

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL
SESSION 2 | THE PASSOVER, PART 1

A WORD ABOUT THE WORD PASSOVER

- The Hebrew people call *Passover* by its Hebrew term, *pesach*.
- The English word *Passover* was coined by William Tyndale for his 1526 translation of the Scripture into English.
- The West Saxon (Wessex) translation of the Gospels, ca. 990, use the word *eastron* when referring to Passover.
- The Wycliff Bible of 1382-1395 used a transliteration of the Greek *pascha*, not having an English word to use.
- Luther's Bible of 1522 used the German *oestern* when referring to Passover.
- The King James Bible is often criticized for using the word *Easter* for Passover in Acts 12:4. Those who criticize have not done their homework on the transition from *eastron/easter* as "Passover" to the word Passover as the exclusive word for the Jewish feast.
- For more information, see *Don't Passover Easter: A New Defense of "Easter" in Acts 12:4* by Bryan Ross, published by Dispensational Publishing House.

THE PASSOVER IN SCRIPTURE

- The Levitical instruction on Passover proper is Leviticus 23:5. However, this passage assumes knowledge of its observance.
- The timing of the Passover:
 - The new moon on which there was "the Abib" became known as the month of Nisan.
 - That is, if the barley was **in the ear** (Ex. 9:31), on the new moon, then Passover would be 14 days later (at the full moon). If the barley was not ready, then the Jews would wait one month.
 - The month of Adar is the month prior to Nissan. If there was no barley **in the ear** at the end of Adar, then Adar II was added.
 - In Deuteronomy 16:1, **the month of Abib** should be understood as *the month of the abib*.
 - The name for Passover month, *Nisan*, is Babylonian, and not used until after the exile. See Nehemiah 2:1 and Esther 3:7, the only places the name of the month occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - The Hebrew people left Egypt when the **barley was in the ear**. Since Passover was to be a continual reminder of their exodus, this is the time when they would observe the Passover.
- The knowledge of Passover was given in Exodus 12:1-14. In this passage, Israel was instructed on when and how to observe Passover.
 - Verse 2 - This month, now called Nisan, was to be **the first month of the year for you**.
 - Verses 3-4 - On the 10th of Nisan, a lamb was to be selected for the Passover. There was to be one lamb for each home, unless the household was small, then neighbors would share.
 - Note that a *household* was later determined by Rabbis to be ten persons.
 - Note that this selection on the 10th is not done by modern Jews. According to Jewish sage Rashi, "The Passover sacrifice of Egypt had to be taken on the tenth, but not the Passover sacrifice of later generations."¹

¹ https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/9873/showrashi/true. Accessed June 1, 2022.

- Verse 5 – the sacrificed animal was called a **lamb** (vv. 3, 4, 5), with a marginal reading of *kid* (v. 3). This **lamb** could come **from the sheep, or from the goats**.
 - Thirteenth century French Jewish scholar Hezekiah ben Manoah, in his commentary *Chizkuni*, believed that this one-year-old male was instructed because the Egyptians worshiped this type of animal. An Egyptian might sell an old and blemished female, but a one-year-old male would be used for worship (not sacrifice). The killing of this animal would, then, have been a hugely political statement.
- Verse 6 – The kid was to be kept until **the fourteenth day**; on which day every family was to **kill it in the evening**.
 - The phrase **in the evening** is literally, *between the two evenings* (see KJV translator note).
 - The traditional rabbinical interpretation is “between noon and sundown.”
 - Modern *Christian* teaching is that the Passover lamb was slain at 3:00 PM. However, I have not found any Jewish teaching that concurs. This looks to me to be somewhat *convenient thinking* by Christian teachers, since Jesus died at 3:00 PM.
- Verse 7 – the nation was to take the blood of the sacrifice and put in on the door posts and above the door of the place in which they would later eat the sacrifice.
 - Some Jewish sages argue that this was to write the Hebrew letter *heth*, ה, which is the first letter of *hayyim*, the word for *life*, signifying the life that would remain in that home.
 - As the *Chizkuni* commentary (see note, v. 5) suggests the boldness of the Passover sacrifice, this would continue the bold move of placing the blood on the doorpost for all the Egyptians to see.
- Verses 8-9 – These verses contain the instructions for cooking and eating the sacrifice, along with **unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs** (v. 8).
 - The *Chizkuni* suggests that cooking the lamb **roast with fire** (v. 9) would be an additional offense to the Egyptians, the aroma spreading through the land.
 - It is almost universally taught that the **bitter herbs** were to be eaten because the Egyptians **made their lives bitter** (Ex. 1:14). While this might be true, the Bible never really says such. Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra (usually abbreviated as *Ibn Ezra*) suggests that this may be *convenient thinking*, and that it was possibly just a local dining custom.
 - There is a crater on the moon named *Abenezra* that is named after *Abraham ben Ezra*.
 - Robert Browning wrote a poem entitled “Rabbi Ben Ezra,” with the famous lines, *Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be...*
- Verse 10 – The lamb was to be eaten before morning, with the leftovers burned before morning.
- Verse 11 – Though they were still in the land of Egypt, they were to **eat it in haste** with full preparation of travel. Having their **loins girded**, etc., was a display of faith that they would soon be traveling.
- Verse 12 – This verse proves that the *death angel* (as we often say) is actual *the Lord*. Compare Numbers 33:4.
- Verse 13 – Once again, God claims to be doing the work personally, Himself, and not using an intermediary such as the *death angel*. The blood would be the **token** which would mark the Israelites safe.
- Verse 14 – The observance of the Passover was **for a memorial** and was **throughout your generations**. The word **generations** is a D.N.A. word, reminding us that *the Passover is not a Christian feast nor ordinance, but for the Jewish people*.

Next Week, Part 2: The Passover in Modern Days and commentary on Christ in the Passover observances.