

Fundamentals of Belief
#11C: Passover—Beginning of the 14th

Edited Sermon Transcript
Jon W. Brisby; 12-9-2000

This afternoon, brethren, we are going to continue our series on the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal. We are still working on fundamental eleven. I can already tell you, we have this and probably one more sermon, before we finish fundamental number eleven. I didn't anticipate that it was going to take this many. In fact, I thought this one was going to go much quicker.

Let me read fundamental number eleven for you again:

We believe in TWO ORDINANCES for this age; water baptism by immersion, into Jesus Christ (not a denomination) for the remission of sins, following genuine repentance; and Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover, observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib.

That is fundamental number eleven. As you are already aware, we covered in one sermon the topic of baptism. Last time, we covered the concept of the second ordinance of Passover, and I gave you an overview of the significance of Passover in the plan of God. We talked about the piece of this fundamental which says, ". . . and Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover . . ." We demonstrated what the Passover was about, what its meaning is in God's overall plan, and the significance of Christ's keeping of the Passover. We discussed the emblems of the Passover that were changed, and which were commanded and required of the Church, even unto the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Now, we are going to get into the technicalities. I am actually glad that it worked out this way. This time of year is early—before Passover season—and yet, for the next two sermons, we are going to get into some of the nitty-gritty technicalities of this issue of the Passover controversy.

I would prefer to cover that at this time of year than in Passover season. I would rather focus at that time on the spiritual intent and significance of Passover to the Church, when we are supposed to be living it and recognizing the value of it—not grinding and chafing in conflict over the issues of technicalities, like the 14th or the 15th.

We are aware, if we have any respect for the revelation of Jesus Christ, that this fundamental is based upon revelation that came through Mr. Armstrong, which is that Christ kept the Passover on the 14th of Abib. It was kept on the 14th of the first month of God's calendar, and it was at the beginning of the 14th. The 15th is the feast of Unleavened Bread; and the Night to be Much Observed is that convocation which we have after sunset, when it moves from the 14th to the 15th.

The Jews and a number of other groups today believe that the Passover was killed on the afternoon of the 14th, and then eaten after sundown—after the 15th began. So, you have the seeds for incredible controversy. On the surface, you can ask, "If everybody is reading the same Bible, why is there such controversy? Why is it so unclear, and why do you have such vehement battles going on over this issue?"

It has been going on for centuries. It is certainly nothing new today. The unfortunate thing is that the number of individuals who were baptized into the Church, even decades ago, who heard the voice of that servant whom God called and to whom He revealed His way of life, accepted that the Passover was on the beginning of the 14th. But now, they have completely turned from it.

Passover is that service, on the Roman calendar, which we would say was on the night of the 13th. It is when the 13th ends and the 14th begins; that is when we keep the Passover. The 15th then, is the beginning of the feast. Two separate nights.

Many who kept that law in that manner for years and years, which is what they were baptized to believe, are now writing papers and speaking, supporting this concept that it has always been a Passover kept on the same night as the feast. I can understand scholars and those who were never part of the Church, that believe those things. Again, those Passover controversies have been going on for centuries.

However, someone who was once part of the Church, who has now embraced this kind of lunacy, is the thing I can least understand.

Well, what kind of questions do we want to answer when we talk about the Passover controversy? First, we want to answer the question, when did Christ keep the Passover? Next, we are going to look at the question, when did the Israelites keep the Passover? Finally, we are going to try to answer, to the best of our ability, when did the Jews keep the Passover? Hopefully, I can get through those first two questions today.

I want to start by asking the question, when did Jesus Christ keep the Passover? We are going to stick to the New Testament and look at the evidence there, because I think we have some incredibly strong evidence. Then, separately, we are going to go over and look at that question in the Old Testament records from Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, to show, by the original commands for the Passover, what the Israelites did, and see if we come up with the same answer technically.

Is there technical evidence to support what we have always believed and been taught from the Bible? Absolutely, there is. This will be beneficial to those who are technically minded, but technical things are not the basis of our faith. Our faith is in the fact that we received something as truth. It was given to us and it all fit together in a perfect picture. I hope at least, that by going through technical details, you are going to be able to see the fabric of the beauty of that which God built into His word—even in the technicalities of the words that were used, why they are there and for what reason—because it is an incredible picture.

We are going to start with the question, when did Christ keep the Passover? Well, what are the scholarly claims that are out there? There are about half a dozen or more major claims. Some of them include that Christ's Last Supper was not the Passover. That supper that He ate with His disciples was not the Passover at all because the Passover is on the 15th. The Passover lamb is killed on the afternoon of the 14th, but eaten after the sun goes down, when it becomes the 15th. What Christ was doing the evening before, therefore, was not a Passover at all. It was just a special supper of unique significance with His disciples, but it was not a Passover ceremony. That is one of the claims.

What is another claim? Certain scholars will tell you that Christ's supper was the Passover; He was keeping a Passover with His disciples, but He was keeping it on the 15th. They will tell you, and try to support from the Bible, that Jesus Christ, on

the night that He ate His last Passover, was keeping a Passover meal, but it was on the evening of the feast of Unleavened Bread.

Then, there are others who claim that Christ's supper was the Passover, but it wasn't on the 15th; it was a special, extra Passover. There were two Passovers approved that year; so, you can either keep the Passover on the beginning of the 14th or on the beginning of the 15th—whichever you choose.

Those are just samples of a smattering of ideas that are out there and which all have incredible volumes of information written technically to support them. They all use terms like, "The Bible clearly shows," and "For anybody that has eyes to see and ears to hear, there is no other conclusion but." They all write this way, but they all totally contradict one another.

Those who have written these letters and articles are brilliant people. You can look up Biblical encyclopedias, dictionaries and all manner of things in which they debate these items. The one thing you find is that they all, invariably, run up against contradictions that are very, very difficult for them to explain. When you don't have the truth and it doesn't match with what the holy, inspired scriptures tell us, you automatically have problems.

So, did Christ actually keep the Passover with His disciples before He died? Let's see if we can prove that one right off the bat. I read you this before we ended last time, but let's read it again.

Luke 22:8–15:

"And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover . . ." What were they doing? Was this just some special meal, separate and apart from the Passover service? See how many times it says and verifies it within the next four or five verses here.

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, 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 goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Was there any doubt what Christ intended to do?

. . . where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew 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 passover.

Christ told the disciples, "Go and prepare the Passover." They went and asked where that chamber was ". . . where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples . . ." Then, they made ready the Passover.

Verse 14:

"And when the hour was come . . ." What hour? The appropriate hour of the beginning of the 14th (as we will see later) when the sun goes down and when it is commanded to keep that service.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer . . .

The Passover was mentioned four different times in those verses. So, why is there any conflict? Why does anybody have any doubt that what was going on, was a Passover service? Well, many say that the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, to whom they refer as the synoptists, contradict the account of John. Here is where we run into the problem.

If all you read were Matthew, Mark or Luke, you would have no doubt that what Christ was doing that night, was keeping the Passover. The problem is, you go to the account of John and there appears to be a contradiction, or so these scholars think. The first three—Matthew, Mark and Luke—state firmly, just like we read in Luke, that He was keeping the literal Passover. Now, let's look at what John says and you will see where the confusion comes in.

What you are going to find is that, as detailed as John is in his description of all of the events of that night, and the following morning and day, never does he say, like the other three gospel writers, that this was the Passover service.

Notice John 13:1–2:

"Now before the feast of the passover . . ." This says, ". . . before the feast of the passover . . .", and as we are going to find out, that is a very broad term. Admittedly, you cannot draw any conclusions about what was encompassed or intended in this reference.

Now before the feast of the passover [before the entire Holy Days], when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him . . .

All you find is a reference that sometime before the feast of the Passover, when Christ knew His hour was coming, a supper occurred. In the inspired writing of John, he doesn't say that this was the Passover service. Now, why is that a problem to the scholars?

Well, turn to John 19:14. These are people who presume. They already have their conclusion in mind—that Christ believed in and kept a Passover that was on the beginning of the 15th. John is the one writer in this book who casts doubt on that. Directly, there is no way you can get around it. What does it say in John 19:14? "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!"

This is before Pilate, when Christ was being sentenced to death and crucified. On that morning, which is sometime before or around 8AM, after the previous evening when Jesus Christ had eaten this supper, John says that the Passover was yet coming. It was the preparation of the Passover.

This would lead you to believe, if you only read the account of John—so these scholars will tell you—that the supper Christ ate with His disciples happened on the night before the Passover. John says that the Passover is coming up, but Christ has already eaten His supper with the disciples; so that couldn't have been the Passover. The Passover must have been the next evening.

So here is a major discrepancy, supposedly, between Matthew, Mark and Luke, which all seem to say very strongly that He was keeping the Passover. However, John is saying that, hours after He had eaten that same supper, the Passover was still looming at the following sunset. Now, how do we reconcile?

Scholars don't have a way to reconcile it because they are unwilling to admit the very facts that we were taught which show the perfect picture of the explanation that we received through Mr. Armstrong. Scholars admit that John seems to imply that Jesus had His supper the evening before the Jews' Passover, which would have been the night of the 13th, or really the beginning of the 14th. Those presuming that the real Passover was at the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th, find this to be a direct contradiction.

I want to quote something out of McClintock and Strong, from the article entitled, *Passover*. Here is what they say; see if you can follow this:

"Finally, it must be admitted that the narrative of John, so far as the mere succession of events is concerned, bears consistent testimony in favor of the last supper having been eaten on the evening before the Passover."

"Whether the explanations of the passages in John, and of the difficulties resulting from the nature of the occurrences related, compared with the enactments of the Jewish law, be considered satisfactory or not, due weight should be given to the antecedent probability that the meal was no other than the regular Passover, and that the reasonableness of the contrary view cannot be maintained without some artificial theory, having no proper foundation either in Scripture or ancient testimony of any kind."

Anybody follow any of that? I had to read it a few times myself. Basically, all they are saying, with all of their flowery words, is that it appears John's writings indicate that it was the night before the Jews' Passover. They still have to assume, however, from their best knowledge of interpretation, that it really was a Passover that Christ was celebrating, but they have no way of reconciling the contradiction between John and the other three gospels.

The scholars of the world have to come from a premise of believing that there is contradiction. They are not coming from our premise—the fact that the entire Bible is inspired, that it all fits together and makes a perfect tapestry, and that it is all truth. Matthew, Mark and Luke were true, we believe, when they say Christ was keeping a Passover service. We also believe that John was true when he said that it was a preparation for some kind of a Passover coming up, after Christ had already kept His. The question is, what is the answer that reconciles all of those different issues?

Well, to overcome this problem, as I mentioned to you, I saw one writer who claimed that there were really two Passovers approved in that particular year of Christ's death. This is somebody who believes that all of the Bible is the inspired word of God; but if you don't have the truth, then what kind of other interesting scenarios can you come up with in order to justify and get rid of this contradiction? This man claims that, in that particular year, the Jews had difficulty, because of the weather or whatever, in observing the new moon, and they weren't quite sure when the first of the month began. Therefore, to be sure, they actually approved two different days for Passover.

Now, what is the problem with that? Well, this is someone who doesn't believe in the Hebrew calendar, for one. There are a lot of what we call "calendar dissidents" who do not accept the fact that God did give His calendar to the Jews, and they brought it down all the way from the time of Moses. They also do not accept that the calendar works in harmony with observation. It wasn't observation as opposed to calculation. The calculation and the observation always arrive at the same conclusion.

So, whether or not they were able to see the new moon—the crescent—as it appeared, they had a calendar that allowed them to know when that new moon was. If they knew when the first of the month was, and if they knew how to calculate Nisan 1, there was no question that they knew how to calculate Nisan 14 and Nisan 15. That argument will not hold water. My intent is not to get into a dissertation on the calendar, although we might do that at some point. Mr. Cole and I have had an opportunity in the last couple of weeks, to spend some time with it in answering some questions. It has been very, very fascinating to me, but I will avoid getting into that now.

All I can tell you is that anyone who comes up with this conclusion—that there were two approved Passovers—denies the fact that God sets up one day and one day only for His holy observances. Now, the Jews have continued—out of tradition and history in many cases—to keep two days. They keep two days for Pentecost and for a number of Holy Days because they are not sure.

That is not the way God operates. God is sure. He gave each day to be holy, one and only one. To not be able to keep it on the day that He commanded is an act of faithlessness. We have an opportunity to know when; and I can guarantee you that Christ, whenever He was keeping it, was keeping the one and only Passover. It wasn't that there were two days approved that year, and so, Christ flipped a coin and decided, "Well, I guess I will keep this one." Preposterous.

But if that is not the answer, what is the answer to reconcile John's account with that of the synoptists? Well, let's look. Here is the problem—at least a presumed problem—with Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Is there really a contradiction? Do Matthew, Mark and Luke say that the Passover was kept at the beginning of the High Day? Because that is what they try and tell you. Even though Matthew, Mark and Luke supposedly verify it was the Passover that Christ was keeping, they claim there are other scriptures that show the Passover was kept at the beginning of the 15th, not the beginning of the 14th. Why do they conclude that?

Mark 14:12:

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Did you catch the problem? ". . . the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover . . ." Now, wait a minute. I thought the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is a High Holy Day, is the 15th of the month. This is saying that if the disciples were preparing for the first day of Unleavened Bread and killing the Passover, then that Passover service Christ kept was mingled together with the High Holy Day. Isn't that what he is saying? Because he says that it was the first day of Unleavened Bread that this was occurring.

Or, is that really what he is saying? What about Luke 22:7? "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed." Well, there is a problem. The Passover must be killed on the day of Unleavened Bread? Are we talking about the feast day there? That is what you would be led to believe.

What about Matthew 26:17?

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 passover?

Now, how can that be right? I wonder if we are wrong. Does anybody believe that it was really, literally on the feast day, the 15th, that this question is being asked of Christ, where do you want to keep the Passover? There is no one, of any of the people who argue over this controversy, that believes that the Passover was kept a day after the

Holy Day. So obviously, we are still talking about a preparation for, leading up to, either the first day of Unleavened Bread or another day. The question is, what are we taking about?

You will notice in your King James Bible that there are several words which are italicized. That means they are not there in the phrase. The proper rendering in Matthew 26:17 is: "Now the first of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus . . ."

What we have are three different accounts. Mark says the first day of unleavened bread; Luke says the day of unleavened bread; and Matthew says the first of unleavened bread. What are we speaking of?

The answer is in coming to understand that unleavened bread, having been eaten actually on eight days—both in the Passover service as well as the seven days of Unleavened Bread—began to be a term that was used interchangeably with Passover. We are going to see several examples in which the term "Passover" was used to denote the entire feast, including both the Passover service itself as well as the seven days of Unleavened Bread. In like manner, Unleavened Bread was used as a common title for the entire feast, including the Passover as well as the seven feast days. Can we prove that?

Notice Luke 22:1 to begin with: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." The feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, and that seven-day feast is called the Passover. At this time in history, those titles for the spring Holy Days had become synonymous. This was because of the relationship of the Passover with the seven-day feast. They began to be titled collectively. This is an example, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that it was very appropriate in that day for the feast of Unleavened Bread to be called the "Passover."

How about conversely? We have a record of Josephus that I will read to you. Josephus states in *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 15, "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*." So here you see that the feast, which included the seven days of Unleavened Bread plus the Passover day (the 14th), was considered collectively an eight-day feast and was just as often called Unleavened Bread.

What do we find is the answer to our apparent discrepancy in Matthew, Mark and Luke, when they said it was "approaching," "nearing," or "in preparation for" the first day of unleavened bread? Were they speaking of the first High Day of the feast of Unleavened Bread? No, "feast" is not mentioned there. It does not say that in any one

of the accounts, in spite of the insertion of the word "feast" in Matthew. The word "feast" is not there. It is the first day of unleavened bread and the first day of unleavened bread, in this sense, was considered the Passover day. It was not saying it was the High Holy Day, whatsoever.

When you understand and put it together, Matthew, Mark and Luke all confirm absolutely that Jesus Christ was keeping a Passover service. These scriptures are not contradictory when they say He was keeping it on the High Day. No, he wasn't, and that is not what it is saying at all. You cannot draw the conclusion that it was kept on the 15th.

Matthew 26:3–5:

Notice if that is what they were saying. If so, then Christ was preparing with His disciples on the 14th to keep the Passover that night—the beginning of the Holy Day. He would have been sitting down to eat the supper with His disciples on the Holy Day; and therefore, He must have been crucified the following morning, on the 15th. Except, what does Matthew 26:3–5 say?

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

The clear intent was not to crucify Christ on the feast day. Those claiming that Matthew, Mark and Luke say that Christ ate the Passover on the beginning of the 15th, are saying that He was crucified on the 15th—that the Jewish leadership actually did crucify Him on that feast day. We have seen here that they intentionally sought to avoid that. Now, some can argue, "Well, they tried to avoid it, but they didn't have any choice; so they did it anyway."

There is a much better explanation. The first thing we have to get past, is trying to assign a definition to the words "Passover" or "Unleavened Bread" whenever you see them used by themselves. We cannot construe from these four different writings whether it is referring specifically to the Passover service, to the Days of Unleavened Bread, to one or the other, or both combined together. They can be interchanged appropriately.

If we do not try to look for the answer to the question of the 14th or the 15th based upon the use of the terms "Passover" or "Unleavened Bread," is there anything else that

points the way? Absolutely. If the terms "Passover" or "Unleavened Bread" do not indicate conclusively which specific day Christ was sitting down with His disciples, how do we know for sure when Christ was keeping the Passover?

We are going to go through a little bit of a logic chain here, and I am going to point out something that I think will be very fascinating. What do we know for sure? Let's look at the pieces logically. Christ kept the service the night before He died; I think everybody will admit that. He ate this supper on a particular night, whatever night it was, with His disciples. Then, He was arrested sometime after midnight, after that supper. He was taken into custody and was tried in the early hours of the next morning. He was convicted, He was sentenced to death and He was hanged on the stake.

Very quickly, Mark 14:72:

And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

"Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." This was a prophecy that Christ uttered at the supper. He said Peter was going to deny Him at that very time, even before the coming of the following morning. As that night moved into morning and those roosters were going to crow at dawn, He said it would only be a very few hours before Peter would deny Him.

You know the account without turning to it. It was when He was standing in the courtyard on trial; He had already been beaten when Peter denied Him that final time, and Jesus looked upon him. So, this was all happening within the space of a few hours.

Christ was sentenced, He was hanged on that stake, and notice now Mark 15:42. This was after He had been hanged on the stake and crucified. "And now when the even was come . . ." This was after Christ had died. We understand that He was on the stake from 9 AM to 3 PM, for a total of six hours.

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath [Keep that in mind.], Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

Whenever His death was, it was on the afternoon of a preparation day for a Sabbath. Is this saying the weekly Sabbath? No, not at all. It is a Sabbath. I went through some of this with you in past sermons on the fundamental concerning Christ's

resurrection. We are just going to hit some of the high points because it is important in determining, once and for all, when Christ kept the Passover.

". . . it was the preparation, that is, the day before [a] sabbath . . ." That is what it says in the Greek. Not the Sabbath, but a Sabbath. It doesn't tell you what kind of Sabbath, whether a weekly Sabbath or a Holy Day. So, how do we know? Let's look at John 19:30, and it will tell us very plainly what kind of Sabbath it was.

John 19:30–31:

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the [spirit]. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day [There is a Sabbath coming up.], (for that sabbath day was an high day,) . . .

That Sabbath day, which was going to begin within hours after Christ died on the stake, was a Holy Day. Can there be any doubt that this is exactly what we are reading from the inspired word?

. . . that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So, what do we know? We know Christ ate a dinner, a supper of some kind, with His disciples. Within hours afterward, He was arrested and He was sentenced to death the following morning. He was hanged on a stake, and by sunset of the following evening, He was dead. Whatever afternoon on which He died, that day was leading up to a Holy Day. A Holy Day was going to begin, because He died on a preparation day for a Holy Day. What else do we know?

I am just putting these pieces together, because I am going to fill it all out to show you the chain of logic which is unbreakable. What about Christ's resurrection? Why do we need to go back and talk about Christ's resurrection? I thought we were talking about whether the Passover is on the 14th or the 15th. Now, we are going to go all the way up and talk about His resurrection?

Interestingly, this hit me very strongly when I was going through all of this material and trying to pull all of these pieces together to present it in a logical fashion for you. You know what the best evidence is that Christ kept the Passover on the

14th? It comes from understanding that Christ was in the tomb for three days and three nights. Did you know that?

We already went through that several sermons ago, on the resurrection of Christ, in order to demonstrate that He was not resurrected on a Sunday morning. However, did you also know that it is the crucial piece that helps us know when Christ kept the Passover? Those three days and three nights are the key in the story. It is that very piece which all of these supposed scholars of the world fail to recognize and to admit, which not only prevents them from knowing when Christ was resurrected, but also when He kept the Passover. Can I prove it? Yes.

Remember, Jesus Christ said one sign of His messiahship was that, as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so would the Son of man be in the heart of the earth. Three days and three nights; not a minute sooner, not a minute later; not more, not less. I went through all of that with you. You can go back and review those tapes for the technicalities. It was three days and three nights—seventy-two hours. No less and no more. When was Christ resurrected?

Well, we know that He was gone from that tomb—resurrected no later than—Sunday morning. The account again, is that Mary Magdalene and the others came at dawn on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, and what did they find? They found an empty tomb, because He had risen. Ok, so He was gone by Sunday morning. No later than Sunday morning, He was resurrected.

We also know that He was three days and three nights in the tomb, and that was the only sign that He gave of His messiahship. So we are not going to try and get around that. We are going to accept that as the basis, and that is how we are going to come to an understanding of Passover, believe it or not.

What time of day was He put in that tomb? It was right at or right before sunset. On whatever day it was—let's not address that right now—He was put in the tomb right before, or immediately at, the setting of the sun. We have already proved those things in the past.

If He was placed in the tomb at the going down of the sun, when was He resurrected? Regardless of how many days, doesn't it also have to be at sundown? If it is seventy-two hours later, it has to be equal increments of time. If you believe in the three days and three nights, then He was placed in the tomb at sundown and He was resurrected at sundown. If you believe in parts of days and parts of nights, then

you are going to believe in a Sunday resurrection or something else; but then again, you have to leave out a very crucial point that we are not going to do.

Three days and three nights, and He was resurrected sometime before Sunday morning. When is the closest sundown to Sunday morning? Saturday night at sundown. Saturday night at sundown is when He came out of the grave. What is seventy-two hours back from Saturday night at sundown? Well, let's count back. From Saturday night, Friday night is one day, Thursday night is the second day, and Wednesday night at sundown is day three—the day we know absolutely that He was put into the tomb.

We know all of those things because of what God did provide. We know that He was resurrected before the rising of the sun on Sunday, the first day of the week. He was in the tomb for three days and three nights. Therefore, there is no other conclusion—if you believe all of those things and take them at face value—that He was put into the tomb Wednesday, right at or just before sundown.

Therefore, we have already seen that the day Christ died was a preparation day for a Holy Day, correct? If Wednesday was the day He was put into the tomb, and Wednesday was the preparation for a Holy Day, what day of the week was the Holy Day that year—in whatever year Christ died? Thursday—beginning at sundown on Wednesday and ending at sundown on Thursday—was the first day of Unleavened Bread, the feast day.

If Christ died on a Wednesday, which we have just proven, when did He eat the supper with His disciples? When did He eat the supper with His disciples, if He died on the afternoon of Wednesday? Wasn't it at the beginning of Wednesday or the end of Tuesday? It was the night before. That is why I showed you all of those scriptures. He had a supper with His disciples; within hours, He was arrested, taken into custody, tried, convicted and hanged on the stake; and He was dead before sundown of the same day, whatever day He ate that supper. That supper was on Wednesday, which was a preparation for the Holy Day, and what day is the Holy Day? The 15th of the month of God's calendar. So, what was the preparation day's date?

If the 15th was Thursday, beginning Wednesday night, then the 14th was the 14th of the month of Nisan or Abib. Christ was crucified and died at the end of Wednesday the 14th; therefore, the supper He was eating with His disciples was on the beginning of the 14th. At the end of the 13th when the sun went down, the 14th day began. His hour had come, He sat down and He ate the Passover meal with His disciples.

Is that what all four accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—tell you? Yes. It fits harmoniously together and it is the only answer that fits, in spite of what all of the conflicting scholars will try and tell you. It fits that Matthew, Mark and Luke all said He was keeping the Passover service. Yes, He was. It fits with what John said, that Christ was eating His supper before the Passover—not the proper Passover, but the Passover of the Jews. Or, it could be that the term "Passover" in John refers to the Days of Unleavened Bread. It could be either way, because we have proved that you cannot use the term "Passover" or "Unleavened Bread" to try and distinguish exactly what it is referring to.

However, the account in John fits that it was the night before, that there was a preparation day leading to a Holy Day, and that Christ was eating the Passover with His disciples on the beginning of the 14th. There is your proof, brethren, right there. It tells you absolutely that Christ was keeping a Passover and that it was before the beginning of the Holy Day. The 14th was the preparation for the Holy Day. He was in the tomb three days and three nights. He was resurrected Saturday night at sundown, and He was already gone from the tomb before the first human beings saw the empty tomb on Sunday morning. That is how it all fits together.

Notice one other historical resource: the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 14, page 56, written by Schaff and Wace. To set the stage for it, this work is speaking of the Quartodeciman controversy which was going on years later. It was this same dispute over the 14th versus the 15th and what was appropriate. This was when the church had gone apostate, at the time of the first Bishops of Rome and different individuals who were pushing to establish Easter. They were trying to stamp out all observance of the 14th. It was a great movement to amalgamate all of the "Christian churches" (they were still called Christian at the time) to keep the same date for Passover, or for Easter really. That is what was going on at this time, and here is what it says:

"At the same time also was generally established, the opinion so little entertained by the ancient authorities of the Church . . ." Meaning, whatever was being promulgated as the popular thought of the day, was something opposed to what had been believed by the ancient authorities of the church. ". . . —one might even say, so strongly in contradiction to their teaching . . ." What was the contradictory teaching from what the ancients believed? ". . . —that Christ partook of the passover on the 14th Nisan, that he died on the 15th . . ." That is what they were trying to get people to believe.

They were willing to admit that Christ ate it on the 14th, but they believed He died on the 15th—however they figured that one. This is what they wrote: ". . . —that Christ partook of the passover on the 14th Nisan, that he died on the 15th (not on the 14th, as the ancients considered) . . ." What was this new philosophy in opposition to? That which was ascribed to the ancients in the church, who taught that Christ died on the 14th. If Christ died on the 14th, when did He keep the Passover? On the 14th as well—the beginning of the 14th. Then, He died toward the end of the 14th.

Do we base our confidence on historical writings? No. However, you see, there are enough nuggets of interesting support, even for the truth, that it is worth using it sometimes. Our confidence is not in that at all. We believe what we believe because that is what we heard from the servant who opened up the knowledge of these things from the Bible to all of us in this last decade.

There is no question, brethren, that we heard the truth. There is nobody else that understood and was able to put these pieces together. While the rest of these religions and scholars are left to fight over who is right, we can laugh at all of it and say, "There is no contradiction; they all fit perfectly together and show a tapestry of unity." It is all the inspired word of God, and it all meshes together.

The only thing you have to do in order to see it, is give up your preconceived ideas—that Christ was keeping a Passover on the 15th, or that He wasn't in the grave for three days and three nights, that He was crucified on a Friday, or all of the other false assumptions that are in all of these writings. That is the thing that amazes me when I read these historical writings and all of these conjuring ideas; they have certain facts or certain logic strings. They are trying to be very logical; the problem is, their logic is embedded upon a presumption they start with in their minds. This is the foundational truth, and they build everything upon that. Any logical string built upon an error, ends in error.

Only if you get rid of all the error and start clean, from scratch, and are willing to accept what the Bible tells you, are you going to find it. The problem is, human beings can't do it. God intentionally hid it so they can't. It makes it that much more spectacular and awe-inspiring to recognize that a man like Herbert Armstrong, who was not a Bible scholar at all, came to understand these things and taught them to us. It is amazing.

What about what Israel did? What night was the Passover that ancient Israel kept? Were they keeping the Passover on the beginning of the 14th or were they

keeping it at the beginning of the 15th? Well, if we have demonstrated to your satisfaction that Christ was keeping the Passover and that He was keeping it on the beginning of the 14th, what do you think Israel was doing? Somehow I suspect they were doing the same thing.

Leviticus 23:4–6; here is the command:

These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.

When is the Passover? Is it the 15th or is it the 14th? "In the fourteenth day"—could that be any more clear?

In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

Passover is on the 14th; the feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th and lasts for seven days. Scholars defending the Jewish tradition, which many of them do, attempt to say that the Passover was killed on the afternoon of the 14th, but then eaten after the sun went down on the beginning of the 15th. How do they come to this conclusion, that the Passover is to be killed on the 14th, but then eaten on the 15th? Where does it come from?

Well, I am going to tell you, brethren, before we get into it, that if you want to believe, or have an inclination to believe that the Passover was killed by the Israelites on the 14th and eaten on the 15th, then there are three things you are going to have to believe.

I will tell you, before we get to them, what they are: 1) You are going to have to believe that "sunset" means noon. Are you willing to do that? When the Bible says "sunset," you are going to have to believe it means noontime. 2) You are going to have to believe that when the Bible says "morning," it really means night. 3) When the Bible says "night," you are going to have to believe it means morning.

Now, if that is not too much of a stretch for you, then you are perfectly configured to accept the killing of the Passover on the afternoon of the 14th and the

eating of it on the beginning of the 15th. Those are the only three things you have to believe. If you have a problem with that, then you are going to have no other alternative than to believe, even technically, that the Passover was ordained to be on the beginning of the 14th and that it was the next night that Israel left Egypt in haste. Let's see it.

Exodus 12:1–13:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month [Here is what they are supposed to do with this sacrificial lamb.]: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

When are they going to kill it? They are going to kill it in the evening, and it is an evening somehow associated with the 14th. You keep it up until the 14th, and then the congregation is to kill it in the evening. That term "in the evening" is the basis for more wrangling and bitter fighting than you could ever imagine. We will get to that in a moment.

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night . . .

Whatever this evening is, they are supposed to kill it in the evening and they are supposed to eat it that night.

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the

morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. [Another important point.] And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the [Eternal's] passover. [That is what the command is, and it is called the "Passover."] For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the [Eternal]. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

This command, if Israel followed and kept it as God ordained, was going to save their lives. The Egyptians were going to be smitten and the Israelites were going to be saved. It had to do with taking the sacrificial lamb and following the instructions properly. Well, how do we know when this evening was? Was this evening the beginning of the 14th or the end of the 14th?

You don't have to turn to it, but you know what scriptures the church always taught us in order to know how God defines a day. Genesis 1:5 is one of them. It says, ". . . the evening and the morning were the first day." There are scholars who even want to debate over this, believe it or not. I read the writings of one that was written about 1946 and published in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. He wants to make the case that the commands of God were never to count a day from sunset to sunset. It was always supposed to be from dawn to dawn. He had a very convoluted explanation, even of Genesis 1. He claimed that when it says the evening and the morning were the first day, it really did not mean the day started at nighttime and was fulfilled in a twenty-four hour period, ending in the daylight. If there is anything you want to believe, I guarantee you that somebody has written a paper on it. It has nothing to do with truth. No, the evening and the morning as the first day tells us.

Let's look at Leviticus 23:32 as well. This is the strongest evidence we have always used to define how God counts time, as far as a day is concerned. It is the command to keep the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 23:32:

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

What does that tell you? The term here, "at even"—the word "even" is the Hebrew word *ereb* or *erev*, depending on the anglicized rendering—means "evening, night or sunset." Now, if you kept your finger back in Exodus 12:6, we want to talk about these two renderings of the word "even." In Exodus 12:6, when the instructions said to "keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening," it is a variation of that same word *ereb*, there. It has to do with something called "evening."

Are we talking about sunset? Was this an instruction to tell the Israelites that they were to kill their lambs when the sun went down, or is it talking about something else? What do the Jews and others tell you that this term means? There is a distinction between the use of the word *ereb* or *erev* in Leviticus 23 and Exodus 12.

In Leviticus 23, the preposition that goes with *ereb* is *ba*. It means literally "at sundown." That is what *ba ereb* means—"at sundown." Doesn't that make sense, because when do we keep the Day of Atonement? Is it not from sundown to sundown, a twenty-four hour period? From sundown to sundown—that is when we keep the Day of Atonement—*ba ereb*.

Unfortunately, *ba ereb* is not what is used in Exodus 12:6. It is a different preposition. There, the phrase for "in the evening" is actually the Hebrew phrase *ben haerevim* or *haerevim*, either one. *Ben haerevim* is translated "between the two evenings." I know you have heard this phrase "between the two evenings," and it is the source of great controversy.

What do the Jews believe this "between the two evenings" means? They believe that it means "noon to sunset." The first evening is when the sun starts to decline in the sky, after it has come to its full position above you at noon. When it starts to make its descent in the afternoon, that is the first evening or when evening begins. The evening is when the sun begins to wane in the day. Then, the second evening is the literal sunset.

Therefore, they believe the instruction here in Exodus was that they were to kill the Passover lambs on the afternoon of the 14th. That is where they get it. It is an interpretation of this Hebrew term *ben haerevim*. The problem is, it doesn't hold water. Not at all. Yes, *ben haerevim* means "between the two evenings," but when we are talking about evening—even with this particular phrase—we are still talking about sunset in a period of dusk and twilight.

Ben haerevim refers specifically to the period between the time that the sun sets and nightfall sets in. It is what we call dusk or twilight—the time after which the sun sets, but before all light is gone—when there is still some light by which you can see. That is the time we call twilight, which is what it means. Can we prove it, or can we at least prove that this is the point in time when God intended for the Passover lambs to be sacrificed? Yes, we can.

Ben haerevim, this term "between the two evenings," is used eleven times in the Old Testament, including Exodus 12:6 which we have just been reading, and Leviticus 23:5 when I began with the command for keeping the Passover. We read, "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the [Eternal's] passover." That is also the term "between the two evenings." What does it mean?

For those who have done all of this wrangling to tell you that it means "noon to sunset," how did that even come about? Well, one explanation is that from the time the Jews "templeized" the keeping of the Passover—which made it so that all of the lambs, rather than being killed by each family, had to be brought to the temple—what obviously would have happened?

If they had interpreted the law correctly, to say that all of those Passover lambs had to be killed at sundown, during twilight or dusk, you have a very narrow window of time. Now, if for purposes of controlling the temple and the people, all of those Passover lambs had to be sacrificed at the temple, you would run into a problem, wouldn't you? A big bottleneck. How many thousands of lambs would have to be sacrificed in a very narrow period of time, with only so many priests who could do the work?

It is a natural progression to see how it might have been possible for the Jews to come up with this interpretation. If, really, what the inspired scriptures said was that you killed the lambs between noon and sundown, you have all of those extra hours to kill all of those lambs in the temple. It makes sense to me. I can see how the mind of man would have easily worked to come up with that scenario, but is that what God commanded? Is that what He expected the Israelites to do?

No, He instructed Israel to kill their own lambs, and He told them to kill them in the evening. Did that mean sunset or did it mean at noon or early afternoon? Here is the one scripture they do not like to address—Deuteronomy 16:6. This is another command for keeping the Passover, and let's see what it says:

"But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even . . ." Between the two evenings, right? Nope, not a bit. This is not the term *ben haerevim* at all. It is the term that we found in Leviticus 23:32, defining how to keep the Day of Atonement. It is the Hebrew preposition and noun *ba ereb*, not *ben haerevim*. Here, in Deuteronomy 16:6, it is *ba ereb*, which means literally at sunset.

Now, in case anyone still has a question, it is as if God provided the answer in the inspired word—in case someone still wasn't clear what He wanted. Look at the very next phrase:

But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even [*ba ereb*, at sunset], at the going down of the sun . . .

". . . at the going down of the sun"—what does that mean? Does that mean noon? Does that mean 3:00 in the afternoon? Or, are we talking about what it says, "the going down of the sun"? You have *ba ereb*, meaning "sunset," and a further certification in the next phrase, "the going down of the sun." That phrase, "the going down of the sun," is the Hebrew expression *bo hashamesh*, meaning "when the sun goes down."

When do you sacrifice the Passover lamb? When the sun goes down, at sunset. That is what *ba ereb*, *bo hashamesh* means. That is still not enough for the scholars. I read a paper that we got off the Internet, in which they interpret all around this very scripture and still try to claim that this is saying "between noon and sunset." It is the most convoluted explanation I have ever seen—amazing.

People get in their minds what they believe, and it is the only thing they are going to believe. Truth and common sense will not prevail; such is the human mind. You, brethren, however, do not need to be confused, because Deuteronomy 16:6 takes away the doubt, even technically.

So, if it is sundown—if sunset means sunset and not noon—then what was God's command to the children of Israel? If the Passover lambs were to be killed at sunset, when the sun went down, and between the two evenings, then those have to mean the same thing because both were commands in Exodus and Deuteronomy. One used "between the two evenings" and one used "at sunset," *ba ereb*. They obviously mean the same thing because it is one command for the killing of the

Passover lambs. Both of them mean the same thing when it comes to keeping the Passover. It means the sun goes down, it is the 14th, you kill the lamb and then you eat it at night.

When is the only night portion of the 14th? The beginning of the 14th. If you wait until the afternoon of the 14th when the sun goes down, you are not on the 14th anymore; you are on to the 15th. If it is to be killed after sunset, between the two evenings, eaten at night and the Passover is on the 14th, then it is the beginning of the 14th. The evening and the morning were the first day. You keep your Sabbath from even to even. Passover day is not a Sabbath, but the service was commanded to be sometime at night.

Exodus 12:21-23, 28-31, 33-36, 41-42:

Moses calls together the elders of the church and gives the command. Here, we will see how it is applied:

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the [Eternal] will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the [Eternal] will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. (Verse 28) And the children of Israel went away, and did as the [Eternal] had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. And it came to pass, that at midnight the [Eternal] smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the [Eternal], as ye have said.

What do we see just happened, recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? What occurred? They were commanded to kill a lamb at sunset, to take the

blood, strike it on the doorposts of their homes, and to stay inside and not come out until morning. Is it possible, if they fulfilled that command, that they left by night on the same night they were keeping the Passover? How could they be leaving Egypt at night and still be in their homes, obeying God's command not to come out until the morning?

Well, what do the so-called scholars try to convince you to believe? This is where the "morning means night" and "night means morning" comes in. They would have you believe that once the death angel passed over at midnight, they were free to come out of their homes, get together all of their possessions, get together in their armies and exit before the sun came up. That is what they believe.

They believe that the Passover service occurred at the end of the 14th; it was the night, as the 15th began, when they were eating their Passover meal. The death angel came over at midnight on the 15th (the feast day, as we know it), and before the sun came up, this mass of millions of people were assembled together and exited Rameses, as God said they did on the 15th. We will see that in a minute. Is that even possible?

First, they have to get past the command to stay in their homes until morning. What do they say? "Well, that means until morning, like the same way we would say, '1 AM, 2 AM or 3 AM.' It is still dark, but it is considered morning." That is how they try to explain it. "It doesn't mean daybreak or when the sun starts to come up; it just means morning, as in when it is still dark, but it is not midnight. Once the death angel passed over, then there was no more danger; they were free to come out, to get ready and to exit the land of Egypt." Does that make sense to you?

Again, if you are willing to believe that morning means night and night means morning, then I guess you can buy that, but not me.

Verse 33:

And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the [Eternal] gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

We are talking about several million people—a massive army of people—living in the land of Goshen, and they were instructed to be in their homes until morning. If you believe what we were taught in the Church, we know that what happened was, on Passover night, the beginning of the 14th, they kept the Passover. They stayed in their homes until the sun came up. Remember that previous command we saw in the early part about anything left over? What are all the things on the list that the Israelites had to do before they were ready to leave the land of Egypt?

When the sun came up, what did they have to do? They had to burn any remaining lamb that was left. Ok, that was going to take a little time. They had to spoil the Egyptians. How long do you think it took for this spoiling of the Egyptians, which is where the Israelites got all of the wealth they took with them? They did not leave Egypt as a vagabond nation. God lavished upon them the wealth of Egypt in gold, silver, jewels and all of these things. So, how long did it take for them to acquire all of these things from their neighbors in Egypt?

They had to make their unleavened bread. They had to get all of their substance together and get it ready to travel. They had to assemble themselves as this huge army. It wasn't just a chaotic mess, which is how it is portrayed in the movie, Cecil B. DeMilles' *The Ten Commandments*, where you see this mass of chaotic people. The first discrepancy is that they are going out in daylight, which is incorrect, because—as we will read next—they left at night.

They didn't leave in the daylight and it wasn't this mass of disorganized people. No, you can bet that they were organized according to their tribes. Millions of people—how long would it take to organize that kind of venture, to get ready to exit? As we believe and know is true, they had from the morning of the 14th until the night, and they left by night. You are talking about fitting all of that activity in a seven or eight-hour period, which would be a phenomenal feat, let alone the idea that the death angel comes through at midnight. How long would it have taken everyone in Egypt to realize that they had their first born killed, and then for Pharaoh to call Moses?

Now he has to send a messenger all the way to Goshen to tell them to get out. Moses and Aaron have to pass the message on to all of these millions of people in the land. They have to get all of their things together, and, if these scholars are right, this certainly couldn't have happened before 1 AM. Now, how long do you have between, let's say, 1 AM and dawn? Let's say dawn is at 5 AM. You have a four-hour period.

In those four hours, they spoiled the Egyptians, got all of their possessions together, burned the remaining part of the Passover lamb, assembled themselves and exited Rameses—millions of people in less than four hours. They would have had to do all of that before the sun was coming up so it would, technically, still be at night, but the sun was really coming up as they were leaving the land. Now, is that what the Bible says the children of Israel did? Hardly.

Verse 41:

And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the [Eternal] went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the [Eternal] for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Can that be the same night they kept the Passover? No way. It was the following night, after they kept the Passover and stayed in their homes, and followed the command of God not to come out until morning. Then, they were feverishly working, I guarantee you, all of that day to assemble themselves, spoil the Egyptians, burn that Passover lamb, make their unleavened bread, prepare and organize themselves. They walked out after the sun went down at the beginning of that which became the feast day, the 15th of the month, which we call the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Notice Deuteronomy 16:1:

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the [Eternal] thy God: for in the month of Abib the [Eternal] thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

He brought them out by night. They left when it was nighttime—not in the early morning, not in the wee hours before the sun was coming up. They left at night.

If you believe that night means night, morning means morning, and sunset means sunset, then you believe the Israelites kept the Passover on the beginning of the 14th. They prepared themselves and exited Egypt on the 15th, after the sun went down, on the beginning of the feast day. That is what you will believe.

If, for no other reason, you believe that is exactly what we proved Jesus Christ kept, then you know that is exactly what Israel did, because who was it that gave the Israelites the very command? Who was that Eternal God? It was the *Yhvh*, the One who became Christ Himself, and you can bet absolutely that Christ was keeping His own command. He was setting the example; He did keep the Passover and He kept it on the beginning of the 14th. The feast—the Night to be Much Observed—begins on the beginning of the 15th.

Those who say that those two feasts are combined together confuse the entire picture of God. They fail to recognize the significance of the Passover, which represented saving God's people from death. It is an incredibly solemn, sobering night. The night Israel left Egypt was a night of great joy and festivity. The Night to be Much Observed for what? For passing over them and saving them from death? No, the night following the Passover is the Night to be Much Observed for bringing them out of Egypt, for giving them their freedom, for liberating them from the constraints of sin, represented by Egypt.

These are two different feasts with different purposes. God would not, in His wisdom, have merged and overlapped them so they would be confused. Those who argue that the Passover is kept on the beginning of the 15th do not understand the significance of the relationship between Jesus Christ saving us from death through His sacrifice and the requirements, beginning with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, of coming out of sin and being liberated from Egypt. They confuse the two.

Like I said to begin with, I understand it coming from those who were never called, who are deceived. There is no way they will ever understand the Bible until God opens their minds. The ones who sadden me are the ones who used to believe the truth, but now have begun to take up these idiotic, technical postulations to refute what they once knew and understood to be the truth.

Numbers 33:3:

This is supposed to be a scripture that gives us a problem with what we believe. It is supposed to be one of those scriptures they point to which refutes what I have just explained to you. Does it?

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

They say, "See, the Israelites kept the Passover service; then, on the very next morning, they left Egypt." Is that what this says? Not at all.

. . . they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover . . .

What does that term "morrow" mean? Does it mean "the morning?" That term has nothing to do with morning time. It simply and literally means "the next day." It is telling you the Israelites left on the 15th, the next day after the Passover, which is exactly what it was.

Leviticus 23 tells us that the Passover is on the 14th. And guess what? The 15th, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is the next day. It doesn't contradict whatsoever. Israel could not go out at night during the Passover, but they did leave Egypt by night. One night, they had to stay in their homes and were protected from death. The next night, they came out with great exuberance and joy.

Ezra 6:19:

"And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month." Can it be any more clear? What did they do during Ezra's time? This was a reformation, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when they came back out of captivity and began to keep the holy laws of God once again; and what were they doing?

"And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month." It doesn't say they killed the Passover on the afternoon of the 14th and then ate it after sundown on the 15th. It doesn't say they divided it between two different days of God's calendar. That is ludicrous.

What other Holy Day does God ever imply you are supposed to bridge between two different days? It just isn't true. You know what they are really saying—those who believe the Passover lamb was killed on the afternoon of the 14th and then eaten on the 15th?

Well, convert that into the symbols Christ gave for the Passover for Christians—the wine representing the blood of Christ, the spilling of the blood of the lamb; and the bread representing the broken body for healing. What are they really

saying? If they believe the lamb was killed and spilled its blood on the afternoon of the 14th, but then they ate the body after the sun went down on the 15th, what are they saying?

If they are doing their Passover service according to that, I guess they should be drinking the wine before the sun goes down and then eating the bread after the sun goes down. If that sounds ludicrous, so does the entire argument.

No, God's festivals, His holy ordinances which He has commanded, are all on the same day, whichever day they are commanded. The killing of the Passover was on the same day as was the Passover service—the eating of that Passover. ". . . the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month."

Next time, brethren, we will go into a number of the other controversies in the New Testament and try to finish fundamental number eleven.