

Passover - The Night to be Much Observed

The passing of the death angel culminating with the exodus from Egypt is one of the most dramatic events recorded in Scripture. Like all important times on God's calendar, which Satan loves to confuse to keep us from worshipping during God's appointed times, it is subject to two different interpretations on when it occurred. Yet we know that only one is correct. This paper will seek to provide clarity for which one is Biblical.

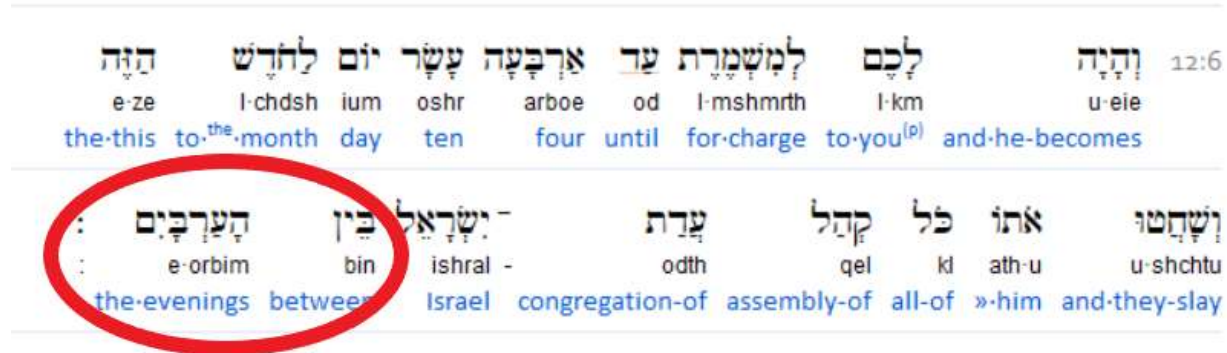
- 1. Two-night theory:** One theory holds that the evening (dark, first part) of the 14th (moments after the sun set on the 13th, approximately 6:00 p.m. in our timing) the lamb was sacrificed and eaten (probably sometime after 8:00 p.m. which was now the 14th), then the death angel came at midnight, still on the 14th. (This theory interprets Leviticus 23's identification of the Passover on the 14th as being both the sacrifice and the passing over of the death angel.) The next morning, all the daylight of the 14th passes until evening, then the dark part of the 15th is the "night to be much observed", leading to the Exodus around sunrise on the 15th. This method observes two nights:
 - a. the Passover sacrifice and meal (just after sundown of the 13th, the early/dark part of the 14th) and the passing over of the death angel a few hours later at midnight, still the 14th, and
 - b. the Exodus 12:42 "night to be much observed" (24 hours after the death angel, the dark part of the 15th) the following night, after which they flee Egypt the morning of the 15th.
- 2. One-night theory:** The second theory holds that the afternoon sacrifice (3:00 p.m.) of the 14th is when the Passover lamb was slain, the meal was eaten at sundown of the 14th as the 15th was beginning, and the death angel came at midnight a few hours after the meal, which was now the 15th. (This theory interprets Leviticus 23's identification of the Passover on the 14th as being the calendar day on which the event of the sacrifice of the Passover lamb took place, rather than the passing over of the death angel.) Pharaoh then called for Moses, and the children of Israel left Egypt in haste on the morning of the 15th. This method observes one night, which includes both the Passover meal and the death angel passing over, with no substantial time gap between the death of the firstborn and the exodus.

Between the Evenings

The Passover lamb was commanded to be chosen on the tenth day of the month, inspected for perfection until the fourteenth day of the month, and then be sacrificed at the evening sacrifice as the end of the 14th was approaching.

Exodus 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

As shown in the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer, the Hebrew words for the timing of the sacrifice in Exodus 12:6 is a two-word phrase that is literally translated as “between the evenings” (beyn H996, between; erebim H6153, evenings). Understanding this phrase and how it is used in Scripture is imperative to understanding the timing of all these events more fully.



Beyn, H996, BDB Definition: between, among, in the midst of, from between

Ereb, H6153, BDB Definition: evening, night, sunset

This two-word phrase appears in the following texts, all of which, save one, are related to an appointed sacrifice or temple ritual: Exodus 12:6 (Passover), Exodus 16:12 (quail in the dessert), Exodus 29:39, 41 (daily sacrifice), Exodus 30:8 (lighting of menorah), Leviticus 23:5 (Passover), Numbers 9:3, 5, 11 (Passover), Numbers 28:4, 8 (daily sacrifice).

Some people mistakenly interpret the phrase “between the evenings” as a 24-hour period from one evening until the next, and others interpret it to simply mean evening, as in 6:00 p.m. sunset. However, the phrase “between the evenings” is generally recognized to be between the time that the sun first reaches the highest point in the sky so that the going down first begins (noon) and when the going down concludes (sunset, 6:00 p.m.). This is why the midpoint between noon and 6:00 p.m. (3:00 p.m., called the ninth hour in Scripture) is deemed to be the time of the evening sacrifice.

A proper understanding of this phrase reveals that the sacrifice, cooking, and eating the meal could not have begun at the beginning of the 14th day, right after sundown. There is never any reference in scripture to any sacrificial offering that took place at or just after sundown.

According to 1 Kings 18:29-36, the evening sacrifice was after midday (12:00 noon).

1 Kings 18:29 And it came to pass, **when midday was past**, and **they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice**, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

The best witness for the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) being the time of the Passover sacrifice is that it was at the ninth hour when Yeshua, Our Passover, died. See Matthew 27:45-50.

Scriptural Sequence of Events

The sequence of events from the initial command to Moses to have the people select a lamb on the tenth day, all the way through their flight from Egypt, is told in Exodus 12. An understanding of the timing of the main points will demonstrate that the two night timing of these events is not correct:

- Exodus 12:6 The lamb was kept **until the 14th day**, then **killed in the evening (between the evenings)**. This command makes eating the Passover meal at even, just as the 13th day ended, impossible. Everything that occurs hereafter is on the 14th day or later.
- 12:8 The flesh is **eaten that night** (H3915, layelah). This word is used only for the dark part of the 24-hour period, meaning that the meal was consumed after sundown, now on the 15th. If it was killed at the time of the evening sacrifice (3:00 p.m.) of the 14th, the meal would be consumed during the early dark hours of the 15th, likely right after sundown.
- 12:11 It was to be eaten with their **loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand**, and **in haste** (four separate phrases all indicating being prepared to flee quickly)
- 12:12 The passing through of the **death angel happens this night** (based on verses 6-8 is now the 15th)
- 12:14 The **day of the passing through is the feast ordinance forever**. Remember that the 14th is not a feast day, but the 15th is (see Leviticus 23:6 “And on the **fifteenth day** of the same month **is the feast of unleavened bread** unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.”). This is more evidence that the passing of the death angel did not occur on the 14th day.
- 12:17 The **feast day is the day they left Egypt, the 15th** (See also Numbers 33:3)
- 12:18 **No leaven is eaten from the even (end) of the 14th to the even (end) of the 21st**. (See 12:6, the lamb is killed between the evenings of the 14th and eaten that night, the start of the 15th.) The meal was to be **eaten without leaven**. A lamb killed at the beginning of the 14th would be eaten prior to the prohibition on leaven that began at the end of the 14th. See also Exodus 34:25 “Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.”
- 12:29 The **death angel passed at midnight**. This must be on the 15th at this point. Scripture never specifies the calendar date for the passing over, but the story lays it out as continues.
- 12:30, 31 Pharaoh rose up in the **same night** and called for Moses and Aaron **by night**
- **Words of haste and urgency from 12:31-39:** (KJV) Rise up (this night), get you forth, go, be gone, urgent, send them out in haste, thrust out, could not tarry.
- 12:42 It is a **night to be much observed**.
- 12:52 The **selfsame day that the Lord brought them out** of Egypt. Numbers 33:3 And they **departed** from Rameses in the first month, **on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in**

the sight of all the Egyptians. The morrow (morning) after the Passover, they left, which was the 15th.

Many people have an issue reconciling that the passing over of the death angel occurred on the 15th, when the day of the Passover is clearly identified as the 14th. Scripture never gives a calendar date for the passing over of the death angel. While not specified as being on either the 14th or 15th, an honest analysis of the sequence of events rules out the 14th as the midnight passing over event. Furthermore, the very definition of the word Passover points to the lamb rather than the death angel.

H6453 pesach, BDB Definition:

1) passover

1a) sacrifice of passover

1b) animal victim of the passover

1c) festival of the passover

The Passover lamb is kept until the 14th, it is slain at the evening sacrifice (between the evenings, 3:00 p.m.) on the 14th, eaten after having sufficient time to cook (a minimum of two hours, potentially even more), and eaten in the night (after sundown beginning a new calendar date) as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. *That timing makes it impossible for the death angel to pass at midnight on the 14th, or the death angel would have had to pass 15 hours before the lamb was even slain.*

Biblical evidence supports the fact that the death angel passed at midnight on the 15th. Exodus 12:12 tells us that the pass through of the death angel happens “this night”. What night? We’re already beyond the evening sacrifice of the 14th in earlier verses, so the night in question must be after sundown, which is now the 15th. Then, in Exodus 12:30-36 we see that Pharaoh rose up in that same night (vs 30), he called for Moses & Aaron by night, told them to rise up, get you forth, and go (vs 31), be gone (vs 32), the Egyptians were urgent and sent the people out in haste (vs 33), the Israelites took dough before it was leavened (vs 34). When is the first day of unleavened bread? The 15th – Leviticus 23:6).

Re-read all of those urgent action verbs: rise up, get forth, go, be gone, haste. Nothing at all in this passage of Exodus 12 suggests there was the 30-hour or longer delay that the two-night theory requires. Verse 42 then contains the phrase “the night to be much observed”. Verse 51 refers to it as “the selfsame day” that the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt. This leaving Egypt is later plainly stated in Numbers 33:3 to be on the 15th, the morrow after the Passover (which we know from Leviticus is the 14th).

Rewind

Now work it backwards, for review and clarity: They left on the 15th (Number 33:3), which was in haste after the death angel (Ex 12:31-36), which occurred after the Passover meal that was eaten in the night (after sundown), that happened after the lamb had cooked, that happened

after the lamb was sacrificed at the evening (3:00 p.m.) sacrifice toward the end of the day of Passover, the 14th (Ex 12:6).

So, there is only one dark period here – the dark part of the 15th, just after sundown of the 14th, which is the night to be much observed, and which is the night of the death angel, and which is the start of the Exodus. All these events happened on the same night, not over a period of two consecutive nights.

The Last Supper

The timing of the last supper is used to suggest the Passover meal is on the early/dark part of the 14th, despite the conflicts with what is plainly laid out in Torah. The timing of the last supper was necessary only because Yeshua had to die on the cross at the time of the true Passover sacrifice. It was an impossibility that He could both eat the Passover meal at the correct time yet die on the cross at the correct time to be the Passover Lamb of God. If He did not die at the time of the Passover sacrifice (which He did, according to Matthew 27:46), then how could He be our Passover Lamb?

Our ministry was recently told how wonderful it was that Yeshua honored both the Sadducee and Pharisee calendar by keeping two Passovers (one night as a meal as the Sadducees, one night on the cross as the Pharisees)¹. We have also been told that there are four different calendars in the New Testament. Do either of those statements sound like an orderly God, who is not the author of confusion? Are we supposed to eat two Passover Seders: one at the time of the Last Supper, and another at the time Yeshua died on the cross?

Problems with the two-night theory

- If indeed the lamb which was to be kept until the 14th (Exodus 12:6) and slain immediately at sundown as it became the 14th, this would be the only sacrifice in Scripture performed in the dark hours, and at a time different than every other “between the evenings” sacrifice.
- It would mean that Yeshua was not our Passover Lamb as he did not die at 6:00 p.m. at the start of the 14th, but rather at 3:00 p.m. with only three hours of daylight remaining on the 14th.
- It would mean that the Seder, which was specified to be eaten without leaven (Exodus 12:8), would be eaten while the leaven was not yet removed from the houses. The

¹ I have no personal knowledge of either of these in relation to the Seder timing, but if ChatGPT can be trusted in this matter, then the viewpoint that the Last Supper was according to Sadducean timing is not correct. ChatGPT answered my question “What date and time do the Sadducees kill the passover lamb?” by giving a comparison of how each group interprets “between the evenings”. The answer was that the Sadducees interpret this as “the period from sunset to complete darkness”, while the Pharisees interpret this as being “from noon until sunset”. As a result, the bottom line difference between when the Sadducees and Pharisees performed the Passover sacrifice, according to ChatGPT, was: “Pharisees: Mid-afternoon (around 3 PM) on the 14th of Nisan. Sadducees: Late afternoon, closer to sunset on the 14th of Nisan.” If this is correct, the person who made this claim was not in line with either group.

leaven was to be removed from the house the entire seven-day period, identified in Exodus 12:18 as from “the fourteenth day of the month at evening ... until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.” The two-night theory has the meal being eaten in the first several hours of the 14th day, 20 or more hours before the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As such, it requires that we add one day to the Biblically given timing of observing the period of unleavened bread.

- It would also mean that the meal would take place the day before the date identified in Exodus and Leviticus as the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 15th day--Leviticus 23:6, beginning at sundown on the 14th—Exodus 12:18). There is only one specified feast during this festival period, the Seder, which by default must be the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- If the passing over of the death angel happened on the overnight hours of the 14th, then at least 24 hours would have passed between Exodus 12:30 and Exodus 12:31, when no such time gap is indicated in Scripture. This time gap defies the plain meaning of the texts that describe the urgent haste of the exodus which occurred “that night” (Exodus 12:30-31) on the morning of the 15th (Numbers 33:3).

Is it reasonable to conclude that “the night” in Exodus 12:30 is 24-hours before the “night” in Exodus 12:31? Would Pharaoh have gotten up in the night along with “all his servants, and all the Egyptians”, then let a full 24-hours pass, and the next night call for Moses and Aaron? Or did he wake up to absolute devastation in every single home and immediately decree the urgent exodus before even greater devastation could occur?

Exodus 12:30 And **Pharaoh rose up in the night**, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Exodus 12:31 And **he called for Moses and Aaron by night**, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

For all the reasons laid out above, our ministry observes the Passover Seder at sundown as the 14th day of the month (the preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread) has ended and the 15th day of the month begins the seven-day appointed time. As with this and all other topics we cover, we are open to considering Biblical evidence that corrects any errors contained in this article. We freely admit that we are imperfect human beings, and like you, are simply trying our best to figure out truth.

Yeshua fulfilled His role as our Passover Lamb by dying at the exact moment that the Pharisees were killing their passover lambs. They rejected their true Passover. Let’s not repeat their mistake by confusing the time that memorializes the mighty works of God for Egypt, the mighty works of God and Yeshua at the cross, and the still-pending mighty work of the Second Coming, a future Passover event.