

CHAPTER 5

PASSOVER 14TH or 15TH CLARITY THROUGH EXEGESIS

“...sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun...” ~ Moses

The time and events surrounding Israel’s departure from Egypt, as recorded by Moses, holds valuable proofs as to the date and time of Passover. Do you remember when the children of Israel left Egypt?

Remember, God told the Israelites they were not to come out of their house Passover night until the following morning (Ex 12:21-24). When the 14th arrived, Israel was told to kill the Passover, put the blood on their door posts, prepare and eat their paschal meal with bitter herbs, and remain indoors all night until morning. While they waited, the destroyer would pass-over those homes that came under the blood of the lamb, but He would visit for judgment the houses that did not. The penalty for not coming under the blood of the lamb was the death of all the firstborn. Eating the lamb was another type of the need to “eat Christ” and absorb the meaning of His sacrifice as well as His life. The bitter herbs symbolized the horrible bitterness of bondage in Egypt. Venturing out doors Passover night was not an option.

What exactly does the biblical word for morning mean? I use the term “biblical,” to denote the meaning of the word “morning” found in your Bible as opposed to what some men will tell you it means after the Babylonian exilic influences were imposed upon it.

OT #1242 **Heb boqer** — morning: The break of day a) morning: 1) used of end of night 2) used of coming of daylight 3) used of the coming of sunrise (The Online Bible Thayer’s Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, Copyright.)

James Strong says of this word morning:

Strong's #1242, boqer (bo'-ker); means: properly, dawn (as the break of day); generally, morning:

No real big mystery here, yet some have been misled to count the time for Passover purposes as the gentiles count time, by claiming that “morning” is that portion of the night that comes after midnight plus that portion of the day up till noon, i.e., midnight to noon. But God calls “morning” the breaking of light through the full rising of the sun. God’s Word calls evening, (*‘ereb*), that period from the beginning of sunset into the twilight of the evening at the other end of the day! God told Israel: Keep the lambs *until* Abib 14, kill them at the coming of evening (*‘ereb*), eat the lamb prepared with bitter herbs in a state of hast, do not come out of your homes until morning (*boqer*).

Remember, the passing-over by the death angle at midnight is the event this day is named for – not the following day. God said the Passover would happen on the 14th. Since the Hebrews counted each days time beginning with the evening and continuing to the next evening – making a complete 24 hour day – it stands the test of logical reasoning that the morning after the previous evening was still part of the same “day.” This is how God counted time in Genesis 1:5; “*So the evening and the morning were the first day*”, and so forth, for all seven days of the creation week. Thus, biblically, the morning after each evening was still part of the same day. The Passover meal with bitter herbs in the evening was followed by the actual Passover event at midnight, followed by spoiling the Egyptians in the day – all part of the 24 hour Passover day on the fourteenth of Abib.

EXEGESIS OF NUMBERS 33 AND DEUTERONOMY 16

Relevant is the fact that Moses recorded the exact date and time of Israel’s departure from Egypt, and of the Egyptians burying their dead:

Num 33:2 Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these are their journeys according to their starting points: 3 They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4 For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had

killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.
NKJV

Combine Numbers 33 with this important passage of scripture in Duet 16:1 and the reader is armed with some irrefutable truth regarding this important topic:

Deut 16:1 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. NKJV

With a little worthwhile exegesis of scripture, several points are learned from the combined facts of these two passages.

- 1 Israel left Egypt "*on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day AFTER the Passover.*" How can you have Passover on the 15th and leave Egypt on the 15th, when Moses recorded Israel left on "the day after the Passover?" One cannot have it both ways!
- 2 Israel departed Egypt by night, i.e. the night of the 15th!
- 3 Egypt was burying their dead while Israel plundered the Egyptians and departed.

These are important and relevant facts to remember when determining if Passover fell on the 14th, as recorded in scripture, or on the 15th as interpreted by some. Remember, God told Israel not to come out of their homes until the morning twilight about sunrise Passover day (Ex 12:22). If, as some presume, Passover began at the end of the 14th, with the Passover meal and service actually falling on the 15th, then Israel would have had to have come out of their homes before the morning contrary to what God commanded them. Not only that, they would have had to have LEFT EGYPT between midnight and the rising of the sun the following morning, for God's Word says Israel left at "night" on the 15th! Each 24 hour day has only ONE NIGHT. If Passover was kept on the 15th and Israel left on the night of the 15th, then they would have had to leave before sunrise, for the next night would be the 16th. But that's not what the Bible records.

Ex 12:22 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that

is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. 23 For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. 24 And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. NKJV

Deut 16:1 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. NKJV

Num 33:3 They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the

It is understandable why one would refer to later historical sources to show that Passover was historically kept by the Jews on the 15th of Abib, as that became a historical fact for many later post exilic Jews. But when one actually looks at what Moses commanded God's people and compares it to Yeshua's example of also keeping Passover on the 14th, one finds that Passover was originally kept at the beginning of the 14th by Moses and ancient Israel, as well as by the New Testament Jewish Church of God. But there's one more incredible point to consider – Egypt burying their dead!

Think about these pointed questions:

1 Does it make sense that families would bury their dead within the same night that they died and within only few hours of their deaths?

2 Since all the firstborn were killed at midnight (Ex 12:29), how long would it be until each Egyptian household realized that their firstborn had died? Many would likely have lain in bed covered up and dead for a few hours before they were discovered.

3 How many hours does it take for a body lying covered in bed to grow cold? How long before rigor mortis would set in? Answer: More than a few hours. Do you really believe that the Egyptians, known for extended pre-burial ceremony, would quickly bury their dead in the dark of night within only a few hours of death? Do you believe they would bury their dead before the bodies of the dead had even grown cold and rigid?

To believe Passover was on the 15th is tantamount to believing the majority of the Egyptians woke up in the middle of the night, and in essence said, ***“O no, _____ and _____ are dead! Quick, grab a shovel. Let’s bury our dead right now, while it’s still in the dark of night, before the rising of the sun and before their warm bodies get cold and rigid.”*** That would be bizarre and extreme heartless behavior. But that is in essence what would have had to have happened if Passover was the same night Israel left Egypt! This author does not believe such a crazy belief. I hope you can see the unrealistic absurdity of such a belief.

Israel obeyed God and did not come out of their homes until the twilight of the next morning on the daylight portion of Passover Abib 14. Then Israel plundered the Egyptians and prepared to leave Egypt while the Egyptians mourned through the daylight of the 14th (Ex 12:36). The time through the daylight portion of the fourteenth of Abib gave opportunity for the Egyptians to mourn and begin burying their dead by nightfall on Abib 15 (Num 33:2-4).

The scripture says Israel departed Egypt *BY NIGHT* on the *DAY AFTER* the Passover. Putting all the scriptures together we have a clear picture:

- 1 Israel prepared for Passover ahead of time. They chose their lambs on the 10th of Abib and kept the lambs UNTIL the arrival of the 14th of Abib at evening twilight (between sunset and dark) (Ex 12:3-6, 21).
- 2 Then each head of household killed their lambs and put some of the blood on the door posts of their homes. With preparation and the fire already being prepared, they roasted the lamb with bitter herbs and ate the Passover meal inside their homes (Ex 12:7-8, 22). This was all done in hast, vs 11.
- 3 The destroyer Passed-over at midnight on the 14th and struck all the firstborn of Egypt – all who did not come under the atoning blood of the lamb were destroyed (Ex 12:12-13, 23, 29-30).
- 4 The Israelites were commanded by God to stay indoors all night. They did not come out of their homes until morning sunrise, as instructed (Ex 12:22).

- 5 In the early morning of the 14th they got up burnt any remains (hide, hair, bones, entrails, and any leftover meat). They then began to spoil the Egyptians (Ex 12:36). This was their preparation day to ready them for their departure from Egypt at nightfall on Abib 15 (Num 33:2-4, Deut 16:1).

- 6 Moses began to lead Israel out of Egypt in an orderly fashion on the night of Abib 15. With time to mourn on the 14th, Egypt began to face the urgent need to begin burying their mass dead. The Egyptians began digging graves on the 14th and began burying their dead at nightfall on the fifteenth, as witnessed by Israel on that memorable night as they departed Egypt (Num 33:2-4).

- 7 God commanded this night of Israel's departure to be remembered and solemnly observed, independent of Passover, forever (Ex 12:24, 42)!

This preparation time on the daylight portion of the 14th was a necessary time, as Goshen (where Israel dwelt in Egypt, Ex 8:22) was several miles wide and about 40 miles long. Moses records that they went out orderly, all from one starting point. Any well trained army would understand the need for the discipline and order involved in marshaling about 3 million people from over a 40 mile range into one starting point – not to mention the added needs of the elderly, the children, the sheep and cattle, and the spoils they took from their former Egyptian captors.

They required the full daytime of the Abib 14 to make this happen. It would have been impossible to leave in the same evening as the Passover. The Passover had to take place on the beginning of the 14th for there to be time to marshal that many people and lead them out of Egypt!

Only with correct understanding, can keep the full eight days (Passover, plus seven days of ULB) the way God intends us to. May the LORD bless and guide you as you pursue His truth!