

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Passover

The Days of Unleavened Bread

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Passover ... When?

Commandment keeping believers should celebrate the Passover Service with the new covenant emblems of **bread** and **wine** no more than once a year; and then only at the **divinely appointed time**, which is the evening of the 14th Abib, the first month in the sacred calendar.

*"Ye shall keep it (the Passover lamb) till the **14th day** of the same month,
and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **in the evening.**"*
(Exodus 12: 6)

The Passover Service, bear in mind, **is a memorial service, a memorial of the Saviour's death:** and as such, it should not be celebrated at any and every time men may think fit. Just as it was the prerogative of the Almighty to decide **when** His Son would die on Calvary, it is also His decision as to **when** the memorial of His Son's death should be held. In His law He has expressly commanded His people to keep the Passover in the first month of the sacred calendar, the month of Abib, also called Nisan. Alas, some groups, observe the **Passover Service** (commonly known as Holy Communion) every week, or every month or every quarter. Some believers even go so far as to observe it **twice a day!** Confusion reigns; **all because the express directions of God concerning the Passover are ignored.**

This article, however, is not about **how often** the Passover Service should be observed; rather it is about **WHEN it should be observed.** The Bible tells us that the Passover service should be held **on the evening of the 14th day of Abib**, the first month in the sacred calendar.

But some will ask:

- When is the evening of the 14th Abib?**
- Is it the end of the 13th Abib?**
- Or is it the end of the 14th Abib?**

These questions are not as odd as may first appear, because a day according to the scriptural way of reckoning **begins and ends at sunset** and not at midnight as in the popular civil calendar. Therefore the evening of the 14th Abib could be taken to mean:

1. The **evening which begins** the 14th Abib; that is at the end of the 13th
2. Or the **evening which ends** the 14th Abib; that is the beginning of the 15th

In (Genesis chapter 1) the first style of reckoning is used, for the record reads:

“The evening and the morning were the first day, ... the evening and the morning were the second day... the evening and the morning were the third day...”

You will notice in that chapter that the ‘**evening**,’ the dark part of a day, came first: **it started the day**. The ‘**morning**’ then followed. It would be incorrect, however, to conclude that in Scripture this is the **only** style of reckoning a day; because elsewhere we note that the ‘**evening**’ of a day can also mean the ‘**end of the day**.’ For example in (Leviticus 23: 32) the specifications for the **Day of Atonement** (10th Ethanim) are given. Notice how the 10th day is said to begin at the **even (end)** of the 9th day.

*“It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls
in the **ninth day of the month at even**,
from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.”*

Obviously in this passage concerning the **Day of Atonement** (which is the 10th Ethanim) the phrase ‘**ninth day of the month at even**’ means the ‘**end**’ of the 9th day **not its beginning**. In other words the Day of Atonement begins in the **evening (end)** of the 9th day and continues to the **evening (end)** of the 10th day. This style of reckoning the evening as the ‘**end of a day**’ differs from the one used in (Genesis chapter 1.)

Another example where the evening of a day means its ‘**end**’ not its beginning is found in:

Exodus 12: 18: *“In the first month, on the fourteenth (14th) day of the month **at even**, ye shall eat unleavened bread, **until** the one and twentieth day of the month **at even**.
19: Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.”*

In this passage, like the one concerning the Day of Atonement, the term ‘**even**’ obviously refers to the **end** of the day and not to its beginning. Why obviously? The answer is, because the 21st Abib is one of the days **of unleavened bread**. It is the last day of unleavened bread. It is a Feast day; so it must be included in that seven day count. The ‘**even**’ in this instance must therefore mean the **end** of 21st Abib and not its beginning. Thus the seven days of unleavened bread are to begin at the **evening or end** of the 14th Abib and continue in unbroken succession **until** the **evening or end** of the 21st Abib.

If the word ‘**even**’ in this passage were taken to mean the **beginning of the day**, as reckoned in Genesis, then the seven days of unleavened bread would begin at the **end** of the 13th Abib and terminate seven days later at the **end** of the 20th Abib. This would effectively exclude the 21st Abib as a day of unleavened bread: which is unacceptable; because we know from the Scripture quoted above and from (Leviticus 23: 6-8) that the 21st Abib is the last day of unleavened bread; so it must be included in the seven day count. Therefore, to include the 21st Abib in the seven day count, one must begin counting - as directed - from the **end of the 14th Abib**. No other sensible conclusion is possible.

In view of these facts we may affirm that the ‘**evening of the 14th Abib**’ is the **end** of that day; just as surely as we can affirm that the evening of the 9th Ethanim is the **end** of the 9th; and the evening of the 21st Abib is the **end** of the 21st. **The Passover service, in other words, should be held after the sunset which ends the 14th Abib. This same evening ushers in the first day of unleavened bread.** Here is further proof of this fact from the New Testament.

- **Matthew 26: 17**
 - “Now the ‘**first day of unleavened bread**’ the disciples came to Jesus saying unto Him Where wilt thou that we prepare the Passover?”
- **Mark 14: 12**

- “And the **‘first day of unleavened bread’** when they killed the Passover.”
- **Luke 22: 7**
 - “Then came the **‘day of unleavened bread,’** when the Passover must be killed.”

These texts plainly state that the Saviour and his disciples kept that memorable Passover on the evening which ushered in the **‘first day of unleavened bread.’** Their actions verify the fact that the Passover service is kept at the **evening or end** of the 14th Abib, because that is the evening which ushers in the **‘first day of unleavened bread.’** The above texts could not possibly be referring to the end of the 13th Abib.

In conclusion we may say: **the Passover service should be held in the evening (end) of the 14th Abib, just after the sunset which ushers in the ‘first day of unleavened bread.’** This is the time the Saviour kept it in obedience to his Father's law. **We would do well to follow His example.**

The Passover Night

After the **Passover Service**, believers should observe the **Passover Night**, a night of prayer and vigil. See **The Passover Night** concerning this.

Exodus 12: 42: *“It is a night **to be much observed** unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be **observed** of all the children of Israel in their generations.”*

Passover In The Second month

In exceptional circumstances the Passover Service may be held on the **14th day of the second month.** The passages which tell of this provision are (Numbers 9: 6-14) and (2 Chronicles 30: 2-15). See **Passover in Second Month ... Zif** concerning this.

I end here trusting that the Most High will bless you abundantly as you do His will by celebrating His Feasts; bearing in mind at all times that each and every one commemorates His mightiest acts in the program of our salvation.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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