

- 31 You are to keep my commandments, and observe them,
I am YHWH!
- 32 You are not to profane my holy name,
that I may be hallowed amid the Children of Israel;
I am YHWH, the one-who-hallows you,
- 33 who is bringing you out of the land of Egypt, to be for you a
God,
I am YHWH!

- 23:1 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:
2 Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them:
The appointed-times of YHWH, which you are to proclaim to
them (as) proclamations of holiness— ✱
these are they, my appointed-times:
- 3 For six days may work be done,
but on the seventh day (is) Sabbath, Sabbath-Ceasing, a
proclamation of holiness,
any-kind of work you are not to do.
It is Sabbath to YHWH, throughout all your settlements.

- 4 These are the appointed-times of YHWH, proclamations of
holiness, which you are to proclaim at their appointed-times:
- 5 on the first New-Moon, on the fourteenth after the New-Moon,
between the setting-times ✱
(is) Passover to YHWH.
- 6 On the fifteenth day after this New-Moon
(is) the pilgrimage-festival of *matzot* to YHWH:
for seven days, *matzot* you are to eat!
- 7 On the first day
a proclamation of holiness shall there be for you,
any-kind of servile work you are not to do.

23:2 appointed-times: Festivals. proclamations of holiness: Heb. *mikra'ei kodesh*; an alternative rendering is "holy convocations," that is, sacred gatherings.

3 you are not to do: I have translated this as "make" (work) in Ex. 31ff., to underscore a major theme of the book; here, such awkwardness may be avoided.

5 between the setting-times: Between the time that the sun is below the horizon, no longer visible, and total darkness. An idiomatic rendition would be "at twilight." ✱

- 23 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:
 24 Speak to the Children of Israel, saying:
 On the seventh New-Moon, on (day) one of the New-Moon,
 you are to have Sabbath-ceasing,
 a reminder by (horn-)blasting, a proclamation of holiness.
 25 Any-kind of servile work you are not to do;
 you are to bring-near a fire-offering to YHWH.
- 26 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:
 27 Mark, on the tenth after this seventh New-Moon,
 it is the Day of Atonement,
 a proclamation of holiness shall there be for you.
 You are to afflict your selves,
 and you are to bring-near a fire-offering to YHWH;
 28 any-kind of work you are not to do on that same day,
 for it is the Day of Atonement, to effect-atonement for you
 before the presence of YHWH your God.
 29 Indeed, if any person does not afflict-himself on that same day,
 he is to be cut-off from his kinspeople,
 30 and if any person does ~~any-kind of work~~ on that same day—
 I will cause that person to perish from amid his kinspeople!
 31 Any-kind of work you are not to do—
 a law for the ages, into your generations, throughout all your
 settlements.
 32 It is Sabbath, a Sabbath-ceasing for you,
 you are to afflict your selves;
 on the ninth (day) after the New-Moon, at sunset, **BAERU**
from sunset to sunset, you are to make-a-ceasing of your ceasing!

TO KEEP YOUR SABBATH

24 a reminder by (horn-)blasting: This became the Jewish festival of Rosh Ha-Shanah, the "head of the (New) Year," at which a *shofar* (ram's horn) is still blown in synagogue. The reason here is probably a combination of proclamation (as before a king) and driving out demons (who, it should be noted, do not like loud noises).

27 Mark: Following JPS. selves: Heb. *nefesh*, variously rendered "soul," "emotions," and even "gullet" (Milgrom). The *nefesh* was one's personhood, one's essence.

Exodus 16

- 16:1 They moved on from Elim, and they came, the entire community of the Children of Israel, to the Wilderness of Syn, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day after the second New-Moon after their going-out from the land of Egypt.
- 2 And they grumbled, the entire community of the Children of Israel, against Moshe and against Aharon in the wilderness.
- 3 The Children of Israel said to them:
Would that we had died by the hand of YHWH in the land of Egypt,
when we sat by the flesh pots,
when we ate bread till (we were) satisfied!
For you have brought us into this wilderness
to bring death to this whole assembly by starvation!
- 4 YHWH said to Moshe:
Here, I will make rain down upon you bread from the heavens,
the people shall go out and glean, each day's amount in its day,
in order that I may test them, whether they will walk according
to my Instruction or not. ★ ★
- 5 But it shall be on the sixth day: ★
when they prepare what they have brought in,
it shall be a double-portion compared to what they glean day
after day.
- 6 Moshe and Aharon said to all the Children of Israel:
At sunset BA EAV -
you will know that it is YHWH who brought you out of the land
of Egypt;
- 7 at daybreak BOREP
you will see the Glory of YHWH:
when he hearkens to your grumbings against YHWH—
what are we, that you grumble against us?

16:1 entire community: See the note to 12:3. Syn: Pronounced "seen." The present spelling has been adopted to avoid the unfortunate associations of the sound "sin" in English.

3 Egypt . . . flesh pots . . . : Notice the endings of each line, which can be grouped into two clusters: "Egypt . . . flesh pots . . . satisfied" versus "wilderness . . . starvation."

4 YHWH said: Notice how God's answer is totally devoid of anger, for the dissatisfaction of the people is to provide them with a "test." them . . . they: The pronouns are collective singular in Hebrew.

5 a double-portion: For the Sabbath, when no glean-ing is permitted.

7 what are we: The issue is not between Israel and its human leaders, but really between them and God.

8 Moshe said:
 Since YHWH gives you
 flesh to eat at sunset,
 and at daybreak bread to satisfy (yourselves);
 since YHWH hearkens to your grumbings which you grumble
 against him—
 what are we:
 not against us are your grumbings, but against YHWH!

9 Moshe said to Aharon:
 Say to the entire community of the Children of Israel:
 Come-near, in the presence of YHWH,
 for he has hearkened to your grumbings!

10 Now it was, when Aharon spoke to the entire community of the
 Children of Israel,
 they faced the wilderness,
 and here:
 the Glory of YHWH could be seen in the cloud.

11 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:

12 I have hearkened to the grumbings of the Children of Israel—
 speak to them and say:
 Between the setting-times you shall eat flesh,
 and at daybreak you shall be satisfied with bread,
 and you shall know
 that I am YHWH your God.

13 Now it was at sunset
 a horde-of-quail came up and covered the camp.
 And at daybreak
 there was a layer of dew around the camp;
 14 and when the layer of dew went up,
 here, upon the surface of the wilderness,
 something fine,

BA EREV

BEN HA ARBYIM

AFTER SUNSET

SO HAD TO EAT AFTER
 ARRIVED AT SUNSET?
 SCRIPTURAL
 PROOF THAT "BEN HA
 ARBYIM" IS AFTER
 SUNSET & BEFORE
 DARK - THIS IS
 HOW GOD USED THE
 TERM?

8 bread: See the note to 2:20.

9 Come-near: See the note to 12:48.

14 something fine: The *mahn* (trad. English "manna"), described again in v.31, below, possibly refers to insect secretions found on the branches of certain Sinai plants. The question has been asked, however,

whether the amount so produced would under normal circumstances be sufficient to feed a large population—hence the text itself stresses the divine element, and any attempt to explain it scientifically misses the point of the biblical story.

- 4 Now if there be too few in the house for a lamb, he is to take (it), he and his neighbor who is near his house, by the computation according to the (total number of) persons; each-man according to what he can eat you are to compute for the lamb.
- 5 A wholly-sound male, year-old lamb shall be yours, from the sheep and from the goats are you to take it.
- 6 It shall be for you in safekeeping, until the fourteenth day after this New-Moon, and they are to slay it—the entire assembly of the community of Israel between the setting-times. — *BEN HA ARBAYIM*
- 7 They are to take some of the blood and put it onto the two posts and onto the lintel, onto the houses in which they eat it.
- 8 They are to eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire, and matzot, with bitter-herbs they are to eat it.
- 9 Do not eat any of it raw, or boiled, boiled in water, but rather roasted in fire, its head along with its legs, along with its innards.
- 10 You are not to leave any of it until morning; what is left of it until morning, with fire you are to burn.
- 11 And thus you are to eat it: your hips girded, your sandals on your feet, your sticks in your hand;

BETWEEN SUNSET + DAWN AT BEGINNING OF DAY

*STAFF IN HANDS
 SYM BOLIC GOD'S RULING GOD'S ACT.
 DRESSED FOR THIS FORMAL OCCASION*

6 you . . . they: The change in the subject of the sentence, from second to third person, is not unusual in biblical Hebrew. **fourteenth day:** Close to the full moon. **between the setting-times:** At twilight. *LEU 23;* This time is mentioned elsewhere (e.g., 16:12; 29:39, 41; and several places in Numbers) in connection with the sacrifices made by the priests. This perhaps implies that we have here the unusual situation (at least in ancient Israel) of the head of the household performing a priestly function.
 8 roasted in fire: Not raw or boiled, since what seems to be meant is an imitation of standard sacrifices. **matzot:** Sing. *matza*, flat, unleavened bread. with

bitter-herbs: Others, "on bitter herbs." Gaster (1949) notes the long-standing use of such cathartics as purifiers or demon-ridders (e.g., garlic) in folk cultures. Later Jewish tradition speaks of the herbs as a symbol of the bitterness of Egyptian bondage.
 9 legs . . . innards: That is, completely consumed.
 10 You are not to leave any of it until morning: Again, as in the removal of leaven, what is meant is complete destruction.
 11 your hips girded . . . : Prepared for travel. Passover is still observed in this manner by some Jews originating in Arab lands.

you are to eat it in trepidation—

NOT HASTE

it is a Passover-Meal to YHWH.

- 12 I will proceed through the land of Egypt on this night and strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and on all the gods of Egypt I will render judgment, I, YHWH.
- 13 Now the blood will be a sign for you upon the houses where you are:
when I see the blood, I will pass over you, the blow will not become a bringer-of-ruin to you, when I strike down the land of Egypt.
- 14 This day shall be for you a memorial, you are to celebrate it as a pilgrimage-celebration for YHWH, throughout your generations, as a law for the ages you are to celebrate it!
- 15 For seven days, *matzot* you are to eat, already on the first day you are to get rid of leaven from your houses,
for anyone who eats what is fermented—from the first day until the seventh day—: that person shall be cut off from Israel!
- 16 And on the first day, a proclamation of holiness,
and on the seventh day, a proclamation of holiness shall there be
for you,
no kind of work is to be made on them,
only what belongs to every person to eat, that alone may be made-ready by you.
- 17 And keep the (Festival of) *matzot*!
For on this same day

11 in trepidation: Others, "in haste," but the element of fear is also contained in the verb (Heb. *hafoz*).

13 pass over: The exact meaning of Hebrew *passo'ah* is in dispute. Some interpret it as "protect"; others, including Buber (1988), relate it to "limp," suggesting a halting dance performed as part of the ancient festival (perhaps in imitation of the newborn spring lambs). It is possible that there are homonyms here, and that the text is playing on them.

15 seven days: Similar to the great fall festival, Sukkot, mentioned in Lev. 23:24. leaven . . . fermented: The removal of these elements is commonly found in agricultural societies (for more, see Gaster 1949, 1969). from the first . . . that person . . . : The two phrases occur in reversed order in the Hebrew.

I have brought out your forces from the land of Egypt.
 Keep this day throughout your generations as a law for the ages.

18 In the first (month), on the fourteenth day after the New-Moon, AS END OF DAY

at sunset you are to eat *matzot*, ~~B. AREV~~
until the twenty-first day of the month. at sunset. ~~B. AREV~~ AT END OF DAY

19 For seven days, no leaven is to be found in your houses,
 for whoever eats what ferments, that person shall be cut off from
 the community of Israel,
 whether sojourner or native of the land.

20 Anything that ferments you are not to eat;
 in all your settlements, you are to eat *matzot*.

21 Moshe had all the elders of Israel called and said to them:
 Pick out, take yourselves a sheep for your clans, and slay the
Passover-animal.

22 Then take a band of hyssop, dip (it) in the blood which is in the
 basin,
 and touch the lintel and the two posts with some of the blood
 which is in the basin.

~~★~~ Now you—you are not to go out, any man from the entrance to
his house, until daybreak. KEY - BOQER

23 YHWH will proceed to deal-blows to Egypt,
 and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two posts,
 YHWH will pass over the entrance,
 and will not give the bringer-of-ruin (leave) to come into your
 houses to deal-the-blow.

24 You are to keep this word
 as a law for you and for your children, into the ages!

16 a proclamation of holiness: Others, "a holy convocation." It is not entirely clear what is meant. proclamation . . . no kind of work: The same rules apply to the fall festival (Lev. 23:33-43). on them: The first and seventh days.

17 *matzot*: This probably describes a festival separate from the one connected to the lambs, as indicated above.

20 not to eat . . . to eat *matzot*: The section ends with an emphatic doublet.

22 hyssop: The leaves are known for having a cooling

effect (but some understand the Hebrew *'ezov* as meaning "marjoram"). entrance: Lit. "opening." This spot of entrance often serves as a figurative threshold in folklore; here, it is the separation point between life and death, Israelites and Egyptians, home and the outside world. Later, it functions as the place of revelation or contact with the holy (e.g., 33:10).

23 pass over: Or, following the comments on v.13, above, "skip over."

- 25 Now it will be,
when you come to the land which YHWH will give you, as he has
spoken,
you are to keep this service!
- 26 And it will be,
when your children say to you: What does this service (mean) to
you?
- 27 then say:
It is the slaughter-meal of Passover to YHWH,
who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt,
when he dealt-the-blow to Egypt and our houses he rescued.
The people did homage and bowed low.
- 28 And the Children of Israel went and did
as YHWH had commanded Moshe and Aharon, thus they did.
- 29 Now it was in the middle of the night:
YHWH struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt,
from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne
to the firstborn of the captive in the dungeon,
and every firstborn of beast.
- 30 Pharaoh arose at night,
he and all his servants and all Egypt,
and there was a great cry in Egypt;
for there is not a house in which there is not a dead man.
- 31 He had Moshe and Aharon called in the night
and said:
Arise, go out from amidst my people, even you, even the
Children of Israel!
Go, serve YHWH according to your words,

25 **service:** Ritual; the Israelites have begun their transformation from serfs to divine servants, underscored by the recurrence of "service" in 12:26 and 13:5.

26 **when your children say:** This framework is used frequently in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut. 6:20).

27 **when he . . . :** The chiasmic structure (A-B/B-A; here, a verb-noun/ noun-verb) ends the speech, a device common in biblical style (Andersen).

29 **captive in the dungeon:** Cf. v.5, "the maid who is behind the handmill"; both phrases express the idea of the lowest person in the society.

30 **for there is not a house:** The omission of the perfect tense expresses the immediacy of the situation.

31 **according to your words:** Pharaoh has never thus conceded before, and so we know that this time he is sincere. The same change of heart is indicated in the next verse, "And bring a blessing even on me!"

- 40 And the settlement of the Children of Israel which they had settled in Egypt was thirty years and four hundred years.
- 41 It was at the end of thirty years and four hundred years, it was on that same day:
All of YHWH's forces went out from the land of Egypt.
- 42 It is a night of keeping-watch for YHWH, to bring them out of the land of Egypt: that is this night for YHWH, a keeping-watch of all the Children of Israel, throughout their generations.
- 43 YHWH said to Moshe and Aharon:
This is the law of the Passover-meal:
Any foreign son is not to eat of it.
- 44 But any man's serf who is acquired by money—if you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it.
- 45 Settler and hired-hand are not to eat of it.
- 46 In one house it is to be eaten, you are not to bring out of the house any of the flesh, outside. And you are not to break a bone of it.
- 47 The entire community of Israel is to do it.
- 48 Now when a sojourner sojourns with you, and would make the Passover-meal to YHWH, every male with him must be circumcised, then he may come-near to make it, and will be (regarded) as a native of the land. But any foreskinned-man is not to eat of it.

40 thirty years and four hundred years: The numbers are patterned as usual; although this total disagrees with Gen. 15:13, for instance (which reckons it as 400 years), the differences seem to be more over which patterned numbers to use and not historical exactitude.

41 YHWH's forces: A term with clear military flavor; later in the Bible, Israel becomes the "armed forces of YHWH" (the same Hebrew term).

42 keeping-watch: Reflecting the play on words in the Hebrew *shamor*, by including ideas of both "guarding" and "observing." Cassuto (1967) sees *shamor* as a shepherd's term, appropriate here. Note again, in the tense structure, the conflation of narrative and contemporary ritual.

43 foreign son: Or "foreigner." The English here

echoes Hebrew usage and the English idea of "native son" (Greenstein, personal communication).

46 outside: Into that area which has the function of being the realm of death in the story. **you are not to break a bone:** As if to violate its perfection, since the bone was identified as symbolic of the whole (viz., the same Hebrew word used for "bone" and "essence, person"). The biblical idea, found in reference to all animal sacrifices, is that only unblemished ("whole" or "hale") animals may be used for such purposes. In Gaster's (1969) view, the prohibition in this verse was originally instituted to ensure a full flock.

48 come-near: This verb (Heb. *karev*) is often used in connection with the priestly cult.

49 One Instruction shall there be for the native and for the sojourner that sojourns in your midst.

50 All the Children of Israel did as YHWH commanded Moshe and Aharon, thus they did.

51 It was on that same day, (when) YHWH brought the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their forces,

13:1 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:

2 Hallow to me every firstborn, breacher of every womb among the Children of Israel, of man or of beast, it is mine.

3 Moshe said to the people: Remember this day, on which you went out from Egypt, from a house of serfs, for by strength of hand YHWH brought you out from here: no fermentation is to be eaten.

4 Today you are going out, in the New-Moon of Ripe-Grain.

5 And it shall be, when YHWH brings you to the land of the Canaanite, of the Hittite, of the Amorite, of the Hivvite and of the Yevusite, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you are to serve this service, in this New-Moon:

6 For seven days you are to eat *matzot*, and on the seventh day (there is): a pilgrimage-festival to YHWH.

7 *Matzot* are to be eaten for the seven days, nothing fermented is to be seen with you, no leaven is to be seen with you, throughout all your territory.

49 **Instruction:** Or "teaching," "priestly ruling." The same word later refers to Moshe's fuller "teaching," and eventually to the entire Pentateuch.

51 **that same day:** The phrase serves to bridge the two chapters here (Plaut).

13:2 **Hallow:** Make holy. **breacher:** Opener. This should not be confused with a so-called breech birth.

3 **Remember:** Here and again at 20:8, the Hebrew verbal form is an emphatic one.

4 **Ripe-Grain:** Heb. *aviṯ*. The month later took on a Babylonian name (Nisan), as did all the months of the Jewish calendar.

- 33:1 These are the marching-stages of the Children of Israel that they went on from the land of Egypt, by their forces, through the hand of Moshe and Aharon.
- 2 Moshe wrote down their departures, by their marching-stages, by order of YHWH.
- Now these are their marching-stages, by their departures:
- 3 They marched from Ra'mses, in the first New-Moon, on the fifteenth day after the first New-Moon; on the morrow of the Passover-meal
the Children of Israel departed with a high hand, before the eyes of all Egypt,
- 4 while Egypt was burying those that YHWH had struck-dead among them, all the firstborn, and on their gods, YHWH had rendered judgment,
- 5 And the Children of Israel marched on from Ra'mses, and encamped at Sukkot;
- 6 they marched on from Sukkot and encamped at Eitam, which is at the edge of the wilderness.
- 7 And they marched on from Eitam and turned toward Pi-Ha-Hirot, that (runs) along the face of Baal Tzefon, and encamped before Migdol.
- 8 They marched on from Penei Ha-Hirot and crossed in the midst of the Sea into the wilderness;
then they marched a journey of three days into the Wilderness of Eitam,
and encamped at Mara.
- 9 They marched on from Mara and came to Eilim;
now in Eilim (were) twelve springs of water and seventy palms,
and they encamped there.
- 10 They marched on from Eilim and encamped by the Sea of Reeds.

33:1 **marching-stages:** Forty-two stations, from Egypt to Sinai, from Sinai to Kadesh, and from Kadesh to the gateway to Canaan opposite Jericho. Milgrom cites the midrashic view that details have been provided to remind future generations of (a) the mira-

cles God wrought for their ancestors and (b) the provocations that led God to kill off the slave generation.

8 **Penei Ha-Hirot:** This location appears as "Pi Ha-Hirot" in Ex. 14:2, 9.

- 19 Every firstling that is born in your flock and in your herd, the male-one, you are to hallow to YHWH your God; you are not to do serving-tasks with the firstling of your ox, you are not to shear the firstling of your sheep.
- 20 Before the presence of YHWH your God you are to eat (it), year after year, in the place that YHWH chooses—you and your household.
- 21 Now if there be in it a defect, lame or blind, any defect for ill, you are not to slaughter (it) to YHWH your God.
- 22 Within your gates you are to eat it, the *tamei* and the pure together, as the gazelle, so the deer.
- 23 Only: its blood you are not to eat, on the earth you are to pour it out, like water.
- 16:1 Keep the New-Moon of Aviv/Ripe-Grain. You are to observe Passover to YHWH your God, for in the New-Moon of Aviv YHWH your God took you out of Egypt, at night.
- 2 You are to slaughter the Passover-offering to YHWH your God, (from) flock and herd, in the place that YHWH chooses to have his name dwell.
- 3 You are not to eat it with leaven; seven days you are to eat it with *matzot*, bread of affliction, for with trepidation you went out from the land of Egypt, in order that you may bear-in-mind the day of your going-out from the land of Egypt, all the days of your life.

UNLEAVENED
BREAD CALLED
PASSOVER
SEE: VERSE 16
DOES NOT
GIVE ANY
DATE

20 you are to eat (it): As in 14:26, the goods go to the offerer, not to the priests or Levites (for which, see Ex. 22:28 etc.) (Weinfeld).

16:1 Passover: The description here indicates one agri-

cultural festival, as opposed to the two (including a shepherd's holy day) that appear together in Ex. 23:15, 18 (Weinfeld).

3 *matzot*: Plural of *matza*, unleavened bread.

- 4 There is not to be seen with you (any) fermentation in all your territory for seven days, there is not to remain-overnight (any) of the meat that you slaughter at sunset on the first day, till daybreak.
- 5 You may not slaughter the Passover-offering ^{AND} within one of your gates that YHWH your God is giving you;
- 6 rather, in the place that YHWH your God chooses ~~his name~~ to dwell you are to slaughter the Passover-offering at setting-time, when the sun comes in, at the appointed-time of your going-out from Egypt. ☆
- 7 You are to boil it and you are to eat it in the place that YHWH your God chooses.
- Then you are to face about, at daybreak, and go back to your tents.
- 8 For six days you are to eat matzot, on the seventh day is a (day of) Restraint to YHWH your God; you are not to do (any) work.
- 9 Seven weeks you are to number for yourself; from the start of the sickle in the standing-grain you are to start numbering, seven weeks.
- 10 You are to observe a pilgrimage-festival of Weeks to YHWH your God according to the sufficiency of the freewill-offering of your hand that you give, as YHWH your God blesses you.
- 11 And you are to rejoice before the presence of YHWH your God, you, your son, your daughter,

NIGHT TO BE REMEMBERED, (1ST DAY OF UNLEAVENED NOT PASSOVER)

6 setting-time: Rendered elsewhere as "sunset."

8 Restraint: The final day of the Sukkot festival (vv.13ff. below) is similarly designated.

were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were found in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God. All his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

35 And Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem; and they killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. ²And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD. ³And he said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, that were holy unto the LORD: 'Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; there shall no more be a burden upon your shoulders; now serve the LORD your God, and His people Israel. ⁴And prepare ye after your fathers' houses by your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. ⁵And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the children of the people, and [let there be for each] a portion of a father's house of the Levites. ⁶And kill the passover lamb, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare for your brethren, to do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.'

⁷And Josiah gave to the children of the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all of them for the passover-offerings unto all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks; these were of the king's substance. ⁸And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover-offerings two thousand and six hundred [small cattle], and three hundred oxen. ⁹Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for the passover-offerings five thousand [small cattle], and five hundred oxen.

¹⁰So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites by their courses, according to the king's commandment. ¹¹And they killed the passover lamb, and the priests dashed [the blood, which they received] of their hand, and the Levites flayed them. ¹²And they removed the portions that were to be burnt, that they might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the children of the people, to present unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. ¹³And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance, and the holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the children of the people. ¹⁴And afterward they prepared for themselves, and for the priests; because the priests the sons

of Aaron were busied in offering the portions that were to be burnt and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. ¹⁵And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters were at every gate; they needed not to depart from their service, for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

¹⁶So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. ¹⁷And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. ¹⁸And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did any of the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁹In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

²⁰After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. ²¹But he sent ambassadors to him, saying: 'What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; and God hath given command to speed me; forbear thee from meddling with God,

who is with me, that He destroy thee not.' ²²Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Neco, from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. ²³And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants: 'Have me away; for I am sore wounded.' ²⁴So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. ²⁵And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spoke of Josiah in their lamentations, unto this day; and they made them an ordinance in Israel; and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. ²⁶Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his good deeds, according to that which is written in the Law of the LORD, ²⁷and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

36 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. ²Johaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. ³And the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and fined the land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ⁴And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WHAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF DEUTERONOMY 16?

The advocates of a 15th Passover claim that the commands of God in Deuteronomy 16 support the temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs. On the surface, it appears that these commands required the sacrificing of the Passover at the temple, and that the Passover and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were combined into one feast. This interpretation of Deuteronomy 16 is taught by Jewish and Christian scholars alike. As the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* states, "The section in Deut. 16:1-10 was interpreted as an attempt to abolish the private Passover celebrations..." (p. 668).

Is this interpretation of Deuteronomy 16 correct? Did God abolish the domestic Passover by commanding that the Passover sacrifice be offered at the temple? If that is the meaning of God's commands in Deuteronomy 16, then these commands are clearly contradicting His commands in Exodus 12, Numbers 9 and Leviticus 23 concerning the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Why do the commands in Deuteronomy 16 appear to be in conflict with all other commands of God for keeping the Passover? That is the question we will address in this chapter.

As we seek the answer to this question, we will apply the rules of Bible study that are listed in Chapter One of this book. We will come to understand the true meaning of Deuteronomy 16 by letting the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures. We will approach our study and analysis very methodically, comparing Scripture with Scripture. As we complete our study of Deuteronomy 16, we will find that the commands in this chapter are for sacrifices that were offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread--not for the sacrifice of the Passover lambs.

Please note: Since this study requires a technical analysis, more than one reading may be required to completely understand the material that is presented, especially if the reader is not familiar with the Old Testament passages that are explained in this chapter.

COMPARISON OF THE COMMANDS IN EXODUS AND NUMBERS WITH THOSE IN DEUTERONOMY 16

Parallel columns showing the related commands in the books of Exodus and Numbers have been provided to assist the reader in comparing these

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COMPARISON OF PASSOVER COMMANDS IN EXODUS 12, NUMBERS 9 AND 28 AND DEUTERONOMY 16

EXODUS 12

3. Speak you 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 their fathers' houses, a **lamb** for a **household**; 4. and if the **household** be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of souls; according to every man's eating you shall make your count for the **lamb**. 5. Your **lamb** shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; you shall take it from the **sheep**, or from the **goats**; 6. and you shall keep it unto the **fourteenth day of the same month**; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk [*ben ha arbayim*]. 7. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the **houses** wherein they shall eat it. 8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, **roast with fire**, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9. Eat **not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire**; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. 10. And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire. 11. And thus shall you eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord's passover. 12. For I will go through the land of Egypt in that 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 judgments: I am the Lord. 13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the **houses** where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. 14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

EXODUS 12

24. And you shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons for ever. 25. And it shall come to pass, when you be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that you shall keep this service. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you: what mean you by this service? 27. that you shall say: **It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, for that He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.** And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28. And the children of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 29. And it came to pass at midnight, that the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.

NUMBERS 9

1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the **first month of the second year** after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2. Let the children of Israel **keep the passover** in its appointed season. 3. In the **fourteenth day of this month, at dusk** [*ben ha arbayim*], you shall keep it in its appointed season; according to all the statutes of it, and according to all the ordinances thereof, shall you keep it. 4. And Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. 5. And they kept the passover in the first month, on the **fourteenth day of the month, at dusk** [*ben ha arbayim*], in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

NUMBERS 9

9. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: 10. 'Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: If any man of you or of your generations shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord; 11. in the second month on the **fourteenth day at dusk** [*ben ha arbayim*] they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; 12. they shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break a bone thereof; according to all the statute of the passover they shall keep it. 13. But the man that is clean, and is not on a journey, and forbears to keep the passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people; because he brought not the offering of the Lord in its appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. 14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord; according to the statute of the passover, and according to the ordinance thereof, so shall he do; you shall have one statute, both for the stranger, and for him that is born in the land.'

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COMPARISON OF PASSOVER COMMANDS IN EXODUS 12, NUMBERS 9 AND 28 AND DEUTERONOMY 16

NUMBERS 28

16. And in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is the Lord's passover. 17. And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18. In the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no manner of servile work; 19. but you shall present an offering made by fire, a burnt-offering unto the Lord: two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish; 20. and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil; three tenth parts shall you offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram; 21. a several tenth part shall you offer for every lamb of the seven lambs; 22. and one he-goat for a sin-offering, to make atonement for you. 23. You shall offer these beside the burnt-offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering. 24. After this manner you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof. 25. And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no manner of servile work.

DEUTERONOMY 16

1. Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord your God; for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night. 2. And you shall sacrifice the passover-offering unto the Lord your God, of the flock and the HERD, in the place which the Lord shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. 3. You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shall you eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for in haste did you come forth out of the land of Egypt; that you may remember the day when you came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4. And there shall be no leaven seen with you in all your borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which you sacrifice the first day at even [*ba erev*], remain all night until the morning. 5. You may not sacrifice the passover-offering within any of your gates, which the Lord your God gives you; 6. but at the place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell in, there you shall sacrifice the passover-offering at even [*ba erev*], at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt. 7. And you shall roast [BOIL] and eat it in the place which the Lord your God shall choose; and you shall turn in the morning, and go unto your tents. 8. Six days you shall eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work therein.

DEUTERONOMY 16 *Schocken Bible*

1. Keep the New-Moon [month] of Aviv/ Ripe-Grain. You are to observe Passover to YHWH your God, for in the New-Moon [month] of Aviv YHWH your God took you out of Egypt, at night. 2. You are to slaughter the Passover-offering to YHWH your God, (from) flock and HERD, in the place that YHWH chooses to have his name dwell. 3. You are not to eat it with leaven-, seven days you are to eat it with *matzot*, bread of affliction, for with trepidation you went out from the land of Egypt, in order that you may bear-in-mind the day of your going-out from the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4. There is not to be seen with you (any) fermentation in all your territory for seven days, there is not to remain-overnight (any) of the meat that you slaughter at sunset [*ba erev*] on the first day, till day break [*boqer*]. 5. You may not slaughter the Passover-offering within one of your gates that YHWH your God is giving you; 6. rather, in the place that YHWH your God chooses his name to dwell you are to slaughter the Passover-offering, at setting time, when the sun comes in, at the appointed-time of your going-out from Egypt. 7. You are to boil it and you are to eat it in the place that YHWH your God chooses. Then you are to face about, at daybreak and go back to your tents. 8. For six days you are to eat *matzot*, on the seventh day is a (day of) Restraint to YHWH your God; you are not to do (any) work.

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COMPARISON OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD COMMANDS IN EXODUS 12,13, 23 & 34 AND DEUTERONOMY 16

EXODUS 12

15. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; howbeit the first day you shall [have] put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16. And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. 17. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall you observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance for ever. 18. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even [*ba erev*, beginning the 15th], you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even [*ba erev*, beginning the 22nd]. 19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whosoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one that is born in the land. 20. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall you eat unleavened bread.'

EXODUS 12

51. And it came to pass the selfsame day that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

EXODUS 13

1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying; 2. 'Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is Mine.' 3. And Moses said unto the people; 'Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of the hand the Lord brought you out from this place; there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4. This day you go forth in the month Abib. 5. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring you into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which He swore unto your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. 6. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. 7. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with you, neither shall there be leaven seen with you, in all your borders. 8. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. 9. And it shall be for a sign unto you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand has the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 10. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

EXODUS 23

14. Three times you shall keep a feast unto Me in the year. 15. The feast of unleavened bread shall you keep; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib—for in it you came out from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty; 16. and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of your labours, which you sow in the field; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when you gather in your labours out of the field. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God.

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COMPARISON OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD COMMANDS IN EXODUS 12,13,23 & 34 AND DEUTERONOMY 16

EXODUS 34

18. The feast of unleavened bread shall you keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. 19. All that opens the womb is Mine; and of all your cattle you shall sanctify the males, the firstlings of ox and sheep. 20. And the firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. All the first-born of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty. 21. Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. 22. And you shall observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year. 23. Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 16

1. Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord your God; for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night. 2. And you shall sacrifice the passover-offering unto the Lord your God, of the flock and the HERD, in the place which the Lord shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. 3. You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shall you eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for in haste did you come forth out of the land of Egypt; that you may remember the day when you came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4. And there shall be no leaven seen with you in all your borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which you sacrifice the first day at even [*ba erev*], remain all night until the morning. 5. You may not sacrifice the passover-offering within any of your gates, which the Lord your God gives you; 6. but at the place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell in, there you shall sacrifice the passover-offering at even [*ba erev*], at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt. 7. And you shall roast [BOIL] and eat it in the place which the Lord your God shall choose; and you shall turn in the morning, and go unto your tents. 8. Six days you shall eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work therein. 9. Seven weeks shall you number unto you; from the time the sickle is first put to the standing corn shall you begin to number seven weeks.

DEUTERONOMY 16

10. And you shall keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord your God after the measure of the freewill-offering of your hand, which you shall give, according as the Lord your God blesses you. 11. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite that is within your gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of you, in the place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. 12. And you shall remember that you were a bondman in Egypt; and you shall observe and do these statutes. 13. You shall keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress. 14. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates. 15. Seven days shall you keep a feast unto the Lord your God in the place which the Lord shall choose; because the Lord your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the work of your hands, and you shall be altogether joyful. 16. Three times in a year shall all your mates appear before the Lord your God in the place which He shall choose; on the feast of unleavened bread, and on the feast of weeks, and on the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty; 17. every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

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Scriptures with the commands in Deuteronomy 16. The related passages contain commands that clearly refer to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Let us begin our study by examining the commands in Deuteronomy 16:1:

"Observe **the month of Abib**, and keep **the passover** unto the LORD thy God; for in **the month of Abib** the LORD thy God **brought thee forth out of Egypt by night**" (*JPSA*).

The command to "keep the **passover**" has led many to assume that this verse is referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. Let us test this interpretation by applying the rules of Bible study and examining the context of this command.

When we analyze the entire verse, it is clear that the command to "keep the passover is linked with **"the month Abib"** and going **"forth out of Egypt by night."** But remember what we have learned about the meaning of the Passover. What did God say the Passover commemorates? As the Scriptures clearly show, the Passover does not commemorate leaving Egypt. It commemorates the Lord's passing over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt! On the other hand, what does the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** commemorate, especially the first day? It commemorates the Exodus---**the day that God brought them forth out of Egypt!**

The children of Israel **did NOT leave Egypt on the Passover night! They stayed in their houses until the next morning, as God had commanded.** The leaving, or being brought forth out of Egypt, was the beginning of the Exodus itself, which occurred the following night, **the night after the Passover night.** We have proved this fact beyond any shadow of doubt!

When we examine the related commands in the books of Exodus and Numbers, we find that Deuteronomy 16:1 is the **only** Scripture which uses the term "passover" in conjunction with "the month of Abib" and being brought forth out of Egypt. Every other Scriptural command to observe "the month of Abib" is clearly and unmistakably referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As the parallel columns show, the related passages in Exodus 13, 23, and 34 all refer to "the month Abib" and the Exodus from Egypt. But in each case, it is a command to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, **not the Passover.**

Why does Deuteronomy 16:1 use the term "passover" in the context of commemorating the Exodus? What is the reason for this apparent discrepancy between Deuteronomy 16:1 and other Scriptural references to leaving Egypt in the month Abib? In order to answer these questions, we need to examine the Scriptural instructions that are recorded in the following verses in Deuteronomy 16, and the related instructions in the book of Exodus.

When we compare the instructions in Exodus 23:14-17 and 34:18-24 with the instructions in Deuteronomy 16:1-17, we find that these three passages have the same theme. They all pertain to the three major feasts of God:

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- A. Feast of Unleavened Bread
- B. Feast of Firstfruits or Weeks, now called Pentecost
- C. Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering

These sections of Scripture give specific instructions for observing these three major feasts. The commands that are given for these three festivals do not necessarily apply to the Passover, which is also a feast but not a holy day. The focus in such passages is on the annual holy days that were observed at the tabernacle/temple.

When we understand the context of the commands in Deuteronomy 16, it appears that the word Passover is entirely out of place. The commands in this chapter do not relate to the Passover sacrifice but to the observance of the annual holy days, at which time the heads of households were commanded to assemble before God. In Deuteronomy 16:16 we read, "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose; **on the feast of unleavened bread**, and on the feast of weeks, and on the feast of tabernacles...."

As this verse shows, the underlying theme of Deuteronomy 16 is the annual feast days which were **commanded assemblies** for the children of Israel. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is included among these annual holy convocations, but **not the Passover**. Deuteronomy 16:16 does not command any assembling for the Passover, as it does for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Although the Passover was instituted by God as a memorial and commanded feast, the Passover day itself was never designated as a commanded assembly. ✱

When we let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures, it is clear that the commands in Deuteronomy 16, which on the surface appear to be instructions for the Passover, are in reality instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These commands do not apply to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb on the Passover day. Rather, they are specific instructions for "the night to be much remembered," which begins the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread--the 15th day of the first month. As the Scriptural account shows, "the night to be much observed" was the night after the Passover--not the same night.


Although Deuteronomy 16 contains instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the two other holy days seasons, the fact that the word "Passover" appears in Verse 1 has caused great confusion in the minds of many Bible students and scholars. They are not aware that these verses were edited by Ezra long after the book of Deuteronomy was originally written, and that in Ezra's time the entire eight-day observance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was called "Passover." When we understand that the term "passover" was used for the Feast of Unleavened bread, the seeming discrepancy between Deuteronomy 16 and other Scriptural passages is eliminated. The Word of God stands sure.


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TWELVE MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN THE COMMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 16

The commands that are given in Deuteronomy 16 differ greatly from the Passover instructions that are recorded in Exodus 12 and in Numbers 9 and 28. When we analyze the commands in Deuteronomy 16, we find twelve major discrepancies between these commands and the ordinances that God gave for the Passover. These differences all point to the fact that the word "passover" in Deuteronomy 16 is not referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lambs but to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Let's take a close look at these differences to verify which feast is being named in Deuteronomy 16:

1) The word "passover" is linked with the month of Abib only in Deuteronomy 16:1, which was edited by Ezra at a time when the Feast of Unleavened Bread was called Passover. In all other Scriptures, the phrase "the month of Abib" is clearly referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

2) Deuteronomy 16:1 appears to link the Passover with leaving Egypt, but Exodus 12 specifically states that the Passover commemorates God's **PASSING OVER** the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He executed judgment upon the firstborn of the Egyptians. **The Passover does not commemorate the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, but the Lord's passing over** the children of Israel the night before they left Egypt. On the Passover night, at midnight, the Lord passed through the land of Egypt, killing the Egyptian firstborn, man and beast, but sparing the firstborn of the Israelites, man and beast. The houses of the children of Israel were passed over because the blood of the Passover lambs was sprinkled on the side posts and lintels of the doors. As the Scriptures clearly show, the children of Israel stayed in their houses until morning. They did not leave their houses during the night of the Passover. It is an undeniable Scriptural fact that the Exodus did not occur on the Passover night! 

3) Deuteronomy 16:6 gives the time setting for the "passover-offering" as "at even [Hebrew *ba erev*], at the going down of the sun." This command differs from the commands in Exodus 12 and Numbers 9 that the Passover lamb be killed at *ben ha arbayim*--"between the two evenings," or between sunset and dark. The account in Exodus 16 of the miracle of the quail, which we studied in Chapter Five, **PROVES ABSOLUTELY, WITH NO ROOM FOR DOUBT**, that *ben ha arbayim* begins **IMMEDIATELY AFTER** sunset; *ben ha arbayim* **DOES NOT OCCUR BEFORE SUNSET, NOR DURING THE SETTING OF THE SUN.** The command to sacrifice "at the going down of the sun" does not apply to the killing of the Passover lambs, which were slain at the beginning of *ben ha arbayim*, after the sun had gone down. Therefore, the "passover-offering" that is referred to in Deuteronomy 16:6 cannot be the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. 

4) The phrase "brought thee forth out of Egypt by night" in Deuteronomy 16:1 directly conflicts with the Passover command in Exodus 12:22 that "none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning." However, the phrase "brought thee forth out of Egypt by night" does not conflict with leaving the next night, as recorded in Exodus 12:37-42 and Numbers 33:3-5. When we understand

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that the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorates the Exodus, then the phrases "**at the going down of the sun**" and "**brought thee forth out of Egypt by night**" fit perfectly. As we learned in Chapter Eight of this book, the children of Israel gathered at Rameses during the day portion of the 14th, after eating the Passover on the night of the 14th. They began to leave Egypt "**at the going down of the sun,**" or *ba erev*, which ended the 14th and began the 15th. As the Scriptural account shows, the Exodus from Egypt continued on into the night of the 15th.


The Scriptures show very plainly that the children of Israel **were brought forth by night**, but NOT the same night that they kept the Passover. Numbers 33 records, "And they journeyed from Rameses in the first month, **on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow** [the next day] **after the passover** the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians, **while the Egyptians were burying them that the LORD had smitten among them, even all their first-born...**" (Num. 33:3-4, *JPSA*). *For a technical exegesis of Numbers 33:3, see Appendix M.*


Some scholars apparently believe that the Egyptians were burying their dead in the dark hours shortly after midnight, because they claim that the Exodus took place shortly after midnight on the Passover night--only an hour or two after the destroyer had passed--which would truly have been "in the dead of the night!" But these verses in Numbers 33 show that after gathering at Rameses in the daylight hours following the Passover, the children of Israel began leaving Rameses "at the going down of the sun," or *ba erev* of the 14th, which was the beginning of the 15th. They departed from Rameses as the night of the 15th was beginning. When their march began, the Egyptians were still burying their firstborn, who were slain in the middle of the previous night.

5) The "passover-offering" that is commanded in Deuteronomy 16:2 could be **taken from the herd** as well as the flock. The Hebrew word that is translated "herd" is *baqar*, which specifically refers to bovine animals such as calves and bullocks. But no calf or other bovine was allowed to be used for the Passover sacrifice. Exodus 12:3-5 clearly records that the children of Israel were to select a lamb or a goat kid, a male less than a year old. The animal for the Passover sacrifice was to be taken **from the flock only, NOT from the herd**. **THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS A PASSOVER CALF!** Jesus, Who fulfilled the Passover by sacrificing His own body, was not called the calf of God, but "**THE LAMB OF GOD, Who takes away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29, *AT*). 16)


Unlike the Passover sacrifice, which was selected only from the sheep or goats, the sacrifices that were offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread specifically included **bovine animals**. The commands for these sacrifices are found in Numbers 28:17-24. During the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, these sacrifices were offered from both the flock and the herd, or *baqar*. Offerings from the herd, or *baqar*, were the most expensive offering that could be offered. They, like the lambs and kids from the flocks, were offered as burnt offerings, peace offerings and thank offerings.


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The account of Josiah's Passover in II Chronicles 35 shows that these offerings for the Feast of Unleavened Bread were called "passover-offerings." In II Chronicles 35:7-9, the term "passover-offerings" is not referring to the Passover sacrifice, but to the lambs and bullocks which were offered as additional sacrifices on each of the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These "passover-offerings" are clearly distinguished from the Passover sacrifice itself by the details that are recorded in II Chronicles 35. 

Ezra's use of the term "passover-offering" in II Chronicles 35 gives us a firm Scriptural foundation for understanding the meaning of Deuteronomy 16. When we let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures, it is clear that the term "passover-offering" in Deuteronomy 16:2 is not referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lambs, but to the sacrifices for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which were taken from both the flock and the herd. 

6) Deuteronomy 16:5-6 gives these instructions concerning the "passover-offering": "Thou mayest not sacrifice the **passover-offering** within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee; but **at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose** to cause His name to dwell in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover-offering at even [*ba erev*], at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt" (*JPSA*).

This command directly contradicts the Passover commands that are recorded in Exodus 12, which show that the sacrifice of the Passover lamb was a domestic observance. In Numbers 9 we read that these Passover commands were established as lasting ordinances and statutes for the children of Israel. Our study of the Old Testament records has demonstrated that God did not change the time or the place of the Passover sacrifice. It was not God but the kings of Judah who instituted the temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs. Moreover, Numbers 28:16 shows that before the temple was built, there was no Passover sacrifice at the tabernacle on the Passover day, the 14th day of the first month. However, there were sacrifices at the tabernacle every day during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (See Num. 28:17-24.) Unlike the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, these offerings were NEVER A DOMESTIC OBSERVANCE. The children of Israel were forbidden to offer them within their gates. This command adds to the Scriptural evidence that the term "passover-offering" in Deuteronomy 16 refers to the sacrifices for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which were offered by the priests at the tabernacle. 

7) Deuteronomy 16:3 commands, "...seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith...." When we read the preceding verse, we find that the antecedent of "therewith" is "**the passover-offering**." The command in Verse 3 shows that unleavened bread was eaten with the "**passover-offering**" for SEVEN DAYS! Since the Passover lambs were eaten on only one day, the 14th day of the first month, it would be IMPOSSIBLE to eat unleavened bread with it, or "therewith," for seven days. The fact that the "passover-offering" in Deuteronomy 16 continued for seven full days, makes it unmistakably clear that this term refers to the sacrifices that were offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 

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8) In Deuteronomy 16:7 we read, "And thou shalt roast and eat it...." This command has been interpreted as referring to the Passover lamb because it matches God's command for observing the Passover (Exodus 12:8-9). However, the word "roast" is **not a correct translation** of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew word that is translated "roast" is *bashal*, which means "boil." *Bashal* is generally translated "seethe" in the King James Version. It is translated "boil" in Leviticus 8:31, and "sod" or "sodden" in the following verses in the Pentateuch: Exodus 12:9, Leviticus 6:21 and Numbers 6:19. It is translated "seethe" in the following verses: Exodus 16:23; 29:31 and 34:26, and Deuteronomy 14:21. In Numbers 11:8 it is translated both "seethe" and "baked with oil," which probably means boiled in oil or deep fried.

It is wholly incorrect to translate the Hebrew word *bashal* as "roast," as the translators of the JPSA and KJV have done in Deuteronomy 16:7. This verse should read "And thou shalt boil and eat it...." The Revised Standard Version, New English Version, and Berkeley Translation all correctly translate *bashal* as "boil" in Deuteronomy 16:7. P. 161

Some Jewish authorities acknowledge that the word "roast" in Deuteronomy 16:7 is a mistranslation. In his Hebrew interlinear, Magil footnotes the correct translation of *bashal* as "boil." *Bashal* is also translated correctly in The Schocken Bible, which states, "You are to **boil it** and you are to eat it..." (Deut. 16:7). On the other hand, in what is considered the most authoritative Hebrew version and Jewish commentary, *The Pentateuch and Rashi's Commentary*, with the linear translation by Rabbis Abraham Ben Isaiah and Benjamin Sharfman, *bashal* is translated "roast." However, a commentary notation states that *bashal* "usually denotes 'cooking.'" This commentary note cleverly masks the mistranslation of *bashal* as "roast."

Whether the mistranslation of Deuteronomy 16:7 was done deliberately or by oversight gives the appearance that this passage applies to the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. When correctly translated, it is obvious that the command in Deuteronomy 16:7 is not referring to the sacrifice of the Passover. The sacrifice referred to in this verse was to be **boiled**, as the use of *bashal* clearly shows. To interpret Deuteronomy 16:7 as a command for the Passover is in direct conflict with God's command that the Passover lambs be roasted. The Hebrew word for "roast" is *tsacah*. *Tsacah* is used in Exodus 12 in the commands for observing the Passover: "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, **roast [tsacah] with fire.... Eat not of it raw or sodden [bashal] at all with water, but roast [tsacah] with fire**" (verses 8-9, JPSA). God clearly commanded that the Passover lambs be **ROASTED (TSACAH) WITH FIRE. IT WAS FORBIDDEN TO BOIL (BASHAL) THEM!** The lambs were not to be boiled in water or cooked in a covered pot, where the juices could boil the meat.

This fact is quite clear: Since *bashal*, the Hebrew word for "boil," is used in Deuteronomy 16:7, this command **CANNOT** be referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. The commands in Exodus 12:8-9 are most **EMPHATIC** that the Passover lamb was to be **roasted (tsacah) with fire**. It would be foolish indeed to

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claim that God contradicted Himself and commanded that the Passover lambs be boiled, or *bashal*, as the Hebrew specifically states in Deuteronomy 16:7.

The commands that we find in Deuteronomy 16--to boil the sacrifices, to sacrifice animals from the herd as well as lambs and kid goats, to eat unleavened bread with those sacrifices for seven days, to assemble at the temple, to celebrate the Exodus--are all **COMMANDS FOR THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, NOT FOR THE PASSOVER.**

9) The term "the first day" in Deuteronomy 16:4 does NOT refer to the Passover day. This term clearly refers to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as it follows the command to observe seven days: "...there shall be no leaven seen with thee...**seven days**; neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day...." The use of the word "passover" in Verse 1 is a later terminology of Judaism. The practice of calling the Feast of Unleavened Bread "the Passover" began many centuries after God gave His commands for the Passover.

10) Deuteronomy 16:4 commands, "...Neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the morning" (*JPSA*). Many have assumed that this command is referring to the flesh of the Passover lamb, as God gave a similar command for the Passover: "And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but **that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire**" (Ex. 12:10, *JPSA*).

Not knowing that God gave these same instructions for other sacrifices, many have assumed that Deuteronomy 16:4 must be referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. But the command in Deuteronomy 16:4 was also a requirement for peace offerings: "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering; **he shall not leave any of it until the morning**" (Lev. 7:15, *JPSA*). The same command was given for thank offerings: "And when ye sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, ye shall sacrifice it that ye may be accepted. **On the same day it shall be eaten; ye shall leave none of it until the morning**: I am the LORD. And ye shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am the LORD" (Lev. 22:29-31, *JPSA*).

Peace offerings and thank offerings were the principal sacrifices that were offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and other annual feast days. None of the flesh of these sacrifices was to be left until morning. However, there is a difference between God's commands for these offerings and His command for the Passover sacrifice. Although the commands are similar, the command for the sacrifice of the Passover lamb includes an additional requirement: "...**that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire**" (Ex. 12:10, *JPSA*).

The commands for peace offerings and thank offerings do not include a requirement to burn the remains, as does the command for the Passover sacrifice. Neither does the command in Deuteronomy 16. Because there is no requirement

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to burn the remains of the offerings in Deuteronomy 16:4, we can conclude that this verse not referring to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.

The instructions in Deuteronomy 16:4, which many have interpreted as commands for the Passover lamb, are clearly referring to the thank offerings and peace offerings that were made during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These sacrifices began on the "first day at even"--the evening beginning the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 15th day of the first month, which commemorates the Exodus of the children of Israel. Remember, the Exodus began on the night of the 15th. That night was a special night to be observed throughout their generations (Ex. 12:42).

Evidence of the special observance of that night is found in Deuteronomy 16:7: "...And thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents" (*JPSA*). This verse shows that the commemoration of the Exodus lasted through the entire night. When they began the Exodus from Egypt, the children of Israel apparently marched all that night. This is the night that is described in Deuteronomy 16:1 as the time that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. That night was the beginning of the 15th day of the first month, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The commands in Verses 4 and 7 of Deuteronomy 16 are further proof that this chapter contains instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread--not for the Passover day.

11) Deuteronomy 16:2, 5 and 6 are the only verses in the entire Pentateuch where the offerings for the Feast of Unleavened Bread are referred to as "the passover-offering." This terminology was not in use when Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, but reflects the later practice of the Jews.



12) Deuteronomy 16:8 contains what appears to be a glaring contradiction to other Scriptural commands for the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "**SIX DAYS thou shalt eat unleavened bread...**" (*JPSA*).

This statement has been used to support the rabbinical teaching that it was not obligatory to eat unleavened bread on the seventh day. But when we examine the context, we find that this rabbinical interpretation of Deuteronomy 16:8 directly conflicts with God's commands for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Verse 3 and Verse 4 state that no leaven was to be eaten for seven days. Verse 8 does not contradict these commands. Rather, it shows that after eating unleavened bread for six days, "the seventh day" was to be observed as a "solemn assembly." These commands, and the preceding commands in Verses 3 and 4, show that the seventh day was in every respect a day of unleavened bread. When we let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures, there is no conflict between Deuteronomy 16:8 and the other commands for observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Some believe that Deuteronomy 16:8 was edited after the time of Ezra to support the rabbinical practice of observing only six days of unleavened bread. Whether or not the Hebrew text was altered, it has obviously been misrepresented. To claim that Deuteronomy 16:8 is a command to eat unleavened bread for ONLY six days is a blatant distortion of the Scriptures. The true interpretation of this

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verse is revealed in the context, which clearly commands that unleavened bread be eaten for **seven days**. Verse 8 does not alter this command. It simply points out that the seventh day of unleavened bread is also a Sabbath and a commanded assembly.

Remember, error does not agree with truth. Truth agrees with the Scriptures, and the Word of God does not contradict itself. It is possible that the Hebrew text was altered by men in an attempt to give their human interpretations the appearance of Scriptural authority. However, the Word of God so totally agrees with itself, because God inspired it, that these areas of human mis-representation can be discovered and corrected.



DEUTERONOMY 16 DOES NOT SUPPORT A 15TH PASSOVER

Those who observe a Nisan 15 Passover maintain that the commands in Deuteronomy 16:1-8 support their belief and practice. In every book, booklet, study paper, or article which advocates a 15th Passover, Deuteronomy 16 is presented as THE MAJOR "PROOF TEXT." But while Deuteronomy 16:1-8, as translated in the JPSA and KJV, might appear to uphold a 15th Passover, we have clearly seen that it does not! The Scriptural evidence shows that the instructions given in Deuteronomy 16:1-8 are commands for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not for the Passover. The term "passover-offering" in Deuteronomy 16 was apparently edited into the text at a later time, when the Passover and the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread were referred to as "Passover." The combining of the two feasts under the name "Passover" appears to have come into practice after the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity.

The prophet Ezekiel, who lived and wrote in the early days of Ezra and Nehemiah, confirms the use of this later terminology for the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover; a feast of seven days..." (Ezek. 45:21, JPSA). This verse is another Scriptural example of the later terminology that was used at the time of Ezra. But the fact that the Scriptures use this terminology does not nullify or alter the Passover commands of God in Exodus 12, Numbers 9 and Leviticus 23. *For a technical exegesis of Exekiel 45:21, see Appendix R.*

When correctly translated and interpreted in the light of all the Scriptures, the commands in Deuteronomy 16 do not support a 15th Passover at all. **THE SCRIPTURES DO NOT COMMAND A 15TH PASSOVER. THIS TEACHING IS A TRADITION OF THE JEWS!**

Jesus Christ condemned the leaders of Judaism for placing their traditions above the Word of God. He said, "How well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written, 'This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me.' But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine *the* commandments of men. For, having left the commandments of God, you hold fast the traditions of men..." (Mark 7:6-8, AT).

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Today, we are facing the same conflict between the Word of God and the traditions of Judaism, and each of us must make a decision: Am I going to keep the commandments of God, or the traditions of men? This question is the heart and core of the 14th/15th Passover controversy.

In this chapter we have seen overwhelming evidence that the commands in Deuteronomy 16:1-8 are, in fact, instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These instructions, which refer to the Feast of Unleavened Bread as "the Passover," were later applied to the Passover day in an attempt to support and uphold a 15th Passover. Aiding this false view of Deuteronomy 16 was the mistranslation of *bashal* as "roast" instead of "boil." This mistranslation has distorted the true meaning of these commands and helped to perpetuate the controversy over the correct day for the observance of the Passover. Such mistranslations, misrepresentations and misinterpretations are intended to justify the Jews' departure from the domestic observance of the Passover at the beginning of the 14th and their practice of sacrificing the Passover lamb late in the afternoon of the 14th and eating the Passover meal on the night of the 15th, which begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

In Chapter Fifteen, we will study the historical circumstances that led to the editing of the Hebrew text, particularly as they relate to the 14th/15th Passover controversy.