

JESUS CHRIST THE **PASSOVER LAMB - PART** **TWO - THE CRUCIFIXION** **AND DEATH**

Having established that Jesus Christ was the Passover Lamb, I'd like us to explore His death for the sins of the world.

From the inauguration of Passover in the time of Moses, the Passover sacrifice was to occur “*at twilight*” of the 14th of Nisan/Aviv, the first month of the year ([Ex 12:6](#), [23:15](#)). With this, it ought to be straightforward to infer that the day of Christ's crucifixion was “*twilight*” on the 14th of Nisan 30AD, since He came as the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice. Even though this is absolutely true it gets a bit complicated reconciling Scripture, the Jewish context, and the various calendar systems to determine feast days in Jesus's time.

In the Jewish context first of all, it should be noted that right from Genesis, a day was reckoned to begin from the “evening” ([Gen 1:5](#), [8...](#)). This is a

paradigm shift from our approach of midnight being the start of our calendar day.

Another thing worth noting from the Biblical perspective is that, the term “*at twilight*” (Hebrew *beyn ha’arbaim*) in connection to [Ex 12:6](#), more appropriately refers to “*between the two evenings*”, and that refers to the span of time from past noon to sunset when the shadow begins to go down. As a matter of fact, in the compiled oral traditions of the Jews (the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*), the “*twilight*” sacrifice of the Passover lamb was to occur between eight and a half hours (2:30pm), and nine and a half hours (3:30pm) - (see ***Mishnah Pesachim 5:1***). Clearly this timeframe implies a different meaning from our typical understanding of “*twilight*”, which is the brief transitory moment of fading light between day and night. Also note that the morning and evening daily sacrifices, were offered around the third hour (9am), and ninth hour (3pm) respectively ([Ex 29:38-39](#), ***Mishnah [Tamid 3:7, 4:1]***).

So we find that the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ exactly followed the Scriptural and Jewish contextual interpretations. First, Jesus was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice, i.e. the third hour or 9am (**Mark 15:25 [NKJV/NIV](#)**). Secondly, He

died around the ninth hour or 3pm (**Mark 15:34-37** [NKJV/NIV](#)), which was the time for the evening sacrifice, and also the time for the twilight Passover sacrifice according to *Mishnah Pesachim* 5:1.

So we see that even the timing of Jesus's crucifixion and death was in direct fulfillment of Scripture. These details would have otherwise been missed without an appropriate understanding of the Jewish context.

Having established the time of Jesus's crucifixion and death, let's focus our attention on the day. Going by the evidence of other Scriptures that prove that Jesus Christ came in fulfillment of them all, we can stand on that premise to make the case that He had to have been crucified and died on the day and hour when the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed. Hence, we're referring to the twilight of the 14th of Nisan according to the Passover Law.

However, the debate arises that if Jesus Christ was actually crucified on the day the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed, i.e. the day of preparation as John alludes ([John 19:14, 31](#)), then what about the "Last Supper", which according to the other Gospels was apparently a Passover Seder ([Matt 26:17](#), [Mark 14:12](#), [Luke 22:7-8](#)). There are a number of

positions that I've looked into to address this question, and I'd like to share my findings with a focus on alignment to Scripture.

You may know this already that in Jesus's day there were different religious and political sects: Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians, Zealots, Samaritans, Essenes etc. Even though groups like the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Herodians often ganged up against Jesus, however, among themselves they had diverging religious views ([Acts 23:6-8](#)).

On the subject of Passover, there were at least three major views on when to observe it.

The Essenes followed a strict 364-day solar calendar (Qumran Calendar), and their Passover always fell on a Wednesday. In 30 AD, their Passover lamb was sacrificed on Tuesday, April 4, and the meal was eaten that evening. I'd get back to this shortly to reconcile the Wednesday part. I might also add that based on astronomical calculations many scholars have postulated that the 14th of Nisan fell on Thursday, April 6, 30AD. Keep these dates in mind as we'll use them shortly.

The Pharisees and Sadducees followed a lunar-based calendar, which was dependent on literally watching to observe the new moon to mark the commencement of the month. They still used the fixed seven-day weekly cycle, but the number of days in the month was not fixed; it could be 29 or 30 days or whatever depending on when the witnesses sighted the new moon and confirmed it with the priest. Remember, they had to make sacrifices every new moon ([Num 28:11-14](#)).

However, Biblically speaking the moon wasn't the only mechanism for telling times and seasons, the solar cycle was also relevant ([Gen 1:14-16](#)). The Biblical festivals aligned with the agricultural seasons, like the ripening of the firstfruits ([Lev 23:10-11](#)), the harvest at the feast of weeks, i.e. Pentecost ([Lev 23:16-17](#), [22](#)), and the final gathering of all the harvests at the feast of Tabernacles ([Lev 23:39](#)), and all these are more attuned to the solar cycle. The sun plays a significant role in the ripening of crops. And as a matter of fact, some seeds would remain dormant in the ground if they do not experience the ideal conditions of moisture and heat.

The lunar cycle for a 12-month year comes short of the number of days for the yearly solar cycle.

Hence, what the religious rulers did to determine when the Passover was to begin was that after observing the lunar beginning of the month, they would also go to observe the fields planted with grain. If the stage of growth is acceptable then they will announce the beginning of the year, otherwise, it will be postponed. This is done so as to be able to offer the firstfruit offering, which was required within the week of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread ([Lev 23:10-11](#)).

So the Sadducees and Pharisees observed Passover on the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the year, and the Passover can fall on any day of the week. Where both sects differ is in the interpretation of “*twilight*” ([Ex 12:6](#)).

Remember the Biblical reckoning of a day begins at evening and ends at the following evening. Hence, the 14th day of Nisan would begin from the evening bordering 13th/14th to the evening of 14th/15th. I'll elaborate on this shortly. Either-way, both evenings technically can be defined as the “evening” of the 14th.

So the Sadducees believed that the 13/14th of Nisan was the “*twilight*” time to sacrifice the Passover, hence by 3pm, the ninth hour, on the

13th the lamb was sacrificed and roasted in PREPARATION for the Passover meal later in the evening after sunset, which would then be the 14th.

It should also be noted that the Sadducees were the ones in charge of the Temple. As a sidenote, the Samaritans observed the Passover in alignment with the Sadducees' interpretation, only that they didn't sacrifice their Passover lamb in the Temple, but rather on Mount Gerizim.

The Pharisees on the other hand subscribed to the evening between the 14/15th of Nisan; hence their PREPARATION begins at 3pm on the 14th, and the Passover meal was eaten after sunset on the 15th. So there is a 24hr difference between the two major sects in their observance of Passover. By the way, modern Rabbinic traditions follow the Pharisaical interpretation, hence they practically eat the Passover Seder on the 15th of Nisan.

Let me briefly prove through Scripture why the 14th, or any other day for instance, starts its count from the evening of the previous day, i.e. the evening between 13/14th.

The answer can be found when studying the festival called the Day of Atonement, which was

commemorated on the 10th day of the seventh month ([Lev 23:27](#)). This is one of the most solemn festivals, and among other things, every Israelite must assemble before the Lord for this festival, and everyone MUST fast (i.e. deny themselves) on that day ([Lev 23:29](#)). God defined the 24hr period of fasting on this 10th day as beginning from the evening of the 9th to the following evening (*[Lev 23:32](#)*). Hence, this is the clearest indication of how a day is reckoned in the Biblical sense. Again bear in mind that you begin with the evening bordering the previous day (9/10), and conclude with the evening bordering the next day (10/11), and this defines the 24hr span of that day (10th). This is going to be helpful in our analysis.

So when Jesus Christ was crucified, presumably in 30 AD, there were at least three different days when three notable sects, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes, would've observed the Passover meal.

Some scholars believed that the Passover meal, or Lord's Supper, which Jesus took with His disciples according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke ([Matt 26:17](#), [Mark 14:12](#), [Luke 22:7-8](#)), was the Passover Seder according to the Essenes. Since Passover for the Essenes always fell on Wednesday, i.e. the 4th day

of the week; it meant that the Lord's Supper was prepared by Peter and John from 3pm on Tuesday, the 3rd day of the week, for the meal on the evening of the 4th day, which would start the count for Wednesday. Remember the analysis we did earlier.

So Jesus's Passover meal with His disciples could be referenced as the Passover of the Essenes. However, His crucifixion aligned with the Passover of the Sadducees, who were in charge of the Temple and followed the Mosaic Law of Sacrificing the Passover lamb on the 14th of Nisan. Again astronomical calculations for 30 AD place the 14th of Nisan to be on Thursday, April 6th. This means that by the interpretation of the Sadducees, the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed and prepared from Wednesday at 3pm, 13th of Nisan, for the Passover meal on the 14th of Nisan which would be considered as Thursday. And this was precisely when Jesus Christ was crucified as the Passover Lamb, it was the preparation day of the Passover ([1 Cor 5:7](#)).

[John 19:14](#)

*And it was now almost noon. And it was **THE SAME DAY** they were **PREPARING to slay the Passover lambs**. Then Pilate said to the Jewish officials, "Look! Here is your King!" **TPT (The Passion Translation)***

The Pharisees used the evening bordering 14th/15th of Nisan, hence 3pm Thursday, as their preparation day for the Passover which was to be eaten on Friday night, the 15th of Nisan. Again, modern-day Rabbinic tradition follows the Pharisaical template.

Anyway, the sum of evidence being presented is that the Lord's Supper can be viewed as a Passover Seder, even as the Essenes celebrated it on that day. But ultimately, the preparation day referenced in the Gospel of John pointed to the time according to the Law and the Temple protocols of the Sadducees, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed ([John 19:14](#) TPT quoted above 🙌). And it was on this day that Jesus Christ was crucified and died in fulfillment of the Scriptural requirements ([Matt 5:17-19](#), [26:52-54](#), [Luke 24:25-26](#), [44-47](#)).

Obviously, the differences in the days of observing the Passover show that the Jews of that day were not united. This is a fact that didn't escape the notice of the religious leaders. However, the high priest, Caiaphas, prophesied that the death of Jesus would unite the Jews as one ([John 11:49-52](#)). And I believe that is what Jesus Christ accomplished with the Passover.

His Passover Seder, the Lord's Supper, was in accordance to the Essenes ([Mark 14:12](#)); His death as the Passover Lamb was in accordance to the day of the Sadducees and Samaritan Passover ([John 19:14 TPT](#)); and His burial included the Pharisees, because it was two Pharisees, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, that buried Him ([John 19:38-41](#)), thus forfeiting their interpretation of the Passover. In other words, they set aside their traditions to honor Jesus Christ and give Him a befitting burial.

Their involvement as Pharisees is very noteworthy, because their mere contact with the Corpse of Jesus meant that they would be unable to celebrate the Passover that month due to ceremonial uncleanness that would last for seven days ([Num 9:6-11](#), [19:11](#)). These are Pharisees who by their traditions would dare NOT eat with unwashed hands, considering them unclean ([Mark 7:1-5](#)), or even come in contact with living Samaritans, who were half Jews thus their kin; but here they boldly forfeited their chance to observe the Passover because of Jesus Christ. This open sacrifice of theirs was a big statement, saying that they profoundly acknowledged the Person of Jesus Christ, and that indeed He was from God ([John](#)

[3:1-2](#), [Mark 15:43](#)). In other words, Jesus Christ was worth more than their interpretation and observance of the Passover. So I believe that the involvement of the Pharisees in the burial of Jesus Christ was a significant detail.

So just as Caiaphas prophesied, Jesus Christ united the major Jewish sects through the Passover. His Passover Seder, crucifixion, and death at the time the Passover lamb was to be slain ([John 19:14 TPT](#)), and His burial by the two Pharisees, basically involved all the Jews in the Passover season.

And just to add that the examination and cross-examination by Pilate, proving that Jesus Christ was blameless and innocent of anything deserving death ([John 18:38](#)), was just as the Passover lamb had to be inspected to ensure that it had no blemishes or defects before it was sacrificed ([Ex 12:5-6](#)); thus this involved the Gentile world, because Pilate was a representative of the Roman Emperor, who was essentially the global power of the world then.

And as a member of the black race, which often gets overlooked, it is worth pointing out that Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry the cross, was

an African ([Mark 15:21](#)). So we see that God involved all the Jews, Gentiles, and every race, in the sequence of events that led up to the Crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb of God, Who died for the sins of the world ([John 1:29](#), [John 3:16-17](#)), to bring to God ALL peoples, nations, tribes and tongues ([Rev 5:9](#)).

Now please permit me to briefly touch on the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ to address a significant issue before we conclude this part.

For the sake of emphasis, Jesus Christ died around 3pm Wednesday, April 5th, 30AD, and He was BURIED just before sunset ([Matt 27:57-60](#)). When Jesus spoke about His resurrection, He said He would be in the grave for three days and three nights, just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights ([Matt 12:40](#)).

So He was put in the grave or buried just before sunset ([Mark 15:42](#) TPT). The count of the FULL three days and three nights from Wednesday sunset would amount to His resurrection being around Saturday sunset, the 7th day, just as it began to transition to the 1st day of the week, Sunday. In other words, the resurrection took place around the evening of the 7th day of the week,

which is EXACTLY three days and three nights from His burial on Wednesday evening.

This timeframe comfortably fulfills what Jesus Christ said about Himself regarding the three full days of being in the grave; and it beautifully complements the feast of firstfruits in so many ways:

- like how according to the Jewish traditions concerning Firstfruits, the priests would be brought harvested sheaf of grain, and he would place it by the altar in the Temple overnight, and then in the morning of the 1st day of the week, the day after the Sabbath, it was waved and presented to the Lord ([Lev 23:11](#)); so also was Jesus Christ resurrected around the evening of the 7th day, thus “harvested from the earth”, and then it was in the morning of the first day of the week that He ascended to Heaven to be officially presented to the Father as “the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” ([1 Cor 15:20](#)); this we can deduce from his discussion with Mary on the morning of the first day of the week, when He was FIRST SEEN by anyone ([John 20:1](#), [17](#), [Daniel 7:13-14](#)). Note that the women went to the tomb WHILE it was

still dark, before dawn, and Jesus Christ was NOT in the tomb, meaning He had ALREADY resurrected prior to their coming ([John 20:1](#)). It is thus an ASSUMPTION to assert that Jesus Christ resurrected on Sunday morning. “Morning” in the Biblical context BEGINS around SUNRISE, or first light, which is the break of dawn. This is the zeroth hour, meaning that something like the 3rd hour of the day, starting from the morning, corresponds to around 9 AM (**Mark 15:25** [NKJV/NIV](#)). Hence since the women went to the tomb BEFORE the break of dawn and Jesus Christ was NOT there, then it means that He could NOT have resurrected on Sunday morning, speaking from the Biblical perspective. But rather, it was Sunday morning that He was FIRST SEEN AFTER His resurrection (please read [Mark 16:9](#) TPT).

- One other fascinating connection that the feast of firstfruits has in relation to the resurrection regards part of the recitations from Scripture that those bringing the firstfruit would say. If I were to suggest a Passage from the Bible that would naturally tie into the firstfruit agricultural theme, I'd

probably choose [Proverbs 3:9-10](#). But when you contextually read one of the chosen Passages recited at the festival you'll find that its subsequent verses speak of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and probably what He would have been reciting or singing after escaping the grave. **Bukkirim 3:4**, of the Jewish tradition regarding firstfruits, has in it a quotation from **Ps 30:1**. Now I'd encourage you to read [Psalms 30:1-5](#). Literally, this Passage has NOTHING to do with agriculture, but it thrives in the context of the resurrection, with Jesus Christ being the firstfruit from the grave ([1 Cor 15:20](#), [John 12:23-24](#), [32](#)).

There is much more we could address concerning this, but I'd have to refer you to Chapter Six of my book “**Early Steps in Christianity**”, and Chapter Three of the other book “**The Biblical Festivals of God**”, which uniquely explores the Feast of Firstfruits with the remarkable connections to the resurrection, as I've briefly discussed above.

Join me in the last part as I conclude this series.

Thanks for the privilege of your time. Shalom and God bless!

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