

CHAPTER 4

YESHUA'S NEW COVENANT PASSOVER

"With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" ~ Yeshua

Yeshua taught His disciples to keep Passover and all of God's Feasts. The teaching and keeping of God's Festivals is one marked difference between the true apostolic Church of God and most churches that proclaim Christ today. When it comes to the Law and Holy Days, most churches do not teach or practice what Jesus taught and did. This unfortunate truth is as Christ said it would be (Matt 24:5-6). Jesus kept and taught His Father's Law, but He knew that misguided imposters would proclaim His name, while they themselves lived and taught a different and lawless gospel (Matt 24:5-6, 11). Christ said He did not come to do away with the Law or prophets (Matt 5:17).

As Jesus kept and taught His disciples about Passover, it is interesting to note that it was still common for many to prepare and keep their own Passover at home on Abib 14 – independent from the Temple Passover which was being kept one day later. There is record in John 13 of Jesus and His disciples eating the pesach meal on Abib 14 at which time Jesus explained in greater detail the full meaning of the unleavened bread and wine. Yet we find many Jews were still planning to eat the Passover the next day in John 18:28.

It is particularly interesting to note Jesus' command to His disciples to go, kill a lamb and prepare the Passover meal / service on Abib 14 did not incite any questions from anyone regarding why they were killing a lamb themselves – OR – why they were keeping Passover one day earlier than the current Temple practice (Mark 14:12, Luke 22:10-13)! Apparently their Abib 14 Passover did not incite any notable concern by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Disciples of Christ, or from the masses of Jews. Nor did this practice incite any curiosity from the man the Disciples rented the room from, though he knew the date and purpose of the rental was for the

Passover meal/service, one day sooner than that at the Temple (Matt 26:18-19). Clearly there must have been many others with the same understanding of God's Word who were also keeping these same ancient practices on Abib 14, independent of Temple Passover services, otherwise this would have stood out and incited comment and criticism. This is especially so, given the scrutiny Jesus was accustomed to receiving for anything He did or taught that was contrary to the tradition of the Jews! Surely the Pharisees and Sadducees would have jumped on this practice if it were unique. But in fact, this was not a unique practice for many Jews of Jesus' day. In fact, the Sadducees themselves believed Passover fell at the beginning of Abib 14, but as this was primarily a personal matter – not a Temple matter – it was not of notable concern.

Indeed many historians have concluded that many or most of the Sadducees remained true to the Abib 14 Passover. Notice the article, "Pascal Lamb," from the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*:

"The Pharisees and Sadducees had a dispute as to the time when the slaughtering [of the lambs] should take place; the former held it should be in the last three hours before sunset [at the end of the fourteenth day], the latter between sunset and nightfall [and thus at the beginning of the fourteenth day]." *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Copyright 1942, published in the USA, Volume 8, Page 406, Article, "Pascal Lamb".

The words of the notable historian and priest, Josephus, who lived during the days of the apostles, are interesting to consider in this light. Notice he still clarifies the Passover service preceding the Feast of Unleavened Bread by one day.

Chapter 10 - Concerning The Festivals; And How Each Day Of Such Festival Is To Be Observed

5. 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 sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them. (*Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews*, Chapter 10, section 5, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Jesus knew the twilight time between dusk and dark was about an hour or so. Notice:

Luke 22:14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; NKJV

Luke records, "the hour" that Passover came. After keeping Passover with His disciples, Jesus was given into the hands of the Romans by the Jews where He suffered all night long at the hands of the Gentiles. He was then put on the cross the next day by the same hands of the Gentiles and thus died for the sins of all mankind.

WAS THE TIME OF CRUCIFIXION PROOF OF A NISSAN 15 PASSOVER?

Many have claimed that, since Jesus died late on Passover day, this lends support for the Passover being killed at the end of the 14th. I like the sound of that. Who wouldn't? The only problem with it is that it's not biblical! Let's see from God's Word when Jesus died and *when* He became our Passover.

To begin, just as the lambs were chosen ahead of time (Ex 12:3), so Jesus was called by God a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). He was the chosen Passover Lamb of God from BEFORE the foundation of this world (1 Pet 1:19-20). God knew man would sin and need a Passover Lamb so He provided a propitiator for our sins in advance of our needs. When did Yeshua become the Passover? Answer: Yeshua became our Passover on the day the Father ordained it so – before the foundation of the world!

But when was His official act of being our Passover carried out? Jesus was captured and beaten for our faults from shortly after the Passover service, early on the 14th until the light of the next day. His sacrifice became “official” with the first blows he absorbed on our behalf. But He did not die in the evening. He died at about 3:00 in the afternoon (Luke 23:44-46). Jesus was dead and buried well before the end of the 14th – well before the “evening” of the high day of Unleavened Bread on the 15th (John 19:31).