sun moving down in the western sky. This period of time must be, has to be, by logical, careful analysis, from the moment after NOON, at the earliest, lasting until the sun disappears behind the horizon, or the actual moment of SUNSET! Once the sun has “set,” it is no longer “going down” -- it has, rather, “GONE DOWN”!

The Septuagint makes it perfectly clear. We read: “Thou shalt not have power to sacrifice the passover in any of the cities, which the Lord thy God gives thee. But in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, to have his name called there thou shalt sacrifice the passover *at even AT THE SETTING OF THE SUN . . .*”

The command is plain that the lambs had to be slain ON THE FOURTEENTH of Nisan (Exodus 12:6). This was to be done toward sunset, in the late afternoon, *BEFORE the sun had set!*

Could anything be plainer? Even a small child can understand this truth! Why is it that so many cannot grasp these plain and simple Spiritual, Biblical truths?

"Between the Two Evenings"

Since the term *ben ha arbayim*, “between the two evenings,” is so controversial, let us see how this expression is used in the Scriptures. According to the Word of God, there were four things which were to be performed at the time period known as “between the two evenings” -- it was the time the Passover was to be killed, the time of the evening sacrifice, the time the lampstand in the Temple was lit, and the time the incense was offered.

Notice, now, how this expression

denotes the time of the “evening sacrifice.”

1. In the book of Numbers, does God give instructions concerning the *daily sacrifices* which were to be offered before Him? Num.28:3-4. Were these DAILY, one in the morning and the second one in the evening of the same day?

COMMENT: God commanded, "And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot DAY BY DAY [Heb. 'IN A DAY'], for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer IN THE MORNING, and the other lamb shalt thou offer AT EVEN [Heb. *ben ha arbayim*, or *between the two evenings*] . . ." (Num.28:3-4).

Notice carefully! Both these offerings were to be offered DAILY, "day by day," "IN A DAY" -- that is, *WITHIN THE SAME DAY!* The first one is the morning sacrifice, and the second one is the EVENING sacrifice. In order for the evening sacrifice to be offered the SAME DAY as the morning sacrifice, it had to be offered *BEFORE SUNSET!* Otherwise it would have been the NEXT day! What could be clearer? Thus, here we find incontrovertible, inexorable, yet simple proof that “between the evenings” has to refer to the period of time *BEFORE SUNSET*, not after sundown, or the period between sunset and dark!

How clear it all is, when we simply let the Bible interpret the Bible! It's really NOT complex at all. The question is, will we follow the **INSPIRED WORD OF GOD** -- or will we follow the opinions of a man?

Lighting of the Lamp, and the Incense

1. When was the menorah lamp lit in the Tabernacle? Exodus 30:7-8. Was the incense burned at the same time? Same verses.

COMMENT: The lighting of the

Lampstand in the Temple, and the incense offering, both also occurred at *ben ha arbayim*, or “between the two evenings.” Interestingly, at the time of the morning sacrifice, which was offered at 9 o'clock in the morning, the Temple lamps were “dressed,” and incense was also offered, together with the morning sacrifice (Exodus 30:7). Then at the time of the evening sacrifice, we read: “And when Aaron lighteth [Heb. “setteth up” or “causeth to ascend”] the lamps at even [“between the two evenings”], he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations” (Exo.30:8).

Therefore, the daily sacrifice, the incense offering, and the lamp lighting and trimming, was done every day, throughout the generations of Israel, as long as there was a Sanctuary or a Temple, at the appointed time called “between the two evenings.”

Can we establish this as being in the mid-afternoon, or about 3:00 o'clock?

The Appointed “Time of Prayer”

The daily sacrifice was a time of “prayer” at the Temple, and the daily sacrifice and incense were physical types of prayer and sacrifice of ourselves to the service of God. The apostle Paul speaks of prayer as “the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:15).

1. Did David connect prayer with the offering of incense and the daily sacrifice? Psalm 141:2.

COMMENT: David declared, “Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as incense*; and the lifting up of my hands as *the evening sacrifice*” (Psalm 141:2). The time of the sacrifices at the Temple were noted as times for prayer in ancient Israel.

2. Is this same connection made in the book of Revelation? Rev.8:3-4.

COMMENT: We read: “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him *much incense*, that he should offer it *with the prayers of all saints* upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the *incense, which came with the prayers of the saints*, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand” (Rev.8:3-4).

Thus it is clear that “incense” and the time of prayer are connected in the Word of God. They are connected with each other, and with the *time* of the “evening sacrifice” (Psalm 141:2). What is this “time”? Is it after sunset, or before? Is it after dark, or during the afternoon?

It was customary for the people of Israel to be at the Temple, and to pray, at the time of the offering of the incense, and the evening sacrifice. We read in the book of Ezra, where Ezra the priest declared: “And *at the evening sacrifice* I rose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God” (Ezra 9:5).

3. Did Elijah the great prophet of God, at the time of the evening sacrifice, pray to God? What happened? I Kings 18:29, 36-39.

COMMENT: fire came down from heaven and devoured his offering atop Mount Carmel. The scene was Mount Carmel in northern Israel. The prophets of Baal had been crying out to their god to bring fire down from heaven to consume their sacrifices. But nothing happened. Then Elijah at the time of the evening sacrifice offers his sacrifice, and prays to God.

Here again, prayer to God is connected with the evening sacrifice -- it is the time of “evening prayer.” As David said in the Psalms, “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he

shall hear my voice” (Psalm 55:17). Daniel also prayed three times a day to God, at the hours of prayer (Daniel 6:10).

4. Did this custom continue into New Testament times? Luke 1:9-10. Did whole multitudes pray at the time of the burning of the incense? Same verses.

Then was the time of burning of incense and sacrifices also the “time of prayer”? Same verses.

When Was the "Time of Prayer"?

Thus the time of incense, the time of the daily sacrifices, morning and evening, was the time of prayer. But when was the “hour of prayer”? Does the Bible tell us elsewhere when the appointed, traditional, customary “time of prayer” at the Temple occurred? Yes, it does!

1. When was the “hour of prayer” in New Testament times? Acts 3:1. Did Cornelius pray at this same time? Acts 10:30-31; 10:1-4.

COMMENT: The book of Acts, in the New Testament, says: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the *hour of prayer, being the NINTH HOUR*” (Acts 3:1). The ninth hour of the day, Jewish time, would be 3 o'clock in the afternoon, our time. This was, therefore, the time of evening devotions, the evening sacrifice, the evening incense offering, the time of the lighting of the lamps in the Temple -- and it was the time called “between the two evenings,” or *ben ha arbayim!*

2. What time was the morning time of prayer and devotion? Acts 2:1-15.

COMMENT: The morning time of devotion and prayer, was the time of the morning sacrifice, the morning incense, and morning lamp trimming in the Temple. It was the time Peter and the disciples went to the Temple, to worship, on the Day of Pentecost, in 30 A.D. At that time of prayer, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and

lighted on the disciples, like a flame of fire, and enabled them to speak in many different languages, miraculously (Acts 2:1-13). Peter said to the assembled multitude, worshipping at the Temple: “Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but *the third hour of the day*” (Acts 3:14-15).

What is the real significance, then, of these times of prayer -- 9 o'clock in the morning and 3 o'clock in the afternoon? We read in the gospel of Mark: “And it was the *third hour* [9:00 AM], and they crucified him And at the *ninth hour* Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Mark 15:25, 34-38).

Jesus Christ was nailed to the stake, or tree, of crucifixion, at 9 o'clock in the morning, where He remained all day, suffering, until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when He died. Thus He was nailed to the stake as the “morning sacrifice,” and died at the same time as the “evening sacrifice” was normally killed. He died at the very time of *ben ha arbayim*, or “between the two evenings.” But there is even more to the story. Jesus Christ died at the very time of the Passover sacrifices in Jerusalem, which also were offered at *ben ha arbayim* -- in the afternoon, before sunset!

A Final Look at the Quail Question

With all these things in mind, then, let's examine what really happened in Exodus 16.

1. What day was this – the 15th day of the second month? Exodus 16:1. Did God promise them they would see a miracle that “evening”? Exodus 16:6. Here the

word in Hebrew is *erev*, as we have seen, which means “evening” or “late afternoon.”

2. Did God promise them that they would eat meat “in the evening”? Verse 8. Here the expression is *ba erev*, meaning “in the evening” or “in the late afternoon.”

3. Were the Israelites told they would eat flesh that “evening”? Exodus 16:12. Here the expression in Hebrew is *ben ha arbayim*, “between the two evenings.”

4. Was this promise literally fulfilled? Exodus 16:13. The word “evening” here is again *ba erev*, meaning “in the evening” or “in the late afternoon.”

COMMENT: How simple it is, when we allow the Scriptures to interpret themselves! The meaning is very simple: The quail flew in that afternoon, and the Israelites ate them that same afternoon! There is no need to “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel” over these verses! They simply mean what they say!

Objections Examined

But wait a minute,” some might object. “That day,” they may continue, “was a Sabbath day. How could the Israelites prepare the quail and cook it, since cooking was forbidden on a Sabbath?”

That may seem a fair question. But wait a minute! Had God revealed to Israel by this time the weekly Sabbath day? The answer, of course, is NO! In fact, this whole chapter is to conclude with the revealing of the Sabbath day, by the miracle of the manna, by the end of the following week!

1. How long, beginning at the evening of this particular day, would God send “manna” for the Israelites? Exo.16:4-5, 13-22.

2. What happened on the sixth day? Verse 22. What did God say about the seventh day? Verse 23-26. So when did God reveal His Sabbath to Israel? Verses

22-26. Did they obey Him, even so? Verse 27. What did God say about this? Exo.16:28-30.

COMMENT: Remember, even though that day would normally have been a weekly Sabbath day, *the Israelites were not yet observing it as such* -- for God had not yet “revealed” to them the Sabbath *until the following Sabbath!* It was not until the *following Friday and Sabbath* that God revealed the weekly Sabbath to them, saying, “Tomorrow is the REST of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning” (Exo.16:23).

In other words, God did not command them to keep the Sabbath day *until the following week AFTER the visitation of the quail!* Continuing: “And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for TODAY IS A SABBATH unto the LORD: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none” (Exo.16:24-26).

Do you see? For over two hundred years, while captive in Egypt, the Israelites had forgotten the truth about the Sabbath commandment. They had certainly not been observing it while under Egyptian bondage. And up until this point, God had NOT shown them which day was the Sabbath. Therefore, He had not required it of them! It's that simple.

3. Therefore, what happened next, after God revealed the Sabbath to them, one week later after they had eaten the quail sent to them? Exo.16:27-30.

COMMENT: Notice carefully! “And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the

LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for the LORD hath [now] given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; ABIDE ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people RESTED on the seventh day” (Exo.16:27-30). Up until this point, then, God had not revealed to them the weekly Sabbath, so He did not require them to observe the Sabbath, and they were not observing it! How plain!

This clearly means that they were *not yet observing the weekly Sabbath when the quail came!* Therefore, God would have allowed them to do things that day which normally would not be permitted or allowed!

God did not reveal His Sabbath to Israel until the 22nd day of the second month. “So the people rested on the seventh day” (verse 30). What does this fact tell us? Simply that up to this time, Israel had not been observing or keeping the seventh day Sabbath, as they came out of Egypt! In fact, on the 15th day of the first month, which God later commanded to be an annual Sabbath (Exo.12:16; Lev..23:6-7), they hiked all the way from Rameses to Sukkoth (Exo.12:37), a considerable journey lasting a whole day. This was “work.” Such work would later be inappropriate for the Holy Day, an annual Sabbath of rest!

The point is, since the weekly Sabbath had not yet been revealed, it was perfectly all right for the Israelites to prepare, cook, and eat the quail which God sent to them that afternoon!

This is also true since God Himself told them to eat it! God has the power to intervene and supercede any of His Holy Days, if He chooses to do so. In the book of Acts, God told Peter to “slay and eat” a sheet full of unclean animals (Acts 10:9-13). When Peter refused, seeing they were unclean, God said, “What God has cleansed you must not call common” (verse 15).

In other words, since God told the children of Israel to eat the quail He sent to them on the seventh day of the week – which meant they had to cook them – a day which would become identified as the Sabbath a week later -- it was perfectly all right for them to do so!

“The Lord of the Sabbath”

Another example illustrating this point is found in Mark, chapter 2. Notice!

1. Did Jesus allow His disciples to pluck ears of wheat in the field, and eat them, on the Sabbath day? Mark 2:23. What did the Pharisees think about this? Verse 24. Did they call it “not lawful”? Same verse.

2. What did Jesus say in response? Mark 2:25-26. Did He mention the example of David, who ate bread designated in the law only for the high priest and the priests? Same verses.

3. Did Jesus then justify what His disciples were doing by saying He was “Lord of the Sabbath”? Mark 2:27-28.

COMMENT: The Sabbath was never intended to be a day of bondage or a yoke of restraint. It was to be a day of joy and spiritual delight (Isa.58:13-14).

Jesus, being the Son of God, and the One who created the Sabbath day, with the Father – One of the pre-existent “Elohim” of Genesis 1 – had authority OVER the Sabbath day, and its regulations. If He permitted something, then it was all right!

In our modern world, an example would be if a policeman were directing traffic at an intersection. There may be a “red light,” but if the policeman waves the traffic through, then you are to obey the policeman on the spot, and not the traffic light!

Even so, God permitted the children of Israel to cook and eat the quail in the afternoon of the day which later would be

designated as the weekly Sabbath. No problem! They were very hungry, and so God permitted it, and used it as an opportunity to reveal to them His power!

***Jesus Christ -- Perfect Passover
Lamb, Perfect Proof!***

Jesus Christ was killed at 3:00 PM in the afternoon of Nisan 14, according to Scripture. At the ninth hour, when the Jews began killing their Passover lambs, Jesus himself hung on the stake.

1. What time of day was Jesus nailed to the cross? When did He die? Matt.27:45-50; Mark 15:25, 34-38.

COMMENT: Matthew's gospel states, "Now from the *sixth hour* [noon] there was darkness over all the land until the *ninth hour* [3:00 PM]. And about the *ninth hour* Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani? 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 Elias [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 Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost" (Matt.27:45-50).

2. Did Isaiah the prophet foretell the sufferings and death of the Messiah? Isaiah 53:4-10. Did John the Baptist declare Him to be the "Lamb of God" who would take away the sins of the world? John 1:29, 36.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ, Yeshua, the Saviour and Messiah, God's Anointed One, the "Lamb of God" (John 1:36), IS God's suffering servant who gave His life for the sins of the world, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, who wrote: 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was

wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are HEALED" (Isa.53:1-5).

3. Was the suffering servant foretold by Isaiah compared to a LAMB? Isa.53:6-7. Did the "lamb" remain silent as he went to the slaughter? Verse 7. Did Jesus Christ also remain silent, when He was unjustly put to death? I Pet.2:21-25.

COMMENT: Isaiah foretold, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a LAMB to the slaughter [the Passover lamb!], and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was CUT OFF from the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isa.53:6-8).

Jesus also "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; and when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (I Pet.2:23)).

4. Did Isaiah foretell that He would die along with the wicked and be buried in a rich man's tomb? Isaiah 53:9,12. Was Jesus crucified alongside malefactors, and buried in a rich man's tomb? Matt.27:38, 57-60; Mark 15:27-28, 43-46.

COMMENT: Isaiah foretold around 712 B.C., "And he made his grave with the wicked [the robbers slain with him], and with the rich in his death [he was given Joseph of Arimathea's tomb]; because he hath done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make HIS SOUL [LIFE] AN OFFERING FOR SIN, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days [be

resurrected!], and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:9-10).

No other individual in all human history ever came close to fulfilling these remarkable, amazing prophecies, except Jesus Christ – Yeshua, the son of David!

5. What did the apostle Paul say about Jesus Christ and the Passover? Did he refer to Him as the "Passover Lamb"? I Corinthians 5:7-8.

COMMENT: Paul put it plainly: "For even *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*" (I Cor.5:7-8). Jesus Christ fulfilled the symbolism of the ancient Passover lambs *perfectly*. He was God's "lamb without blemish."

The Perfect Proof

Certainly Christ, AS the Passover Lamb, had to be slain at the *proper time!* Those who claim that the Passover is to be observed at the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, and admit that the lambs were slain in the afternoon of Nisan 14, have a very serious problem. According to their chronology, Jesus was therefore not slain until some twenty hours LATER than the time they claim the Passover is to be observed!

For Jesus Christ to fulfill the role of the Passover Lamb, *He had to be slain at the very same time as the Passover lambs! And He was! The Passover could not be eaten until AFTER the lambs were slain, and roasted! Therefore, it had to be eaten AFTER Nisan 14, during the beginning of Nisan 15, that very evening!*

By their reckoning, His death was at the *wrong time*, and did not therefore perfectly fulfill the Passover typology!

If that were the case, then Christ could not truly have been our Saviour, God's Passover Lamb -- He would be a fake, a fraud, an impostor, a counterfeit!

But thank God, Christ was the PERFECT fulfillment of the Passover.

Therefore, He was slain at the VERY MOMENT the Passover lambs were being slain at the Temple of God! He was slain at the VERY TIME God commanded for the Passover to be killed – "between the two evenings"!

Even as these sacrificial lambs were being slaughtered at the Temple, in 30 A.D., God's own True Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, also known as Yeshua Ha Mashiach, was being slain for all of us who accept His shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins (II Cor.5:20-21; I Cor.5:7-8). Thus Jesus Christ fulfilled the TYPE of the Passover lambs PERFECTLY -- RIGHT ON TIME, exactly on schedule!

If the lambs were sacrificed the previous evening, as some claim, then Jesus missed the correct time by twenty hours -- and did not fulfill the type of the Passover perfectly! If that were true, then He could not be our SAVIOUR! He would be an impostor! But Jesus fulfilled EVERY Scripture that prophesied of His coming TO THE MOST INFINITE DETAIL, in every respect -- PERFECTLY in all points!

Now, let's look at this question from the reverse angle. We know Christ was our Passover lamb (I Cor.5:7). Therefore, we know that He must have died at the right time, when the Passover was to be killed. The fact that the gospels plainly show that Jesus was killed at precisely 3:00 PM on the afternoon of Nisan 14, then, PROVES that the original Passover lambs were to be killed at that same time! This is further proof, then, that *ben ha arbayim* has to mean the *late afternoon!*

Here, then, is the *ultimate proof* -- the example of Jesus Christ Himself, our Passover lamb!

Yeshua was slain at 3:00 PM in the afternoon; *He HAD to fulfill the commandment to be slain "between the two evenings" (Exodus 12:6).*

Therefore, ben ha arbayim, "between

the two evenings," MUST refer to a time which includes 3:00 PM in the afternoon!

The Scribes and Pharisees

1. As to the question of whether the scribes and Pharisees observed the Passover at the right time, what did Jesus Christ Himself say? Did He declare that they sat "in Moses' seat"? Matt.23:2-3. What does this mean, for us?

COMMENT: Jesus declared in plain words: **"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do"** (Matt.23:2-3). Obviously, He was referring to their correct teachings which they drew from the Torah, the Law, the Word of God. He was not speaking about their "traditions" as such (Matt.15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).

2. Who were the scribes and Pharisees? Were they the ones who preserved the Old Testament or Tanakh? – the "Holy Scriptures"? Romans 3:1-4.

COMMENT: As Paul wrote to the Romans, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the **ORACLES OF GOD**. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom.3:1-4).

To the Jews were given the oracles, words, testimonies of God -- the Scriptures. If the Pharisees were wrong in sacrificing the Passover in the late afternoon of Nisan 14, then Jesus would have been wrong to say they sit in Moses' seat and that we are to follow their interpretation of the Law (Matt.23:1-3). He would have clarified this matter. If they were wrong, *then Jesus would surely have pointed out such an egregious error*. If they were wrong in the

time they sacrificed and observed the Passover, then Jesus would have been derelict in His duty as the Son of God and the One "greater than Moses" for never correcting or faulting them for such a GROSS error of the greatest magnitude!!!

3. Was the apostle Paul, who said he was a Pharisee, taught the Law of God by them? Was one of his teachers a great rabbi named Gamaliel? Acts 22:1-3; 23:6-9. If the Pharisees were wrong, would Paul have been taught the Law BLAMELESSLY, having learned from them? Does Paul say that he WAS taught the Law correctly and that he kept the law of God "blamelessly" as a Pharisee? Phi.3:4-6.

COMMENT: Paul says he did learn the correct way from the teachings of the Pharisees. Otherwise, he would have been a *liar* to make the statement he did to the Philippians!

Both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul, endorsed the teachings of the Jews, and the Pharisees, as the correct teachings concerning observing the Passover. They never faulted or criticized the Pharisees on this teaching.

To Know the Truth

To know and understand the truth of God is a wonderful blessing. To *obey* God is even better! It may not seem to men to be a very important thing as to when they observe Passover, or how they keep it. But it is important in the sight of God. God Himself sets the parameters of true worship -- not men, ministers, priests, or other human beings. Will we obey God in this matter? Or will we follow men? Will we serve God? Or follow Baal?

Jesus Christ declared: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who

worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24, NKJV). Are you willing to do just that, without compromise?