

Why is the Passover, called the Passover?

by Robert Schmid

There is nothing more important to "Christianity" than Easter. Easter is defined as "an annual Christian festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, held on the first Sunday after the date of the first full moon that occurs on or after March."

The problem is that "Easter" is not a Biblical word, it is not a Biblical holiday, and it is not a day or season that God instituted or that Jesus Christ acknowledged or kept. The King James translators tried to establish a Biblical connection by translating the Greek word "pascha" as "Easter," but "pascha" is not "Easter," it translates into "Passover" as any lexicon, or any other Bible translation will show.

The sad fact is that man, under the inspiration of Satan, is celebrating the resurrection of Jesus (Easter), whereas God instructed man to commemorate the death of Jesus ((Passover). To be sure, Jesus was resurrected from the dead on the third day assuring us that death is not the end, and assuring us that we too, that is ALL human beings, will have a resurrection, a resurrection either to **eternal life**, or to **eternal death**.

For a true *Biblical* Christian, the most important day of the year is the Passover. The reason is simple; it all begins with the Passover. If there is no Passover, then there is no solution to the sin problem, and if there is no solution to the sin problem then there is no escaping the penalty of sin which ultimately is the second, the eternal death.

And so, as soon as the first sin was committed by Adam and Eve, God established the principle of the Passover by killing an animal, providing them with "garments of skin" to cover up their sinful condition. The original penalty was that in the day they would eat of the forbidden tree they would die. They did not die "that day" *physically* as Satan meant it, but they did die "that day" *spiritually* as God meant it. God in His mercy passed-over their sin, just as He later on will do for His nation Israel and for us today. However, just like Adam and Eve and just like the nation Israel, and just like us today; we all have to live with the daily consequences of our sins.

And so, the very first thing God did, after rescuing and delivering from slavery a people for Himself, was to establish the institution of the Passover.

Let us now ask and answer some questions about this original Old Testament Passover as it was established by God Almighty personally, and recorded for us in Exodus 12.

When was the original, Old Testament Passover kept?

The LORD, very specifically instructed Israel, through Moses, that the Passover was to be kept in the first month (Nisan) of the year, on the fourteenth day of this month. On the tenth day of this month they were to take a lamb and keep it until the fourteenth day and kill the lamb in the evening. They were to take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and the lintel of the houses in which they were to eat the flesh that night and no one was to go out of the door of his house until morning. Why? For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when

he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two door posts, the LORD will *pass over* the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you.

So, the Passover was to be kept on the **14th day of the 1st month**. The 14th obviously begins at the end of the 13th and ends before the beginning of the 15th. In other words, a 24 hour period. Clearly, in order for the blood to be on the door posts at *midnight of the 14th* the lambs had to be killed and eaten at the *beginning* of the evening of the 14th. **There is no other way.**

Where was the Passover kept?

The LORD, very specifically instructed Israel, through Moses that **“every man”** is to keep the Passover **“for his household,”** in **“his house,”** and **“none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.”**

Why was the Passover kept?

Because; **“The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever.”**

Let us now consider the first New Testament Passover, instituted and presided over by Jesus Christ personally.

When was the original New Testament Passover kept?

We know that the Passover was to be kept on the 14th day of the first month. Again, the 14th began at the end of the 13th and ends before the beginning of the 15th. We also know that Jesus was crucified at the sixth hour (3 pm), and died at the ninth hour (6 pm). Therefore, the Passover Jesus kept with His disciples was in the evening at the *beginning* of the 14th. **There is no other way.**

The key to a correct understanding of when to keep the Passover is to differentiate between the *symbolic* Passover and the *literal* Passover. The symbolic Passover always precedes the literal Passover, because keeping a symbolic Passover becomes the evidence of our faith, that God (then) will provide for us a literal Passover. Both the symbolic and the literal Passover must take place on, that is within, the 14th day of the first month.

Therefore, the Israelites had to slay the symbolic lamb at the beginning of the 14th in order to literally be *passed over* at midnight of the 14th. Likewise, we today must keep the symbolic Passover at the beginning of the 14th in order to partake of the literal Passover at the end of the 14th.

Where was the original New Testament Passover kept?

The disciples asked; *"Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?"* he (Jesus) said, *"Go into the city to a certain one, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples'"* (Matt 26:17-18).

Notice, the Passover was kept at a HOUSE, not at the temple; Why? The reason why it had to be in a householder's house is, first of all, because God said so. Secondly, because God works through each head of a household, holding them responsible to provide spiritual leadership. The instructions are clear; *"Children obey your parents in the Lord."* *"The head of every woman is her husband."* *"The head of every man (householder) is Christ."* *"The head of Christ is God."*

At Christ's last Passover, when there was darkness over the land and an earthquake shook Jerusalem, when the temple veil was split from top to bottom, when the door to the Most Holy Place was supernaturally opened, God confirmed His original instructions in Exodus that the Passover was to be kept in every house, by defiling the temple, so that there could be no false Passover. Keeping the Passover at the temple was but the tradition of the Jews, and God would not allow a false tradition to take place at the same time the true Passover - Jesus Christ was sacrificed.

God confirmed that our Passover, Jesus Christ, was to be the only one between Him and the people. On the Passover, the priesthood (Ministry) has no involvement in the personal relationship that is desired and required between God and His people, and is possible only when it is kept in every man's house.

Why did the Israelites change the time and place of the Passover?

A domestic / home Passover did not require a priesthood, for every head of household becomes a priest to God for this occasion. We all know that the goal and objective of every organization, government or priesthood is to garner as much power and control as possible. So, in order for the priesthood / organization to get involved in the Passover, they had to move it out of the home and into the temple. However, moving the Passover to the temple at the beginning of the 14th was not possible because the day begins with darkness, i.e., they could not slaughter lambs at the temple in darkness. Therefore, it had to be moved to daylight hours, i.e., to the end of the 14th.

These were the human reasons for changing the "when" and "where." However, it was actually God who removed the Israelites from the true 14th Passover, and shifted them to a so called 14 / 15th Passover, which is not really the Passover at all, but is only the commemoration of the Exodus. God did so because they, the Israelites, did not want to deal with God directly, they rejected God, they did not believe God. The Jews, to this day, by rejecting their God, the Messiah Jesus Christ, have no Passover, even though they call their remembrance of the Exodus (the 1st day of the feast of Unleavened Bread), incorrectly, Passover.

Why do the Churches of God today keep a public Passover in the temple (church building), when the Word of God and the example of Jesus Christ demand a private, domestic Passover?

First of all, let's consider that there is nothing in all of scripture that prohibits or discourages a private, domestic Passover. In fact, the majority of Jews, the Apostles (heads of households) and Jesus Christ kept a domestic, private home Passover at the beginning of the 14th. Why is this important? Philo answers it better than I can:

"Pascha, on which the whole nation sacrifices, each individual among them, not waiting for the priests, since on this occasion the law has given for one special day in every year, a priesthood to the whole nation, so that each private individual slays his own victim on this day. And each house is at that time invested with the character and dignity of a temple, the victim being sacrificed so as to make a suitable feast for the man who has provided it and of those who are collected to share in the feast....And this universal sacrifice of the whole people is celebrated on the 14th day of the month."

In contrast, let's also consider what takes place at the Passover in most Churches of God. The heads of households and their families come together, not in their homes, but at the temple called the church. The priest / minister / pastor / elder, administers the Passover for and in place of them. So, instead of each head of household being involved, having to prepare, study, read and present the scriptures, prepare and serve the bread and wine, set the example of humility to his household by washing feet, i.e., administer the Passover, they sit there mostly uninvolved, often mindlessly, defaulting on their God given responsibility, allowing the priesthood / ministers / organization to step in and call a holy convocation, even though it is well known that God did not call for a holy convocation on the Passover.

Through the annual holy days we understand that the Passover is the beginning point of salvation, a very personal event between God and every individual. But, God immediately provides help, giving us a ministry and a holy convocation in the temple / church, the very **next day**, the first feast day of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Considering the Biblical evidence that both the *symbolic* and *literal* Passover must take place on, that is within, the 14th day, why then do some keep the symbolic Passover at the end of the 14th, and why is the Jewish Passover kept on the 15th of the first month?

Here are three reasons why we have a so called "14/15th Passover" issue.

First of all there is UNBELIEF! God Himself set up the first Old Testament Passover in such a way that the symbols of flesh and blood had to be available at the beginning of the 14th in order to be passed over by the death angel at midnight of the 14th.

Likewise, Jesus Himself provided the example for the first New Testament Passover in such a way that the changed symbols of bread and wine had to be introduced and partaken off at the beginning of the 14th, so that He could become our sacrifice at the end of the 14th. Unbelief in the Word of God is one of the main reasons why there is a 14/15th Passover issue.

Secondly, there is the problem of LOOKING TO THE JEWS INSTEAD OF TO GOD in determining when to keep the Passover. The Word of God states, at least ten times, that the Passover of the Lord is on the 14th day of the first month. In spite of that Biblical fact, the Jewish Passover is kept on the 15th day of the first month, according to the Hebrew Calendar.

Thirdly there is MAN'S DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN HIS OWN SALVATION! The idea to keep the *symbolic* Passover at the very time that Jesus was crucified and became our *literal* Passover is one of the reasons why there is a 14/15th Passover issue. Biblically however, and from God's standpoint, there is nothing more necessary and significant than that the literal Passover was accomplished by Jesus Christ ALONE. In fact, this is so important, that God at the time of Christ's death caused an earthquake that defiled the temple, so that no traditional Jewish Passover, at the end of the 14th, could have taken place that year.

Why do the Jews keep a 15th Passover?

The Biblical record clearly states that:

"In the first month, on the 14th day of the month in the evening, is the Lord's Passover. On the 15th day of the same month is the feast of Unleavened Bread" (Lev 23:5, 6).

At some point in their history, the Hebrews (under the inspiration of God or Satan?) changed the domestic Passover, kept at the beginning of the 14th, to a temple Passover, kept at the end of the 14th, and on into the 15th.

So, why a 15th Passover? The short answer is: Unbelief. Unbelief in God and His prophecies of a coming Messiah, which in turn caused them to not recognize their Messiah when He was born of God and dwelled among them 2000 years ago. This in spite of the fact that Jesus fulfilled every prophesy in their scriptures, the Old Testament. And so, because of their unbelief, God removed the Jewish people from the 14th Passover, causing them to focus on the 15th day of the month, the feast of Unleavened Bread, remembering the Exodus. They are still looking for and waiting for the promised Messiah in the future.

Why is the Passover called the Passover?

The Passover is called the Passover because at midnight of the 14th of Nisan the death angel PAST-OVER those houses that followed God's instructions to apply the blood at their door posts. The blood of the animal was a symbol of the blood of Christ. The symbolic Passover therefore must be kept at the beginning of the 14th and cannot possibly be kept at the end of the 14th and on into the 15th.

Keeping a 14/15 Passover is eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is a mixing of the Passover with the first day of Unleavened Bread which is syncretism that God hates. When Jesus said: *"I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,"* He let it be known that this symbolic re-enactment of the Passover will be kept at that same day and hour at the beginning of the 14th day of Nisan in the first month of the year.

Therefore, let us keep the Passover season with sincerity and truth.