

Fundamentals of Belief
#11D: The Jews' Passover

Edited Sermon Transcript
Jon W. Brisby; 12-30-2000

This afternoon, brethren, I hope to finish Fundamental of Belief number eleven. This is now the fourth sermon on this topic, and I have one more section of material that I thought was very important to include. Normally, I wouldn't have spent nearly this much time on the technicalities of Passover. I am trying to keep this series as an overview and to hit only the high points—not necessarily going into great detail in an exhaustive examination on every point.

However, I think there is enough very critical information that is very important for all of us to understand, especially because Passover has been the point of attack for so many—not just from the unlearned, the so-called scholars who are deceived in this world, but also from those within the Church who used to keep the Passover correctly. They received that revelation and should know better.

When there are so many things being said and written to refute what we were first taught concerning Passover, I have determined that it is important to go through enough of these technical explanations to let you know that we do have a strong foundation for what we are doing.

Yes, we do everything and keep what we are keeping because of our belief in revelation, but it is also nice to know that the technical side of those arguments does support the very revelation we received from Mr. Armstrong. So, let me read, once again, fundamental number eleven:

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.

This is the third sermon on this topic of Passover and the Lord's Supper, as it is called by the world, as continuation of Passover; and specifically, the fact that it is ". . . observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib."

Now, in the last two sermons, we have gone through and talked about the significance of Passover as it falls within God's overall plan, pictured by the Holy Days. We have discussed the significance of the original Passover and the significance of the fulfillment of those emblems as Christ being that Savior, our Passover. We talked about the new emblems that He instituted as a part of the Passover, including the bread, the wine and the foot washing, which all Christians are required to keep in this age.

Last time, we also went through the technicalities to substantiate the fact that the Passover is to be kept on the beginning of the 14th of the first month of God's calendar, not the 15th as the Jews keep it. Many of our former brethren in groups have decided that the Jews were right about all things; and therefore, we have to look to them as our example on how to keep the Holy Days.

The Jews really don't even keep the Passover anymore. They have what they call a Seder service that they keep on the beginning of the 15th, on the Night to Be Much Observed, but they really don't keep a Passover whatsoever.

We have a number of these groups and individuals who believe that the Passover is kept appropriately on the beginning of the 15th. Well, in the last sermon, we went through a lot of technicalities, not only from the New Testament, but also from the Old Testament commands for keeping Passover, to prove exactly what God required from the Israelites keeping that first Passover.

It was the beginning of the 14th when the death angel passed over, not the beginning of the 15th. Also, more importantly, we went through the example of Jesus Christ and I showed you the substantiation from the New Testament, and how to reconcile all of those supposedly contradictory scriptures from the first three gospels with that from John's account, to show that Christ did keep the Passover.

It wasn't a separate, special meal. It was the Passover, and it was also on the beginning of the 14th. I substantiated that by explaining the whole chain of events in the time line that God provides us in understanding the timing of the resurrection on Saturday night. Counting back three days and three nights in the grave, knowing that Christ was crucified on the day after He kept His Passover with the disciples, leads you to no other conclusion than that He was keeping it one full night prior to the beginning of the Feast day. The Passover is the beginning of the 14th, followed by the beginning of the first day of Unleavened Bread, the High Day that begins on the following night.

We went through those technicalities. I had hoped originally to push all of those technicalities into one single sermon, but I couldn't do it. I have just enough technical pieces that I think are important, that I want to pull those together now for one more sermon and close out this topic.

We have shown that Passover is to be taken on the beginning of the 14th, but the Jews today keep it—or their Seder service—on the beginning of the 15th. So, the question we want to mainly focus on today is, have the Jews always kept Passover on the beginning of the 15th, which is what some people will want to tell you.

They want to go back and argue from the Old Testament that Israel, as we addressed some of those issues last time, actually kept their Passover on the beginning of the 15th. They killed it at the end of the 14th, but then the sun went down and they ate it at the beginning of the 15th. After midnight, when all of the firstborn were killed in Egypt, they walked out in this very short window of time while it was still dark on the morning of the 15th. That is what some would have you to believe.

It is those who want to tell you that the Israelites started off by keeping Passover on the beginning of the 15th. They have done it all of these years, and that is why you find the Jews today, by this tradition in their keeping of the law as commanded in the Bible, still keeping Passover or attributing Passover to the beginning of the 15th. Is that true?

Is there historical evidence of a change? That is the critical question. Historically, is there any evidence of a change that occurred? If there was a change, if the Jews corrupted Passover and began to keep it a day late, then there should be some indication that a change took place. Is there that kind of evidence, and if so, when did that change occur? Those are the issues we want to address today.

Let me start by quoting from about four or five historical references, Bible commentaries and different sources, which demonstrate that there are a number of scholars who absolutely accept the premise that the Jews changed Passover from the 14th to the 15th at some time in history.

First, let's notice *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. Adam Clarke says specifically about Exodus 12:15, which is where the Passover was commanded: "Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread - this has been considered as a distinct ordinance, and not essentially connected with the passover."

So, Adam Clarke certainly recognized that, originally, the Days of Unleavened Bread were a distinct ordinance, separate from Passover. "The passover was to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month; the feast of unleavened bread began on the fifteenth and lasted seven days, the first and last of which were holy convocations." Adam Clarke seems to recognize in his commentary that there was definitely a distinction between Passover and Unleavened Bread, and that they were not always together.

Also, from Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, Chapter 10, here is his account of the Exodus. Certain pieces of this are paraphrased for simplicity, but here is how Josephus is quoted: "In the month . . . which is by us called Nisan . . . on the fourteenth day of the lunar month . . . the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which . . . we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the *Passover* . . . The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days . . ."

Even Josephus seems to recognize and make a distinction between the Passover on the 14th and the Days of Unleavened Bread—the seven days that begin on the 15th. Josephus repeats the account of the Exodus in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, and he says: ". . . but when the fourteenth day was come . . ." Now, when does the 14th day come? Doesn't it come at sundown? The way God counts time, it begins when the sun goes down. Then, the 14th day, or any day, commences.

". . . but when the fourteenth day was come, and all were ready to depart they offered the sacrifice . . . Whence it is that we do still offer this sacrifice in like manner to this day, and call this festival *Pascha* which signifies the *feast of the passover*; because on that day God passed us over, and sent the plague upon the Egyptians; for the destruction of the first-born came upon the Egyptians that night . . ."

What night was that? What is the only night that falls on the 14th day of the month? If the day begins at sundown and ends with the following sundown, what is the only night portion that falls on a day, as the Jews reckon it? It is the beginning of the day—the beginning of the 14th.

Many can argue, "Well, that is not what Josephus meant, you see, because he was just saying that the 14th is when they killed the lambs, but they didn't eat it until after sundown." So, I will allow you, that there is the potential, in trying to use any of these technical, historical sources as dogmatic proof. That is not what we are attempting to do. What I am attempting to do, is to show you that there are, at least so-called or so-considered, credible historical and technical Biblical sources that do admit and do indicate that there was originally a distinction between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread—unlike those who want to write their articles and say that the Bible clearly shows this or clearly shows that, that the Passover has always been on the 15th and never a day earlier. No, it is not clear whatsoever. In fact, anyone who is honest with it recognizes that there is a distinction between those two ordinances.

Notice a quote from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, in an article entitled *Passover*. This is what they have to say: "Leviticus 23, however, seems to distinguish between Passover, which is set for the fourteenth day of the month, and . . . (the Festival of Unleavened Bread . . .), appointed for the fifteenth day. . . . Comparison of the successive strata of the Pentateuchal laws bearing on the festival makes it plain that the institution, as developed, is really of a composite character. Two festivals, originally distinct, have become merged . . ."

This is what *The Jewish Encyclopedia* says. They are the ones who keep the Passover on the beginning of the 15th. They recognize that the Pentateuchal law does not support it whatsoever. "Two festivals, originally distinct, have become merged . . ."

Notice also, Hayyim Schauss, in his book entitled *The Jewish Festivals*, says: "We cannot be certain how long a time passed before the Jews accepted these reforms in practice . . ." He was referring to Josiah's reforms of having the Passover "templeized," rather than in the homes. ". . . and ceased to offer the *Pesach* sacrifice in their own homes; nor can we be certain how long it took for *Pesach* [the Passover] and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to become one festival."

So here is the Jewish historian, who recognizes that they were not always together. They were separate, they were distinct and they were not merged together

until later. In a footnote from this same book on page 293, Schauss says: "That *Pesach* and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were originally two distinct festivals, distinct in name as well as in character, is evident from the Pentateuchal sources. *Pesach* and *Chag HaMatzot* [meaning Unleavened Bread] were never amalgamated among the Samaritans, and remained two distinct holy days."

There is the problem with the Quartodeciman controversy and the Passover controversy, which came up much later in the second and third centuries after Christ. What they are saying is, there were these remnants of those they called Karaites and Samaritans, who were keeping the Passover on the beginning of the 14th.

So for all of those who want to claim, "Well, that is not how the Jews originally did it. They just changed to the 14th at some point down in history," this Jewish author seems to accept the idea that those called the Samaritans did not change to the 14th at some later date in history. They were the ones who continued to keep it, uncorrupted, the way it was first kept by the Israelites. And it was the Jews who actually changed at some time in history to keeping and merging their Passover in with the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th.

One more technical source to read to you—*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, in an article entitled *Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread*: "In contemporary Judaism, the word *Pesach*, or Passover, is used to refer to the whole range of observances related to this season."

If you will remember last time, when I went through the difficulties in the New Testament because of the terms that are used, I showed you that the term Passover can refer specifically to the Passover service itself; it can apply to the Days of Unleavened Bread; or, it can apply to both the Passover and the seven Days of Unleavened Bread. Conversely, unleavened bread can be used to denote specifically the Days of Unleavened Bread or it can refer to the Passover, because unleavened bread is eaten with the Passover meal at the beginning of the 14th. So it was also called a day of unleavened bread.

Because Unleavened Bread and Passover, as terms, can be used interchangeably, we cannot make a definitive conclusion about the use and how certain of the gospel writers used it. That is what this author of *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* is saying.

"In contemporary Judaism, the word *Pesach*, or Passover, is used to refer to the whole range of observances related to this season. This usage has been customary since the 2nd century of the Christian era." Actually, we know it was before that, because it is in the gospels.

"As the employment of the one title, Passover, indicates the Mishna, like Josephus, treated all the observances as part of a single, integrated feast. This has not always been so. Earlier, in the Old Testament and into the New Testament as well, Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were both used with reference to the rites. Now one and now the other covered the entire sequence, but basically, the Passover referred to the even of the first day—that is, the fourteenth day of the month (Leviticus 23:5) on which the sacrifice of the Passover lamb took place; while the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) applied to the seven days following. This indicates a recollection that there were two separable units of feasts in the single complex of observances, but this distinction was not carefully kept. Amid all the uncertainty about the history of Passover and Unleavened Bread in Israel, there is general agreement on two points: the feast contains two originally separate components and both have a pre-Israelite history."

If anyone wants to say that there are not certain scholars or historians that admit, or believe strongly, that there was a distinction between Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread or that "the Bible clearly shows it has always been on the 15th," we can show just as many technical sources as they can.

Basically, brethren, as we have told you before, our confidence is not in the writings of historians, or profane history or of those who want to interpret the Bible. We know that they have not been given the Holy Spirit or the ability to understand those things. However, it is interesting that in this debate and controversy, there are just as many scholars who will tell you that they believe the Passover originally was distinct from the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was on a separate night, the 14th.

We believe there was a change that definitely occurred. We believe that God gave to Israel the requirement to keep the Passover on the beginning of the 14th, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the beginning of the 15th.

Yet, the Jews today have them merged together on the 15th. A change took place somewhere in history. The next question is, when did that change occur? I will tell you from the beginning, I am not going to give you a definitive answer on that today. I am going to give you some strong evidence, theories and hypotheses to give you some indications and to support what Mr. Armstrong said.

If a change took place, which we believe did, when did the Jews change Passover to the 15th? It has been an area of great controversy, as much as this issue of the 14th versus the 15th. For those who believe it changed, when did it change? This is going to have specific significance because you are going to find out why I am focusing on this in today's sermon when we get into it a little bit later.

Before I tip my hand and tell you why I am getting into this topic, I want to start by going through and explaining to you the technicalities that came from Dr. Herman Hoeh in support of what Mr. Armstrong originally said years and years ago.

Mr. Armstrong said definitively that by the time of Christ, the Jews had corrupted Passover and were keeping it a day later than Christ. That is what Mr. Armstrong said. Why did he say that? He read John 18:28 very literally, when it said that the Jews would not enter the Praetorium at the time of Christ's trial before Pilate because of a fear of being defiled, that they might eat the Passover.

Mr. Armstrong took that very literally and said, that means the Jews were planning to keep their Passover in the coming evening, when Christ had already kept His the night before. That is what Mr. Armstrong said and that is exactly the way he interpreted it.

OK, so then years later, Dr. Herman Hoeh wrote an article entitled "The True Reason Why the Jews Rejected Christ" which was published in the June 1961 *Good News*. I am going to go through and give you a synopsis of what that technical explanation was in order to support the conclusion that Mr. Armstrong made years before.

Dr. Hoeh did his research and came up with an explanation that, very possibly, is the truth. I am going to tell you that there are things I cannot prove, so I am going to call it "Dr. Hoeh's theory." I can tell you that everyone else who has an opinion about it and writes a theory, is just that. There is so much lack of information and credible, historical evidence during that whole period of time, that there is no one who can tell you technically and definitively or prove historically exactly what happened and when it happened.

What I can tell you, from all the reading I have done, is that Dr. Hoeh seems to be at least as credible or more credible than anybody else who has written on it. Let's go back to the Bible, to the latest time we can know exactly that the Israelites were keeping the Passover correctly. It is found in Ezra 6:19–22:

"And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month." Here, you have it. Those scholars who want to argue, say, "Well, that just means they killed it on the 14th, but they actually ate it on the 15th." That is not what it says. The Passover and everything in it required the killing of the lambs and the eating of the lambs. It was a single ordinance, and it was kept on the same day.

Those who want to argue that half of it was done on one day and half on the other day, don't understand anything about the way God commanded His Holy Days. No, it was all on the 14th, and it says here in Ezra 6:19: "And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month."

Now remember, after the Israelites went into captivity, they were put into bondage, overrun by the Babylonians. It was after the Persian Empire became stronger and rooted out the Babylonians that Palestine came under the dominion of Persia. It was under the Persians that the Israelites had favor. If you will remember the story, Ezra was permitted to take a remnant of the Israelites out of Babylon back to Palestine and resettle in the Holy Land, and even begin to build the temple once again.

Later on, you find that Nehemiah was actually given authorization as a governor by the Persian government. Ezra was a religious leader, but Nehemiah was the one who actually had the authority of the Persian Empire as a governor of the region. He was a faithful Israelite. He came and followed Ezra, and had the authority actually to establish the Israelites again in the land, with the authority of the Persian government.

They established and rebuilt the temple, and they did all of the work to reestablish a faithful people, God's people, back into the worship of God with all the sacrifices in the temple once again. During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, it was a huge reformation after the captivity. So this is the time we are talking about.

And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the

filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the [Eternal] God of Israel, did eat, And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy . . .

Here is a great reformation. The people of God, those who have learned their lessons from all of those years in captivity, are now coming back to God. They had this great Passover service in rededicating themselves to God. Now, what happened after that?

Well, that lasted until the Israelites began to corrupt themselves again. The Persian Empire was finally taken over by Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great defeated the Persians in 333 B.C. Remember, Alexander the Great was a Greek; this is the rise of the Grecian Empire.

From the time the Greeks began to dominate the known world and successfully defeat the Persians, then all of the Persian Empire, including Palestine and the Israelites, came under Greek influence and domination. You also realize from history that Alexander the Great died as a very young man; and after his death, his kingdom was divided into four parts, each given to one of his four generals—all Greeks.

So, even though you aren't dealing with a united empire, as it was under Alexander, you are still dealing with four specific empires that all share a common orientation—a Hellenistic thought—because they are all Grecian empires.

It so happens that Palestine came under domination of one of those four empires that was seated in Egypt. From 301 B.C. to 198 B.C., just over a one-hundred-year period, Palestine and all of the Israelites in Jerusalem came under Egyptian rule and influence. Why is this important?

This is a big part of the hypothesis that Dr. Hoeh projected, concerning the time the Israelites finally corrupted the Passover. During this time, the entire world was being saturated religiously, educationally and in every other way, with Hellenistic thought. The Egyptians were totally saturated with their own brand of Hellenism.

Now, every different empire, including the Syrians, the Egyptians and the others, all had a different brand, but it was all the same ideology and thought, all originating with Greece. Palestine, being under the Egyptians, now enters into this over one-hundred-year reign of Egypt, and it is the time called "chaos," religiously, for the Jews.

This is a period of time where there is nothing written to put our hands on to see what happened. It is like the Israelites, in this captivity, fell into this black hole; and for this 100–150-year period, you don't know what happened or how it happened. But on the other end, when you come out, you have Judaism, which is the forerunner of that which you have today in Jewish belief.

Judaism is not a belief in the laws of God the way He gave them to Israel whatsoever. Judaism has a mixture of respect for the Pentateuch, for those original books of the Old Testament, mixed in with all of this Jewish mysticism that originated right out of Greece and Babylon. All of these things were somehow infiltrated and absorbed within the Jewish community during this 150-year domination of the Egyptians.

However it happened and whatever occurred in the midst of all of this dark period, you have on the other end the immergence of the Pharisees as a revolutionary, religious sect of the Jews, along with the Sadducees. The Sadducees, in all appearances, were the continuation of the original elders established by Ezra and Nehemiah to govern the judges and the great counsel—which became the Great Sanhedrin—to judge the people.

So that came through this dark period of 150 years, but then you have the Pharisees and all of this oral law. All of this oral tradition was put along with the written word of God and, in fact, took precedence over the written word. Now it wasn't just, "We believe in the Holy Scriptures and that is what we are going to believe and do." No, now they have all of this unwritten law, these oral traditions, that somehow got into the mix and became just as important, or more important, to the Pharisees than that which was written.

How did all of their oral traditions concerning their special washings, their rituals, their do's and don'ts and all of these things, come in? We get one hint from Herodotus, Book 2, from pages 3–41. He says, from his visits to Egypt in the fifth century, that their ceremonial washings of pots and pans, religiously bathing themselves twice each day and shunning foreigners were zealous practices.

Imagine that. Doesn't that sound a lot like Phariseeism? Washing of pots and pans, religious bathing and shunning foreigners, were all, Herodotus says, part of Egyptian practice, even back in the early centuries. Here we find, after more than one hundred years of Egyptian domination in a Hellenistic period in which they were

saturated with this Greek thought, out on the other end pops up the beginning of modern-day Judaism and the Pharisees with all of these ritual do's and don'ts in this oral law.

You will also notice that it was very prominent with the Greeks to have this orientation of a master and a student and these master-student relationships for learning and passing on great knowledge. Just like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. So you find in modern-day Judaism this same concept. All of these things can be traced back to the Hellenistic influence. They were not at all a part of the original laws, commands and statutes that God gave to the Israelites.

These were all nothing more than the paganization of God's laws. No, they didn't repudiate and totally abandon God's law. What they did was infiltrate it with all of their own pagan beliefs that came right out of Greek thought. Why is this important in trying to determine the timing of the corruption of Passover in Dr. Hoeh's theory?

During this 100-year period, from 301–198 B.C., under Egyptian domination in this Hellenistic world, the Jews were in religious chaos. How did the Egyptians reckon their time? Remember, God reckons time from sunset to sunset. How do the Egyptians reckon time? From sunrise to sunrise. That, you can prove historically.

So what Dr. Hoeh said was that during this time of religious anarchy under Egyptian, Hellenistic domination, the Jews adopted the Egyptian reckoning of time from sunrise to sunrise. If you do that, what is going to happen to the Passover?

You see, with God's reckoning of a day, the 14th begins at sundown. What happens if you say that the 14th doesn't begin until the following morning when the sun comes up? When is the sundown that is going to fall "on the 14th day?" It is not until the following night. This is how Dr. Hoeh explained it.

He said that from the time the Jews adopted Egyptian time, they automatically moved their Passover forward to the following night. The Passover was supposed to be killed right after sundown, between the two evenings, remember? So if they believe that the day of the 14th began at sunrise, when was the sundown that was going to fall on their 14th? It was going to be on the following night. That is how he explained the way the Jews ultimately moved Passover forward by 24 hours from when it was kept originally.

Sure enough, when you go through all of the historical writings from the time they come out of this "black hole," it seems to indicate they were keeping it at the beginning of the 15th. I am not going to say that dogmatically, because that is greatly debated as well.

At one point, after this 100 or 102-year domination of the Egyptians, all of these kingdoms were fighting among themselves; so the Hellenistic Egyptians were fighting against the Hellenistic Syrians. Ultimately, the Syrians wrestled away Palestine from the Egyptians. Then, for the next 40 plus years, Palestine and all of the Israelites were under Syrian domination. However, they were seriously Hellenized as well, religiously, economically, and educationally in all of their beliefs and practices, just as much as the Egyptians were. It was a little bit of a different brand, but it was very much the same thing.

Then, about 40 years later, finally, you had the Maccabean revolution. The Jews, for the first time, were able to organize this revolt against the Syrian oppressors and temporarily gain their freedom for a number of years before they were overrun by the Romans. During this small period of time of the Maccabees, there were a number of years when the Israelites were independent. What happened during this time?

Dr. Hoeh says that they restored the beginning of the day back to sunset. Once they were free from the domination of the Egyptians and Syrians, the Israelites did restore their day back to sunset to sunset like they had before. Let me read you a quote from this article entitled "The True Reason Why the Jews Rejected Christ" which appeared in the June 1961 *Good News*. Here is what Dr. Hoeh has to say:

"In 1948 I wrote to the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, asking them for information on this very subject. The librarian replied to me that in Christ's time the Jews were divided over the Passover celebrations. The Jews, he wrote, had just recently (just before Christ) restored the beginning of a day to sunset. The Galileans, he admitted, had consequently restored the Passover to the beginning of the 14th as originally celebrated. But the Judaeans decided to continue their practice of killing the lambs one day later, at the beginning of the 15th so as not to change the customs they had followed while under Egyptian rule. If their elders had done so, they reasoned, they would continue to do so!"

Now, here is the problem. I don't have a way to go back and contact whoever this historian was at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio and ask where their sources were taken from or what their technical evidence is to make these

statements. I haven't been able to find it, and I am not sure anybody else has any technical references that seem to pinpoint these conclusions. However, this, again, is a quote from Dr. Hoeh at the time that, supposedly, he received this letter confirming these things that were in his hypothesis. That is why I cannot tell you that they are accurate. I can't tell you that they are not accurate either.

I can tell you that it seems to fit. We start from the premise that Mr. Armstrong was correct. He was the one who received revelation and he said simply that the Jews had corrupted Passover at the time of Christ and that they were keeping it one day later from when Christ and His disciples kept it. This explanation would harmonize with that.

He is indicating that, at the time of Christ, there was not a unified nation of the Jews who were all keeping the Passover at the same time. It would certainly make sense to me that you wouldn't be dealing with a unified nation.

There was another very long piece that was written over several months in *The PLAIN TRUTH* on the subject of Judaism. It is a very fascinating read. The premise is that the Jews were no more unified in the way they handled their religious exercises than the Americans are in this country. How many different sections and factions of Christianity do we have?

Even though you have a large percentage of the country, though fewer and fewer, that still claims to be Christian, yet, they all do things totally differently in their own sects—unlike the idea that most of us have, that the Jews at the time of Christ were this huge, unified body, and they all believed exactly the same way. These papers on Judaism show quite the opposite—that they were just as divided in the way they conducted themselves religiously as we are today in our religions.

That makes a whole lot more sense, when you think about that nation coming out through all of this perversion and influence of the Greeks. So, is it true? I cannot tell you for sure, but it certainly makes sense to me that if there were factions outside of Jerusalem that were less influenced by this Hellenistic thought, when the Israelites became independent again under the revolt of the Maccabees, some of them would have reverted their Passover back to the beginning of the 14th, when the nation reverted the counting of their day from sunset to sunset.

It makes perfect sense to me also that those Pharisees and those who absorbed all of this oral law and tradition of the elders would have resisted changing the

keeping of the Passover and put more emphasis, not on what the Bible said, but on what their oral tradition of the fathers said. That makes much sense, knowing what the orientation of the human mind is, but not enough, again, for us to say that we are going to put all of our weight on it and say that it is absolutely the truth in every case.

What I am here to tell you is, there is no stronger evidence for any of these other theories that try to claim otherwise—that the Jews were united in their keeping of the Passover at the time of Christ, as well as those who want to say that Christ was keeping the Passover exactly at the same time as the Jews.

So, did the Jews keep the Passover at the same time as Christ? Mr. Armstrong said no. He said, emphatically, no, they did not. We were taught that Christ was given over to the Jews, but due to their corruption, they did not sacrifice Him at the right time. That is why this question becomes important. Not that it is necessarily the end-all be-all question that we have to understand as Christians, but you see, it goes to answer a very important question—even one that the young Mr. Raymond Cole asked of Mr. Armstrong way back in the late 40's.

In the article that Mr. Cole wrote more than a year ago, entitled *Church of God, The Eternal, Who are We?*, he goes through and explains the history of his association with Mr. Armstrong and some of those sticking points that he had at the time, which caused him difficulty in accepting the things that Mr. Armstrong was saying came through divine revelation.

One of those sticking points happened to be on this subject of Passover. He had been raised in a Seventh Day family who had kept the Passover on the 15th, the way the Jews do—not on the beginning of the 14th. So that was something he seriously had to get through. It was by accepting that Mr. Armstrong was the servant through whom Jesus Christ revealed His revelation, that he came to accept that teaching. Can it also be substantiated technically? To a greater extent, historically, we believe it can.

Why is it important though? How did it become important in this question? Part of the explanation for this important question came out of that discussion. Here is the question: "How could Christ be the Passover Lamb and yet, at the same time, keep the Passover in the same year?" Do you understand the dilemma there?

If Christ were the Passover Lamb, shouldn't He have been killed exactly at the appropriate time, when the Passover lambs were to be slaughtered? How could He

still be alive, keeping that last Passover with His disciples, and in the very same year, at the very same time, fulfill the requirement for Him to be the Passover Lamb, Himself? If He were truly to be the Passover Lamb, shouldn't He have been crucified at the proper time for slaughtering the lambs, which would have prevented Him, obviously, from sitting down and eating the Passover meal with His disciples?

This is one of the questions that Mr. Cole asked of Mr. Armstrong. He accepted it by revelation because Mr. Armstrong did not have an answer for that. His answer was, "I don't know; I just know that Passover is at the beginning of the 14th and the Feast of Unleavened Bread starts at the beginning of the 15th. We are going to have to accept that as revelation." Well, that is exactly what Mr. Cole did.

It was later on, that a very clear explanation came forward for how Christ could have actually taken the Passover but been the Passover at the same time. You know what that explanation was? Turn to John 13:1:

"Now before the feast of the passover . . ." Notice the next phrase. ". . . when Jesus knew that his hour was come . . ." What hour? The hour, not only when the Passover lambs were supposed to be killed right after sundown, but also because He was the Passover Lamb, it meant that was His hour when He was supposed to be crucified. That is what we are talking about here. Why? Notice the next phrase. ". . . when Jesus knew that his hour was come [What? That He should sit down and eat a meal? No.] that he should depart out of this world unto the Father . . ." He should die.

That is what the significance of that hour was. That was the appointed hour when He should have been killed. The very time when the sun went down, between the two evenings at dusk. That is when He should have been killed by the Jews, but He wasn't. What do we understand? That was the very moment, however, that the Father gave Christ over to be crucified. That was the time when the protection of those holy angels was taken away and Christ was literally turned over, in the Spirit, to those who would murder Him.

Before that moment, the Heavenly Father protected Him, and He was impervious to injury. At this very moment, at the proper time for the killing of the Passover lamb, is when God removed that protection, and He was, literally, turned over to those who were going to slay Him. Now, why is this important?

The explanation that we all received and which made the picture fit so well was that the reason He wasn't killed at the appropriate time, was because of the corruption

of the Jews. Because of the fact that they had already perverted and corrupted Passover, they did not recognize the Messiah; they also then, failed to fulfill their function of killing the Messiah at the appropriate time.

That was the technical explanation. That was how we reconciled, in the Body, the answer to the question, "How could Christ take the Passover and yet, be the Passover?" Had the Jews done what they should have done, they would have crucified Him at that hour. Since they didn't, Christ was able to still be there and partake of that last Passover meal with His disciples and to institute the new emblems that all Christians were to abide by from there on out.

Notice also Luke 22:13–15:

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come [that same hour for keeping the Passover and slaying those lambs], 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:

He desired to do it, but He was not necessarily counting on it because He had been turned over that same hour to the enemy.

Notice also what it says in the *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*, Lesson 34. This was a part of that which we accepted and was a part of the original teaching of the Church. "In the time of Christ the Jews rejected the True Messiah because they were not observing the Passover at the right time. They therefore had lost the knowledge of the FIRST STEP in God's plan—and put their Savior to an ignominious, painful death." That is what we were taught.

So many of those things gelled and made sense with that which we accepted as revelation, by believing that the Jews had already corrupted the Passover by the time of Christ and were keeping it incorrectly a day later. What happens then, if you back up and try to build a case to say that Christ really did keep the Passover at the same time as the Jews? Even if you try to say that the Jews were still keeping Passover correctly on the beginning of the 14th and therefore, Christ was keeping the Passover correctly along with the Jews, on the beginning of the 14th, all of those other pieces fall apart. It doesn't mean that they are that critical. We still accept that Christ kept the Passover at the beginning of the 14th. We accept that by faith and I have already gone through the technical explanation in the last sermon to show you that is exactly

what Jesus Christ did. So we should have no doubt that Christ kept it at the beginning of the 14th. The only question is, "Did the Jews keep it also at the beginning of the 14th with Christ, or had they corrupted it?"

If we believe what Mr. Armstrong originally said, what was said later in the Church, what was written in the Correspondence Course, then we see how well the pieces fit together—that it was because of the Jews' corruption of Passover that they failed to fulfill their responsibility to crucify Him at the appropriate time. That makes it a very nice explanation.

So, why have I given you all of this material? Here is where I tip my hand. Some of you are aware that, beginning about ten years ago, there was a minister who was with us, who began to advance a different hypothesis concerning the Jews' Passover. Do you remember the *hagigah* theory? I remember hearing it a number of times leading up to the spring Holy Days. There is even an article that was published under our name, Church of God, The Eternal, called *Passover and Pentecost, What are the Facts?* It was published in 1990.

Most of that article is just fine except for about six pages toward the end that launch into this incredible theory—what I call the *hagigah* theory. Now, I talked at length with Mr. Cole about this before bringing this up because when I began to delve into the details of this *hagigah* theory, I never truly understood it. Even when I heard the sermon tapes years ago, I never spent a lot of time on it, but I knew that I was confused.

This minister whom we all trusted very much was saying the exact opposite from what Mr. Armstrong had always taught about the Jews' Passover. This *hagigah* theory that he advanced was to prove that the Jews were keeping the Passover on the right day, on the beginning of the 14th, at the time of Christ. At the time, since I had not studied it for a number of years, I remember sitting through those sermons and thinking, *Now wait a minute, isn't that different from what the Church had taught for a long time? I thought we always taught that the Jews had already corrupted Passover. Now, he is making a very strong technical argument for the fact that no, the Jews were keeping it the same as Christ, at the beginning of the 14th.*

So, I listened through it and I heard all of the technicalities, but it is pretty high-brow stuff. I mean, it takes a lot of time to catch all of these things. To be honest with you, I never really focused that much on it. I just kind of let it go by, but when I began working in the Church office and I began to dig into some of these things, I really wanted to understand.

One, because I had serious doubts; and the more I studied it, I had even greater doubts about this theory—especially because it was written under the name of the Church and being put out there as truth. Then, I had serious reservations about whether we should leave it without digging into the depths of it.

Well, I completed that recently. I have spent a lot of time on this subject and I can tell you that it wasn't an easy study. All of the pieces finally fell together. What I am going to give you right now, is a synopsis of the things I learned about the *hagigah* theory. The sad thing about it is, we have, written under our name, a piece of information that is totally incorrect.

Now, it is not the end of the world. We are not talking about a serious doctrinal error. The technicality of whether the Jews kept the Passover at the same time as Christ, or not, is not a huge issue; but it is, in the things that were written, very fallacious. So, we are going to make that right at some point. I can already tell you, more than a year ago, we pulled this article. We are not sending it out. I expect most of you have a copy of this article from 1990 called *Passover and Pentecost, What are the Facts?*, but I can also tell you honestly, we have not been sending this article out for more than a year because of the questions and concerns.

Let me get into and explain to you what the *hagigah* theory is. Then, I am going to cut it to ribbons and show you how easily we can disprove it. I cannot tell you why this minister was intent on proving that the Jews kept Passover still at the very same time as Christ. I am not sure why that was so important to prove. I still do not have an answer to that question, but somehow it was very, very strong in his thinking.

The contested scripture is John 18:28—the one I told you before that Mr. Armstrong accepted at face value.

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

This one, Mr. Armstrong accepted at face value and said, Here you are, the morning after Christ ate His Passover with the disciples. He was arrested that same night, He was put on trial, He was condemned by the Jews, and now the Jews have taken Him to the judgment hall—the Praetorium, the residence of Pilate—and He is standing there. The Jews now, are trying to get Pilate to second their decision to put

Him to death and to order the execution, and this is approximately 7:00 to 8:00 in the morning—after Christ ate His Passover the night before.

The question is, had the Jews eaten their Passover the night before or were they getting ready to eat their Passover the next night? Mr. Armstrong said they were going to eat their Passover the coming night because it says right here, they were worried about being defiled on this morning. They didn't want to enter the Praetorium, ". . . but that they might eat the passover." Now, here is where the technicians get involved.

Passover here, see, can't necessarily mean Passover, and they are right. Remember, I have already shown you that. Passover, as a word, might be referring to the Days of Unleavened Bread or it might be referring to the Passover—we cannot say for sure. So, the technical explanation goes.

Also John 19:13–14; let's look at that one very quickly:

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

Here again, you can't conclude what that "passover" refers to. Maybe it refers to the fact that the Jews' Passover service was upcoming, a day later than Christ's. Or, maybe this term "passover" is referring to the Days of Unleavened Bread. It might technically, so I cannot prove otherwise just from this scripture.

Since "passover" can refer to the Passover service, the entire eight-day Feast, or the first day of Unleavened Bread specifically, we cannot conclude technically from these texts that it was literally the Passover service that the Jews were planning to keep; but that is exactly what Mr. Armstrong said it was.

Alright, so how does the *hagigah* theory go? The *hagigah* theory is intended to say that the Jews were keeping the Passover at the same time as Christ and it was not the upcoming Passover service that they were worried about, but something else that was a part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the burnt sacrifices and the other Holy Day offerings called the *hagigah*, as distinct from the sacrifice of the Passover lambs at the Passover service.

Where is that command? Let's turn back very quickly to Numbers 10:10. Here is the command for the Holy Day offerings. This is not the Passover offering—the Passover lamb sacrifice. These are Holy Day offerings.

Numbers 10:10:

Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the [Eternal] your God.

Here was a commandment to have burnt offerings and peace offerings on the solemn Feast days. Now, we already know that only a lamb or a kid—a baby goat—was permitted to be used for the Passover sacrifice. We have already seen that; I won't turn to it again, but that is Exodus 12:3–5. Now 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. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the [Eternal] thy God, of the flock and the herd . . .

This says, "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the [Eternal] thy God, of the flock and the herd . . ." Now, wait a minute. Didn't we just see that the only eligible sacrifice for the Passover service was a lamb or a goat? Yet, here it says, "of the flock and the herd," meaning cattle and other beasts other than sheep and goats.

What does that tell us, because we know God is not contradictory in His commands. The use of the term "passover" here, obviously refers not to the Passover service at all—that was given earlier—but to the Holy Day, the first day of Unleavened Bread. That is what it is referring to here. Notice as we continue on:

. . . of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith . . .

There it tells you. We are talking here about a command to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread. Not specifically the Passover service.

. . . even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

What day did they come out of Egypt? They came out on the 15th. They came out on the High Day, the first day of Unleavened Bread. The Passover had been the night before. So this is a command concerning the Holy Days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; and therefore, the sacrifices of the flock and the herd were not referring to the Passover sacrifice. It is referring to the Holy Day sacrifice, as those burnt offerings and those peace offerings that we already noticed in Numbers.

There is legitimately a distinction, and this is true. God commanded the Passover sacrifice of a lamb or a kid. He also commanded burnt offerings and peace offerings on the first High Day of Unleavened Bread and on the last day as well. Those Holy Day offerings, in the Hebrew, are called *hagigah* or *chagigah*. All right, that is what they are, and they are distinct from the Pasch—the sacrifice of the lamb for the Passover service.

Now, I am going to give you a quote from our article, *Passover and Pentecost, What are the Facts?* I never thought I would be using our own article to cut it apart and disprove it, but that is the position I find myself in. Again, I talked with Mr. Cole at length about these things as I was discovering them. He told me I should go ahead and tell it like it is, so that is what I am doing. Again, we already pulled this article more than a year ago and at some point, we will rewrite it and take out this section. All of the rest of the article is fine, concerning the technicalities of the Passover and proving that it is the 14th and not the 15th, and the section on Pentecost. It is just this four to six page section that launches into this theory here, which is totally inappropriate.

Here is a quote from our article: "Schauss says, 'A group [partaking of the Passover] cannot consist of less than ten people, for it takes at least that many to eat an entire sheep at one sitting. But some Jews form huge groups, numbering so many that each member can get no more than a mere taste of the sacrificial animal, a piece no larger than an olive, entirely too small to satisfy one's hunger. It is customary, then, for such a group to slay another animal, an additional festive offering, called *chagigoh* [hagigah]. This animal is always useful. Unlike the official sacrifice, which had to be eaten before dawn, the *chagigoh* may be held for a second day.'"

This is from Schauss, pages 51–52. Then, our article says: "The Mishna states: 'The [freewill] festal offering may be taken from the sheep or from the oxen, from the lambs or from the goats, from the males or from the females, and consumed during two days and one night' (*Pesahim* 6.4). In a footnote we read: 'The offering here spoken was intended to supplement if need be the meal of the night of Passover' (*The Mishnah*, trans. by Herbert Danby, p. 144)."

Then, from our article, continuing, "Alfred Edersheim [Now, here is one that is heavily quoted as an authority, and we are going to see how accurate he is.], in his work entitled *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, tells us that the Jews were prevented by religious scruples from entering the Praetorium (judgment hall). The Praetorium was the quarters occupied by the Roman governor. It is recorded that while they brought Christ to the Praetorium they would not enter themselves that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. It can be said with certainty, says Edersheim, that entrance into a heathen house did render Levitically impure for that day, till the evening."

What they are saying is, it was absolutely true that had the Jews entered into that Praetorium, they would have been considered ceremonially impure until that evening. That is very, very critical. "To have become 'impure' for the day would not have disqualified one from eating the paschal lamb, since the Passover was partaken of after evening, when a new day had begun." So you see now what this theory begins to tell you?

It could not have been, they say, the Passover service that the Jews were worried about that was coming up, because the Passover meal is eaten after sundown, isn't it? As I am also going to show you, they were killing their lambs before sundown, but they were eating it after. However, since the eating of the Passover was after sundown, they could have been cleansed of their ceremonial impurity when the sun went down that night.

This author, and our minister who put this in here, believed this theory based on the fact that it wasn't the Passover service they were worried about. They could be defiled all day long by entering in and touching defiled things, but at sundown, all of that goes away and they start fresh. They just do a ritual bathing, the sun goes down and they would have been pure to eat the Passover sacrifice.

This theory is saying that could not have been what they were worried about. That could not have been the thing that kept those Jews from entering into the

judgment hall with Pilate that morning, because pure or impure, everything starts fresh again when the sun goes down that night. They still would have been able to eat the Passover. Ok, keep that in mind.

Continuing on with this quote from Edersheim: "These Sanhedrists could not have abstained from entering the Palace in order to be able to eat the Passover, because entering would not have disqualified them from the paschal supper. John 18:28, then, could not be referring to the paschal supper." That is the conclusion.

"Both here and in the Old Testament," our article continues, "the term *Pesach* was applied not only to the paschal lamb but to *all* of the Passover sacrifices, especially to what was called the *chagigah*, or festive offering, from the word *chag* or *chagag*, to bring the festive sacrifice to each of the three great feasts. The *chagigah* was brought on the first festive paschal day."

What is the first festive paschal day? The first day of Unleavened Bread. Keep that in mind because that is the thing that the author of our article has totally overlooked. It was offered immediately after the morning service and eaten on that day, probably before the evening. When were those burnt offerings and peace offerings God commanded that we saw back in Numbers, to be killed, sacrificed, and eaten? On the first High Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Ok, this will start to tell you how confused I was. I read over this section of our article dozens of times. I consider myself somewhat able to read and decipher even some technical things, and I read this and read this and read this and I could not figure it out. I could not make the logic work until something clicked. Let me read the rest of it; then I will go back.

"It was 'not on the eve of the Passover, but on the first Paschal day,'" that is the first day of Unleavened Bread, "'the Sanhedrists would avoid incurring a defilement which, lasting till the evening, would not only have involved them inconvenience of Levitical defilement on the first festive day, but have prevented their offering on that day of the Passover, the festive sacrifice or *Chagigah*. There would have been no reason to fear defilement on the morning of the Paschal Sacrifice, but entrance into the Praetorium on the morning of the first Passover day would have rendered it impossible for them to offer the *Chagigah*, which was also designated by the term *Pesach*.'" That is Edersheim, Volume II, pages 566–568.

Our article continues, "Keep in mind, as the Mishna states, the *hagigah* could be eaten during the period of two days and one night, so defilement could not be permitted during this period. The *Expositor's Bible Commentary* says that 'to eat the Passover in John 18:28 may refer, not to the Passover meal itself, but to the continuing feast, and in particular to the *chagigah*, the feast-offering offered on the morning of the full paschal day (cf. Num. 28:18–19). This could explain the Jews' concern: ritual purification could be regained by nightfall, but not by the morning *chagigah*.' The *hagigah* could be eaten later in the week, but it is unlikely that the leaders, because of their public status, would have been willing to delay their participation in the *hagigah*. See page 531 in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*."

Now, right after the quotes from Edersheim and from the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, here is what our author at the time concludes: "This means that Christ took the Passover at the beginning of the fourteenth day, the same time the Jews partook of it." That is what it says.

Now, if all of that technical stuff I just read from our article went over your head, I don't blame you a bit. I had to read it over several times, probably a dozen times. I never did get it until I went back and actually looked up in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* and looked up in the other sources quoted here, and I read a page before and a page after to get everything in context.

You know what I found out? All of these Bible scholars who use this *hagigah* theory, believe that Christ was crucified on the Feast day. Did you pick that up from reading it, when I read it to you? The whole theory hangs or falls based upon whether you believe Christ was crucified on the first day of Unleavened Bread. Why?

What they are saying is, here the Jews are, standing at the Praetorium on this morning. The question is, what morning is it? I was reading our article written by our minister, assuming that these sources he was quoting were going to support what we believe—that Christ was crucified on the preparation day for the Feast day. Remember, I have already proven that to you. I have already read the scriptures that say it was a Feast day; it was a preparation day and that Sabbath was a High Sabbath that was coming up.

So, we recognize that this was the morning of the 14th. He was crucified around 9:00, put on the stake and hung on that stake until He died at about 3:00 PM. This was the daylight portion of the 14th. The Feast day was going to be starting at sundown—the beginning of the 15th—that night. When were the *hagigah* sacrifices

going to occur? Not until the next day. When were those sacrifices, those burnt offerings and peace offerings, commanded to be sacrificed? On the first day of Unleavened Bread, which was the following day.

Answer me this one. If it is true that the Jews, standing at the Praetorium on the morning of that trial, were not worried at all about the Passover service, with the presumption that they had already kept it the night before at the beginning of the 14th, the same time Christ did; they were not worried about that at all, so these scholars say; they were worried about the *hagigah* sacrifices, that they would have been defiled. If they had entered the Praetorium, they would have been defiled for the Feast sacrifices.

How could that be? The Feast sacrifices were not to be sacrificed until the next day. They had another sundown to go through, which would have made them pure, right? That was exactly the explanation we heard. It said that they weren't worried about the Passover because the Passover is eaten after sundown. As soon as Passover comes, they do their ritual washing and they are clean again and they could have eaten the Passover. If they could have eaten the Passover after sundown, why couldn't they have done the *hagigah* sacrifices the next morning on the Feast day?

That is what I couldn't understand. I could not figure out how these scholars were saying that they were not worried about the Passover, but they were worried about the *hagigah*—that was the defilement they were worried about. To me, it was the same.

The Passover the Jews were keeping would have been after sundown the next night, as well as the *hagigah* sacrifices, a few hours later the next morning. So what difference does it make? That is when I figured it out because I went back and read the sources.

These men all believe that Christ was crucified on the High Day. They didn't think the Holy Day sacrifices were going to be the following morning after another sundown when they could have been purified. They believe that the priests were going right from this trial at the Praetorium, to do the sacrifices a few hours later because it was the Holy Day that day. That is what they believe.

They believe Christ was crucified on the Holy Day. We don't believe that. We don't believe Christ was crucified on the first day of Unleavened Bread. He was

crucified on the preparation day for the Feast. So why are we quoting technicians and Bible scholars who have a whole theory advanced around Christ being crucified on the Holy Day?

It is all a red herring, that is what it is. Why was it so important, anyway, to hypothesize that Christ kept the same Passover as the Jews? I don't understand why that was so important. Again, Mr. Armstrong is the one who told us that the Jews had corrupted Passover by that time, and they were keeping it a day later than Christ.

I already explained to you how perfectly that fits with the concept of explaining how Christ could have been the Passover and eaten the Passover with His disciples, because of the corruption of the Jews. Not only does this *hagigah* theory attempt to dispute what Mr. Armstrong taught, it doesn't do it at all. Not if you believe Christ was crucified on the 14th, on the preparation day.

Now, if you believe Christ was crucified on the first day of Unleavened Bread, then this *hagigah* theory is made just for you; but if you don't believe that, then it has no value whatsoever.

One other key assumption is that one who was ceremoniously unclean was still permitted to take the Passover. This is a quote from our article:

"While the Passover might be eaten by those who had incurred a degree of legal impurity (II Chron. 30:15–21), this was not the case with the *hagigah*. Had the priests in John 18:28 merely intended to eat the Passover in the evening, any defilement would have been removed by mere ablution, but as the festival had actually commenced . . ."

This is McClintock and Strong, quoted as another source that tells you that they believe the festival had already commenced when they were standing at the Praetorium. They think the crucifixion occurred on the High Day. Why is this being quoted?

". . . any defilement would have been removed by mere ablution, but as the festival had actually commenced, they were prepared to eat the *hagigah* and could not resort to even a simple mode of purification (McClintock and Strong, s.v. 'Passover')."

McClintock and Strong throws in their weight, as well, with these other commentaries, with this false concept that He was crucified on the High Day. The important thing was our quote from our former minister who also believed and quoted this, that it was permissible to partake of the Passover even if you were legally impure, but it was not permissible to partake of the *hagigah*.

What is their quote? I can't read it as I planned to; 2 Chronicles 30:15 goes through and shows us Hezekiah's Passover. Now, if you know anything about the account of Hezekiah's special Passover, it was an exception to the rule. Hezekiah's Passover was a second month Passover. Read verses 15 and 21 yourself.

In this case, Israel was in a state of idolatry. Hezekiah, as a faithful king of Judah, was trying to bring the nation back to God to keep His laws. He was trying to bring them back around a great Passover. The problem was, the real Passover in the first month had already come and gone. So here is the second month of the year and, because there is a provision for a second month Passover for those who miss the first month Passover for some reason, Hezekiah is rushing to try and pull all of the people back together to get them to come up to Jerusalem to keep this Passover and to renew the people's commitment to following the laws of God.

So, it is an exception to begin with; it is not the regular first month Passover. You are also going to find this congregation was not purified. They had not gone through the rituals that were required in order to make them ready to eat the Passover. The priests had, by the second month, so the priests now sacrificed all of these Passover lambs for the people because the people were not sanctified.

However, it was also required in the law that the people be sanctified. Yet, they ate the Passover anyway. The problem was, Hezekiah recognized it as an infraction of the law, but he specifically prayed to God and asked for his forgiveness to allow the people to eat the Passover anyway, because of the importance of trying to bring them back and start this big reformation in Judah.

So God accepted Hezekiah's prayer. Based on this single exceptional case, even though it was totally against the law, when God honored Hezekiah's request to allow the unclean people to partake of the lambs, then this is being used as a case to prove that the Jews at the time of Christ were not worried a bit about being defiled for partaking of their Passover, because there is the example of Hezekiah's Passover when the people were able to partake of the Passover even though they were ceremonially unclean.

Does that make a shred of sense to you, that the Jews and these Pharisees who were so consumed with their physical washings and all of this protocol they had added to the law, their do's and don'ts, that they would have been so cavalier concerning the cleanliness laws—concerning defilement for keeping the Passover service? I don't think so.

I don't think the Jews at that time were looking for excuses to water down the law; they were going above and beyond. What Christ accused them of, was adding all of these things to the law. Yet, these authors and our former minister would have you believe that they were not concerned at all about the potential of being defiled for the Passover service because of this Hezekiah example. Hogwash.

If anything, all of these arguments substantiate that much more the fact that the Jews were keeping the Passover a day later than Christ. We know that something was coming up called the Passover. John 18:28 has to be reconciled. It says they were worried about being defiled that they might eat the Passover.

Now, let me ask you this. Even if I give credit and accepted this philosophy—which I don't because it is false—that the Jews were not worried a bit about the Passover service; what they were worried about was the Feast offerings; they would have been impure, defiled and not able to eat those offerings; now how does that still prove that the Jews had already eaten their Passover service twenty-four hours earlier?

Even if I give credit for the idea that the Jews were not worried a bit about being defiled for the Passover service itself, they were only worried about being defiled for the *hagigah*, how does that prove one iota that they had not already merged Passover with the Feast?

It is a huge red herring. It is a misdirect. It is a sleight of hand, is what it is. Even if I accept everything that is postulated about the *hagigah* theory, it still doesn't prove that they had not already combined Passover with the *hagigah*. They could have done it easily, and the theory still holds water. There is not a shred of evidence in this *hagigah* theory that proves the Passover had been eaten twenty-four hours earlier. Not a shred.

That was the first thing which came to my understanding. It was only after digging into these technicalities that I came up with an explanation that none of these

authors believe Christ was killed the day before the Feast day. They believe He was crucified on the Holy Day itself, which totally invalidates the entire argument.

Our author states in the article, "It was at a later day, probably after the destruction of the temple, that the Jews began their Seder service, a substitute for the Passover. Since they had no Temple in which to sacrifice, the meaning and time of the Passover sacrifice was lost."

What he is saying is that the Jews were incredibly devout about maintaining the correct Passover, as long as they had the temple there to do all of their sacrifices. It was only after Titus under the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and the Jews were scattered to the four winds without their normal yearly sacrifices on the Holy Days, that they ultimately lost knowledge of the correct Passover and ended up merging it together with the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Good theory, except one, it gives way too much credit to the Jews for having maintained the sanctity of the Holy Days, even at the time of Christ. Now, what do we know?

We know that Josephus says the Jews at the time of Christ were killing the lambs between the ninth and eleventh hours, meaning between 3:00 and 5:00 PM. Is that not a corruption of what God told them to do? When were they supposed to kill the lambs? At sundown, between the two evenings. We know at the time of Christ that they were killing them in the afternoon. So the Jews weren't very faithful, were they, about holding onto the original truth?

What else do we know they had corrupted by the time of Christ? Pentecost. The Jews at the time of Christ had already corrupted Pentecost. The Sadducees were keeping a Sunday Pentecost and the Pharisees were keeping a Sivan 6 and a Sivan 7. They were keeping two days. That, you can prove historically.

Here are these "faithful Jews" who were defending so devoutly the true Passover at the time of Christ. Yet, they had already corrupted Pentecost; they were already corrupting Passover by sacrificing their lambs in the afternoon, rather than at sundown. How can we give them any credit whatsoever for having preserved the Passover?

Is it more likely that because of the corruption and all of this Hellenistic influence through these dark ages under Egyptian and Syrian rule that they had

actually corrupted Passover and merged it in with the Feast of Unleavened Bread by the time of Christ? A whole lot more indicators, even if they are strictly unverifiable, indicate that is exactly what had happened.

They were not faithful in keeping the Holy Days at the time of Christ, as God had commanded them originally, and we shouldn't give them any more credit in thinking they had preserved the Passover at that time either.

Also, if they were preparing the sacrificial lambs in the afternoon, just take this hypothesis: the Jews were corrupting Passover at the time of Christ; it was a day late. They are standing at the Praetorium on the morning of the trial; they are worried because they know they are going to be doing their sacrifices of the lambs, starting at 3:00 in the afternoon (which, by the way, was exactly when Christ died). They were worried about being defiled and not being able to sacrifice those lambs, let alone, the *hagigah* sacrifice. They were all going to be done together. None of those sacrifices were going to be able to be done if they entered into the Praetorium, because they would be defiled.

That is what makes sense, brethren, and guess what? For all of the technicalities and rationalizations, that is the only one that supports what we received from Mr. Armstrong. The fact that the Jews had corrupted Passover by the time of Christ, is what all fits together. That is the only thing that we are going to teach and preach.