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Chapter 9

Messiah Yeshua, God's Passover Lamb

The next day he saw Jesus [Yeshua] coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people (Luke 22:1-2).

PASSOVER LAMBS SACRIFICED IN THE AFTERNOON OF THE 14TH OF NISAN

In the original Chapter 8 (“The Two Passovers”) of previous editions of this book (1994, 1997, 2001), we accepted and presented the belief that the date for the observance of the Passover meal shifted from the 14th to the 15th day of Nisan (Abib), based upon the work of the late Phinehas Ben Zadok (Hans Philip Veerman), as explained in his booklet, *Which Day Is the Passover?* According to this opinion, the Exodus Passover meal was eaten during the evening of the 14th of Nisan but by the time of Yeshua, the Passover meal was eaten during the evening of the 15th, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

However, we now understand that there was no shift in dates from the 14th to the 15th for the Passover meal. The confusion results from English translations of the Hebrew stating that the Passover was to be sacrificed “at twilight” or “in the evening” of the 14th of Nisan.

‘And you shall keep it [the Passover lamb] until **the fourteenth day** of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to **kill it at twilight**’ (Exodus 12:6, emphasis added).

‘In the first month, **on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight** is the LORD’S Passover’ (Leviticus 23:5, emphasis added).

Thus the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, “Now, let the sons of Israel **observe the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight**, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.” So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. And **they observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai**; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did (Numbers 9:1-5, emphasis added).

In Exodus 12:6, the Hebrew *ben ha-‘arbayim* is translated “at twilight” (NASB, NKJV, NIV) or “in the evening” (KJV, Amplified Bible). In Leviticus 23:5, *ben ha-‘arbayim* is translated “at twilight” (NASB, NKJV, NIV) or “at even” (KJV) or “between evenings” (Amplified Bible). In Numbers 9:3, 5, *ben ha-‘arbayim* is translated “at twilight” (NASB, NKJV, NIV) or “at even” (KJV) or “in the evening” (Amplified Bible). (Note: This Hebrew phrase occurs in Exodus 12:6; 16:12; 29:39, 41; 30:8; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:3, 5, 11; 28:4, 8.)

Translating the Hebrew “at twilight” or “in the evening” or “at even” seems to indicate that the Passover lambs were sacrificed and eaten during the evening of the 14th of Nisan. The confusion then arises because the nation of Israel at the time of Yeshua ate the Passover meal during the evening of the 15th of Nisan, the start of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (According to Biblical reckoning, a new day begins at sunset – Genesis 1.)

Only by correctly understanding the meaning of the Hebrew *ben ha-‘arbayim* can we have clarification as to the time the Passover lambs were actually sacrificed. The Hebrew literally translates as “between the two evenings”¹ or “between the two settings”.²

Rabbinic sources take this to mean “from noon on.”¹⁷ According to Radak,¹⁸ **the first “setting” occurs when the sun passes its zenith just after noon and the shadows begin to lengthen, and the second “setting” is the actual sunset.** Josephus testifies that the paschal lamb was slaughtered in the Temple between 3 and 5 P.M.¹⁹ (emphasis added).³

So “between the two settings” means the midpoint between noon and sunset. As Passover takes place around the time of the Spring Equinox, when day and night are equal in length, the midpoint is 3 pm. Jewish historian Josephus (AD 37 – c. 100)⁴ confirms that the sacrifice of the Passover lambs began at the Temple at 3 p.m. This is the exact time that Messiah Yeshua, God’s

¹ Spiros Zodhiates (Editor), *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, p. 194.

² Nahum M. Sarna (Editor), *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 55.

³ Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 55.

⁴ Wikipedia, article: Josephus - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus> - accessed 2015.

Passover Lamb, died for the sins of humanity.⁵ With this understanding, we can see that the Passover lambs were sacrificed in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan and the Passover meal was eaten after sunset on the 15th of Nisan.

The daily evening sacrifice of a male lamb also took place “between the two settings” (*ben ha-‘arbayim*), the same time the sacrifice of the Passover lambs at the Temple began. This was one of the two daily sacrifices of a male lamb, called the morning and evening sacrifices.

“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. The **one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight**” (Exodus 29:38-39, emphasis added).

The morning sacrifice was offered at the third hour (9 am).⁶ The evening sacrifice “between the two settings” was offered at the ninth hour (3 pm). In this we can see the prophetic significance of Yeshua being crucified at 9 am⁷ and giving up His life at 3 pm in fulfillment of the morning and evening sacrifices.

THE ANNUAL SABBATH DAYS OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD KEY TO UNDERSTANDING FRIDAY CRUCIFIXION ERROR

In order to understand the timing of events during the week of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we need to understand the difference between **annual** and **weekly** Sabbath days. In addition to the weekly Sabbath day (Leviticus 23:3) are annual Sabbath days of the Appointed Times of the Lord (Leviticus 23). This includes the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

⁵ The ninth hour of the day according to Biblical (Jewish) time is 3 pm (Matthew 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-37; Luke 23:44-46).

⁶ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Updated Edition), p. 108.

⁷ The third hour of the day according to Biblical (Jewish) time is 9 am (Mark 15:25). Note: The reference to Yeshua being brought out to the Jews by Pilate at the sixth hour (John 19:14) is according to Roman time – 6 am as counted from midnight when the day began according to Roman time.

‘In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD’S Passover. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. **On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.** But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. **On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work**’” (Leviticus 23:5-8, emphasis added).

During the period of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there are two annual Sabbath days on the 1st and 7th day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and one weekly Sabbath day.

Messiah Yeshua was placed in a tomb just before sunset, when the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread began. In the Word of God, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is referred to as a high day, meaning a high holy day or annual Sabbath day:

The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross [tree] on the Sabbath (for **that Sabbath was a high day**), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away (John 19:31, emphasis added).

If no distinction is made between the annual Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath, it leads to misinterpretation and the error that the Crucifixion took place on Friday. However, it can be proven from the Word of God that the Crucifixion took place on Wednesday and the Resurrection took place on Saturday, the weekly Sabbath day, thus fulfilling the Sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:39-40; Luke 11:29-30). (See Chapter 12 “The Biblical Sabbath Day Is the Day of the Resurrection”.)

THE LAST SUPPER WAS NOT A PASSOVER MEAL

The controversy regarding the Last Supper being a Passover meal or not originates from the apparent discrepancy between John's account and the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John's account clearly shows that the Last Supper was NOT a Passover meal because it took place the evening BEFORE the Passover lambs were sacrificed, the same day that Messiah Yeshua was crucified:

Now **it was the day of preparation for the Passover**; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" (John 19:14, emphasis added).

They led Jesus [Yeshua] therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium **in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover** (John 18:28, emphasis added).

The Jews therefore, because it was **the day of preparation**, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross [tree] on the [Passover] Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day) [the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread], asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away (John 19:31, emphasis added).

According to John, the Last Supper was eaten on the day of preparation for the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. The day of preparation was the 14th of Nisan, sunset Tuesday to sunset Wednesday.⁸ Therefore, the Last Supper was eaten on Tuesday evening, while the Passover meal was eaten on Wednesday evening.

While John's account is clear that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal, the accounts of

⁸ The Last Supper was on Tuesday evening according to our way of reckoning days of the week, the day beginning and ending at midnight. According to Jewish Biblical time, the day begins at sunset, so that the Last Supper was on Wednesday, the 14th of Nisan, with night followed by day.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to the Last Supper taking place on the “first day of unleavened bread”, which is NOT to be confused with the first day of the FEAST of Unleavened Bread:

Now on **the first day of Unleavened Bread** the disciples came to Jesus [Yeshua], saying, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” (Matthew 26:17, emphasis added).

Note that in Matthew 26:17, the word “day” is not in the Greek text and is added to the English translation.⁹

And on **the first day of Unleavened Bread**, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?” (Mark 14:12, emphasis added).

Then came **the first day of Unleavened Bread** on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed (Luke 22:7, emphasis added).

Note that in Luke 22:7, the word “first” is not in the Greek text and is added to the English translation.

The English translations of these verses are sometimes MISINTERPRETED to refer to the FIRST DAY of the FEAST of Unleavened Bread. However, the word “feast” is not in the Greek text, showing that this is not necessarily referring to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but to the day before, when leavened bread was removed in preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

According to Jewish tradition, all leaven was removed the day before the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Since festivals commence in the evening,⁴⁰ this injunction [to remove leaven –

⁹ Alfred Marshall, *The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, p. 89.

Exodus 12:15] has traditionally been taken to mean that the leaven must have been removed prior to the time for the paschal offering on the fourteenth of the month. ...⁴¹

Immediately after dark on the night preceding the eve of the festival, a search for leaven ... takes place – even though the dwelling has previously been thoroughly swept and cleaned.¹⁰

As the disciples were preparing for the Passover meal on the following evening, all leaven would have been removed for the Last Supper.

‘In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land’ (Exodus 12:18-19, emphasis added).

So there was a total of eight days of unleavened bread, and the Last Supper was eaten on the first of the eight days.

From this we can understand that Yeshua’s disciples were preparing for the Last Supper on the evening of the 14th of Nisan after sunset, the next day being the day the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed. Therefore, the 14th of Nisan was the first day of unleavened bread, but the actual Feast of Unleavened Bread did not begin until the following day after sunset, on the 15th of Nisan, when the nation of Israel ate the Passover lambs. Luke shows that the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was called the Passover because that is when the nation of Israel ate the Passover meal.

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching (Luke 22:1, emphasis added).

¹⁰ Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 58.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE THE LAST SUPPER WAS NOT A PASSOVER MEAL

There are three key elements missing from the Biblical account of the Last Supper that are essential parts of the Passover meal:

1. No matzah, the unleavened bread of Passover
2. No lamb
3. No women and children

Additional clues in the Greek text and Biblical account show that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal:

1. Yeshua says that He desires to eat the Passover with them, but that He will not eat it until the Kingdom comes:

And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:15-16).

2. The disciples think that Judas is being sent out to purchase something for the Passover feast, meaning the Passover meal to take place AFTER the Last Supper meal:

For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus [Yeshua] was saying to him, “Buy the things we have need of for the [Passover] feast”; or else, that he should give something to the poor (John 13:29).

If the Last Supper were a Passover meal, Judas would not be going out to purchase something for Passover AFTER the Last Supper meal had been eaten.

3. The bread Yeshua broke at the Last Supper was not *matzah*, the special unleavened bread traditionally eaten at Passover. Matzah is cooked in a thin, crisp wafer, not as a loaf of bread.

The Greek language has a specific word, *azumos* (Strong's #106), to denote *matzah*, the Hebrew word for the unleavened bread of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:1, 12; Luke 22:1, 7; Acts 12:3; 20:6).¹¹ Significantly, this Greek word is not used when referring to the bread that Yeshua broke at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23):

And while they were eating, Jesus [Yeshua] took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26).

If Yeshua had been eating a traditional Passover meal, He would have taken the *matzah*. But as we see from the Greek text, this is not the case. In the following section, we will show the special significance of the Last Supper Bread.

For all the reasons we have given, the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal. This fits the prophetic picture because Yeshua was God's Passover Lamb that was sacrificed at the time the Passover lambs were sacrificed the next day.

THE LAST SUPPER SHOWBREAD

In each and every passage referring to the bread Yeshua took and broke at the Last Supper, the Greek word *artos* (Strong's #740) is used.¹² *Artos* refers to bread in a loaf or cake form; it may be leavened as in ordinary bread, or it may be unleavened, as in the Showbread, the Bread of Presence set before the Lord in the Temple. In the New Testament, the word is used in the following ways:¹³

¹¹ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 77.

¹² Vine, p. 77.

¹³ Vine, p. 77.

1. Showbread – Twelve loaves of unleavened bread placed in the Holy Place of the Temple (Leviticus 24:5-8). The Showbread was called the Bread of Presence because it was continually kept in the presence of God (Exodus 25:30).

The twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, symbolized man's constant indebtedness to God who is the source of every material blessing. The showbread was a special form of meal offering, which was eaten by the priests in the sanctuary. The *lehem ha-panim* (bread of the presence) was so named because it was placed before God, as a permanent expression of gratitude.

The presence-bread, or showbread, was required to be constantly in the presence of the Lord. Each Sabbath fresh loaves replaced the old, which then belonged to the priests who ate them in a holy place because they were regarded as a holy offering.¹⁴

When they became hungry, David and his men ate the Showbread (1 Samuel 21:6; Matthew 12:4, KJV, NKJV, Amplified Bible):

But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate **the showbread** which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? (Matthew 12:3-4, NKJV, emphasis added).

The NASB and NIV versions translate “consecrated bread” from the literal Greek meaning “loaves of the setting forth”, referring to the Showbread set forth before the Lord in the Temple.

But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house of God, and they ate **the consecrated bread**, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?” (Matthew 12:3-4, NASB, emphasis added).

¹⁴ Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts*, p. 312.

2. The Bread Yeshua broke at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19):

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19).

The word *artos* is also used to refer to the Bread of Communion (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-24).

3. Bread, metaphorically speaking; for example, Messiah Yeshua as the Bread of God and the Bread of Life:

“For **the bread of God** is that which comes down out of **heaven**, and **gives life** to the world” (John 6:33).

Jesus [Yeshua] said to them, “**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

4. Bread in general, but often including a spiritual context; for example, the multiplication of the loaves (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16; John 6:11); speaking of bread as a necessary sustenance of life (Matthew 6:11; 2 Corinthians 9:10).

With this understanding of the various usages of the word *artos*, let us consider how it applies to the Last Supper Bread.

Since Yeshua instructed Peter and John to prepare a room for Passover, there would not have been any leavened bread at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-13; Luke 22:7-13). Therefore, the bread that Yeshua broke was not leavened bread, yet it was not *matzah*, the flat unleavened bread used for Passover. This we know because the Greek word denoting *matzah* (*azumos*) is not used to describe the bread.

This means that the loaf of bread Yeshua broke was UNLEAVENED, unlike ordinary leavened bread, and similar to the loaves of the Showbread in the Temple.

In this regard, it is very interesting to note that, according to the Mishnah (Menachot 11:2), it was lawful for the Showbread to be prepared in Bethpage.¹⁵ Bethpage was also the place where the donkey for Yeshua's triumphal entry into Jerusalem was obtained. During the Passover week, Yeshua stayed with friends in Bethany, very close to Bethphage, both of which were located on the Mount of Olives. One of Yeshua's disciples had priestly connections and could have acquired Showbread for the Last Supper (John 18:15-16).¹⁶

And Simon Peter was following Jesus [Yeshua], and so was **another disciple**. **Now that disciple was known to the high priest**, and entered with Jesus [Yeshua] into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. **So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest**, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought in Peter (John 18:15-16, emphasis added).

Even if Yeshua did not obtain bread specifically prepared as Showbread, the bread He obtained was most certainly a loaf of unleavened bread just like the Showbread. And as the Eternal High Priest, Yeshua was surely able to consecrate and present the bread at the Last Supper as Showbread before God the Father.

The prophetic picture of the Showbread represents Messiah Yeshua in many ways. The Showbread is a symbol of the Messiah in both Jewish and Christian traditions.¹⁷ The Showbread was unleavened, representing spiritual purity. The Showbread was perforated, symbolizing the piercing of Yeshua (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34-37).¹⁸ The Showbread was consecrated to the

¹⁵ Edersheim, *The Temple* (1994 Updated Edition), p. 140.

¹⁶ The reference to "another disciple" seems to refer to John, who with Peter prepared the room for the Last Supper (Luke 22:8).

¹⁷ Edersheim, p. 144.

¹⁸ Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of Moses*, p. 37.

Lord and continually in His presence; Messiah Yeshua, the Son of God, is eternally present with the Father (John 1:1-2). The Showbread represented the Presence of the Lord with us; Messiah Yeshua is God dwelling with us (Matthew 1:23).

The Showbread was always offered with great gratitude. Yeshua was grateful to be able to give His body, symbolized by the Last Supper Bread, to be broken for the sins of humanity (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19):

And when He [Yeshua] had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19).

As the Bread of God and the Bread of Life, Yeshua gives life to the world:

Jesus [Yeshua] therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. **For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.**” They said therefore to Him, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” Jesus [Yeshua] said to them, “**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:32-35, emphasis added).

Yeshua presented Himself as the final and complete offering for the sins of humanity, and by His sacrifice gives eternal life in the presence of God:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

Just as the priests in the Temple ate the Showbread, Yeshua’s disciples ate the Last Supper Showbread given to them by the Eternal High Priest, Messiah Yeshua. Only those priests who

were in a state of Levitical purity, meaning spiritual purity, could lawfully eat the showbread.¹⁹ By His sacrifice, Yeshua's disciples were, and all believers are, spiritually purified and made partakers in the New Priesthood of the New Covenant.

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

and He [Yeshua] has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:6).

The twelve loaves of Showbread represented the Twelve Tribes of Israel and they also represent Yeshua's Twelve Disciples or Apostles. In the Word of God, the number 12 represents the perfection of God's government.²⁰ Salvation comes through the Messiah of Israel and all who put their trust in Yeshua for salvation are part of God's Kingdom. The Twelve Apostles represent the New Covenant Priesthood, which includes every person who trusts in Yeshua for salvation.

When Yeshua broke the Last Supper Showbread into pieces for the disciples, Judas was not present to partake. Judas rejected Yeshua as the Messiah and therefore could not partake of His sacrifice to become a part of the New Covenant Priesthood. However, Matthias was selected (by God's working through the picking of lots) to replace Judas, maintaining God's governmental order (Acts 1:26). There is a parallel to the Twelve Tribes of Israel revealed in the Book of Revelation. The Tribe of Dan is not included because of its rejection of God but is replaced by Manasseh, the son of Joseph (Revelation 7:5-8), thereby maintaining God's governmental order.

The Last Supper Showbread REPRESENTED Yeshua's body. Clearly, the disciples were not literally eating Yeshua's body, nor is the believer partaking of Communion eating the literal body of Yeshua. The meaning of the Last Supper Bread and Wine is entirely symbolic:

¹⁹ Edersheim, p. 144.

²⁰ E. W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance*, p. 253.

And when He [Yeshua] had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, **“This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”** And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:19-20, emphasis added).

TIMELINE OF PASSOVER WEEK EVENTS

In the following timeline of Passover week events, dates are according to the Biblical (Jewish) calendar for the month of Nisan (Abib). According to the Biblical calendar, the day begins at sunset. This is in contrast to the day beginning at midnight according to the Julian calendar of the Roman Empire at the time of the Crucifixion, and our present-day Gregorian calendar. Note: Days of the week in the timeline below are according to our modern way of reckoning days.

10th of Nisan – the Weekly Sabbath Day (Friday evening to Saturday evening)

Passover lambs selected and examined for four days; Yeshua, God’s Passover Lamb, presented to the people for examination for four days before His crucifixion.

10th-11th of Nisan – Yeshua enters Jerusalem on a donkey (Saturday late afternoon to evening)

Yeshua in His role as Messiah and King enters Jerusalem on a donkey at the end of the weekly Sabbath day (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5).

11th of Nisan (Sunday)

Yeshua in His role as High Priest cleanses the Temple.

12th of Nisan (Monday)

Yeshua in His role as Prophet teaches at the Temple.

14th of Nisan (Tuesday evening)

Last Supper and Yeshua's arrest.

14th of Nisan (Wednesday)

Crucifixion and Yeshua's body placed in a tomb before sunset.

15th of Nisan (Wednesday evening)

Passover meal eaten by the nation of Israel.

15th of Nisan (Thursday)

Tomb sealed by the Temple Guard (Matthew 27:62-66).

16th of Nisan (Friday)

Women buy and prepare spices after the annual Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Mark 16:1).

17th of Nisan (Friday evening)

Beginning of the weekly Sabbath, the women rest according to Sabbath law before taking spices the next morning to complete preparation of Yeshua's body (Luke 23:56).

17th of Nisan (Saturday, the Sabbath day)

Resurrection; women go to the tomb to complete preparation of Yeshua's body and discover Yeshua has resurrected.

With this basic understanding of the timetable of Passover week events, let us take a closer look at the important events leading up to Yeshua's crucifixion and resurrection in His role as Messiah, King, High Priest, and the greatest Prophet promised by God.

YESHUA EXAMINED AS GOD'S PASSOVER LAMB

The Lord commanded that the Passover lambs be selected on the 10th of Nisan:

“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household’” (Exodus 12:3).

According to the timeline of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread events, the 10th of Nisan fell on a weekly Sabbath day (Friday evening to Saturday evening). On that Friday evening, six days before the Passover meal of the nation of Israel, Yeshua came to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, the man He raised from the dead. Yeshua and His disciples shared the Sabbath meal with their close friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

Jesus [Yeshua], therefore, six days before the Passover [first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread], came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus [Yeshua] had raised from the dead (John 12:1).

The weekly Sabbath before Passover is called the Great Sabbath because it commemorates the Sabbath preceding the Exodus from Egypt.²¹ Edersheim explains:

The modern synagogue designates the Sabbath before the Passover as ‘the Great Sabbath’, and prescribes particular prayers and special instruction with a view to the coming festival. For, according to Jewish tradition, at the original institution of the Passover (Exod. 12:3), **the 10th of Nisan, on which the sacrifice was to be selected, had fallen on a Sabbath** (emphasis added).²²

²¹ Birnbaum, p. 581.

²² Edersheim, p. 170.

Although there is no evidence that the name and observance of the Great Sabbath dates back to Yeshua's time²³, the key point here is that at the time of the Exodus, the 10th of Nisan, when the Passover lambs were selected, fell on a weekly Sabbath day.²⁴ The identical prophetic pattern and timeline repeated in A.D. 31, including the selection and examination of Messiah Yeshua as God's Passover Lamb, beginning on the 10th of Nisan, which fell on a weekly Sabbath day. This also means that the Exodus Passover lambs were sacrificed on Wednesday, the same day of the week that Yeshua was sacrificed as God's Passover Lamb. That there is such a precise lineup of the date and days of the week is prophetically significant.

On the 10th of Nisan, the Passover lambs were selected by each Jewish family and brought into the home for a four-day examination period prior to the Passover sacrifice. The lamb had to be a firstborn male without blemish in order to be an acceptable sacrifice. The four-day period allowed ample time to examine the lamb for any defect and, if necessary, sufficient time to find an acceptable replacement.

Following the prophetic pattern of the Passover lamb, Yeshua, the Lamb of God, began a four-day period of examination by the people and the religious leaders. He was found to be perfect and without sin, the one and only acceptable sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

YESHUA ENTERS JERUSALEM AS MESSIAH AND KING

During His period of examination as the Lamb of God, Yeshua entered Jerusalem as Messiah and King, fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah:

²³ Edersheim, p. 170.

²⁴ "According to a tradition in Shabbat 87b, that day was a Sabbath, which is one of the reasons adduced for entitling the Sabbath before Passover 'the Great Sabbath' (Heb. *Shabbat ha-gadol*)" (Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 54). Based upon a month of 30 days for the first month of Nisan, this can be shown to be true by calculating backward from the 15th of the second month, which fell on a Sabbath day, as ascertained from the Biblical text of Exodus Chapter 16 (Exodus 16:1; 12-14; 22-23). The manna began to fall on the 16th of the second month, fell for six days until the seventh day, a weekly Sabbath day. Counting back to the 10th of the first month, given the first month was a 30-day month, shows that the 10th of Nisan did indeed fall on a Sabbath day.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).

Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, ‘BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN’” (Matthew 21:4-5).

In preparation for His entry into Jerusalem, Yeshua instructed His disciples to obtain a donkey colt that had never been ridden from Bethphage (Mark 11:1-7). Bethphage was the official entry point into the holy city.²⁵ From this point, Yeshua road on the main road up the eastern side of the Mount of Olives to its summit and down its western slope to the Temple:

In His ‘triumphal’ entry into Jerusalem Jesus came from the Mount of Olives (Mt. 21:1; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29), and Lk, who mentions the ‘descent’ of the mount in 19:37 ... If Bethphage ... was indeed on the heights of the Mount of Olives and perhaps about one-half mile east of the summit, then **the most direct route to the city would have been right over the summit and straight down the slope to the west**. This was a relatively steep descent and provided striking views of the city. ... The Inbomon [the absolute summit, near the Crucifixion site] and the Eleona [Pater Noster Church, location of Yeshua’s tomb] were on this route at the top of the mount. ...

The paths which go down there now mitigate the steepness by their zigzag course, which may be judged likely for the ancient way too.²⁶

²⁵ Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Revised Edition), p. 163.

²⁶ Finegan, p. 171.

Yeshua would follow this same main roadway from Jerusalem to the summit of the Mount of Olives, where He was crucified as God's Passover Lamb for humanity's sins.

As Yeshua rode the donkey into Jerusalem, the people acclaimed Him as the Son of David and Messiah:

And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus [Yeshua], from Nazareth in Galilee" (Matthew 21:9-11).

The apostle Mark indicates that by the time Yeshua reached the Temple, it was already late and Yeshua departed for Bethany with His disciples to spend the night:

And He entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late (Mark 11:11).

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* translation clarifies that it was "already the evening hour":

And Jesus [Yeshua] entered into Jerusalem and into the sanctuary. And looking all about, *it* being already the evening hour, He came out to Bethany with the twelve (Mark 11:11).

This means that Yeshua entered the Temple precincts after sunset, after the Sabbath, although He likely began His entry into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives on the Sabbath day, in the late afternoon on Saturday (10th of Nisan). There was no violation of the Sabbath travel restrictions or activities by Yeshua or the crowd who acclaimed Him as the Messiah.

Palm branches carried by the people and spread on the road for Yeshua symbolized triumphant homage to a king.²⁷

And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road (Matthew 21:8).

In jubilation, they called on Yeshua to save them, recognizing Him as the Son of David, the One who comes in the Name of the Lord, and the King of Israel:

And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9).

And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, “Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:9-10).

On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus [Yeshua] was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, “Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel” (John 12:12-13).

Note: “Hosanna” (Strong’s #5614) means “oh save!” and is also “an exclamation of adoration”.²⁸ “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” is quoted from Psalms 118:26.

The multitudes were participants in and witnesses of the fulfillment of a prophecy made more than five hundred years before by the prophet Zechariah:

²⁷ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 220.

²⁸ Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, New Testament Dictionary, p. 2318.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey
(Zechariah 9:9).

“Your King” refers to the Messiah, the son of David. By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Messiah Yeshua came in humility, according to Zechariah’s prophecy.

The Talmud notes the contrast between the Messiah coming in glory with the clouds of Heaven, as described by Daniel 7:13, and the Messiah coming as a humble person, as described by Zechariah. The Talmud explains the reason for the difference as depending upon the worthiness of Israel. If Israel was worthy, the Messiah would come in great glory; if not, He would come as a humble person.²⁹ Believers understand the two pictures in terms of Yeshua’s First and Second Comings.

YESHUA CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE AS HIGH PRIEST

Messiah Yeshua is our eternal Heavenly High Priest, the High Priest of the New Covenant (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11).

Following His entry into Jerusalem as Messiah and King, Yeshua returned to Bethany to be among His closest friends and disciples. After spending the night, Yeshua returned to Jerusalem the next day, Sunday (11th of Nisan). As He walked along the pathway to the city, He singled out a particular fig tree and said: “May no one ever eat fruit from you again” (Mark 11:14). Because it was not the season for figs (Mark 11:13), Yeshua’s words must have had profound meaning.

In this regard, we believe that this fig tree represented the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, which we believe grew on the Mount of Olives (see Chapter 4 The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). If so, Yeshua paid the price for humanity’s sins in the very

²⁹ Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg (Translator), *Twelve Prophets*, Vol. 2, p. 362.

place the first sin was committed, which would certainly be very prophetically significant according to God's master plan of redemption. We also think that Yeshua's words may have alluded to His impending sacrifice, perhaps expressing the hope that humankind would accept His sacrifice and no longer partake of the fruit of disobedience.

After cursing the fig tree, Yeshua continued along the road that led across the Kidron Valley from the Mount of Olives to the Temple Mount. After crossing the valley, He ascended the steps at the Temple platform's southern entrance, which led to the Royal Stoa. Here, in His role as High Priest, Yeshua overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those selling animals for sacrifice, referring to them as robbers (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46).

And Jesus [Yeshua] entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN" (Matthew 21:12-13).

Afterwards, He once again returned to spend the night in Bethany.

YESHUA TEACHES AT THE TEMPLE AS PROPHET

The next day, Monday (12th of Nisan), Yeshua and His disciples returned to the Temple, where Yeshua taught as the Prophet promised by God (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Matthew 21:11, 46; Luke 7:16-17; 24:19; John 6:14; 7:40).

From Bethany to Jerusalem, they followed the same road as they had the day before, when Yeshua first cursed the fig tree on the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:12-14). This time, when Yeshua said, "No longer shall there ever be fruit from you," the fig tree instantly withered (Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:20-21).

On the same day, the corrupt religious leaders were plotting how to eliminate Yeshua as He posed a great threat to their position, power, and authority (John 11:48). They saw how the multitudes acclaimed Yeshua as Son of David and Messiah when He entered Jerusalem on the donkey. As Yeshua was teaching in the Temple area, the chief priests and elders challenged His authority:

And when He had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?” And Jesus [Yeshua] answered and said to them, “I will ask you one thing too, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. “The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?” And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ “But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude; for they all hold John to be a prophet.” And answering Jesus [Yeshua], they said, “We do not know.” He also said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things (Matthew 21:23-27).

After this exchange, Yeshua went on to tell two parables illustrating the unbelief, disobedience, lack of repentance, and murderous intent of the corrupt religious leaders and elders (Matthew 21:28-41).

Then the Pharisees who were working with the Herodians³⁰ sent their disciples to ask Yeshua a question they hoped would trap Him into giving a politically dangerous answer that would guarantee His death as an insurgent. The answer He gave astounded them and caused them to retreat in defeat (Matthew 22:15-22).

Following this, the Sadducees (who did not believe in an afterlife) asked Yeshua a question concerning the resurrection of the dead. Yeshua condemned their ignorance of the Word and power of God, and gave insight into the existence and nature of eternal life (Matthew 22:23-33).

³⁰ A political group that supported the Herodian rulers put into power by Rome.

After this, the Pharisees sent a scribe (an expert in the Mosaic Law) to ask Yeshua a question they thought would be impossible to answer but Yeshua answered with the wisdom of God (Matthew 22:34-40). Then Yeshua asked the Pharisees a question about the Messiah that they could not answer and showed from the Word of God that He is both Messiah and God. From this time forward, no one dared to question His authority (Matthew 22:41-46).

The Lord then spoke to the multitudes, exposing the hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, greed, self-righteousness, and corruption of the religious leaders (Matthew 23:1-33). Instead of leading the people to receive their Messiah, the corrupt religious leaders rejected Messiah Yeshua and sought His destruction. Yeshua mourned over the city of Jerusalem because of the coming destruction, judgment for the rejection of God's prophets and His Messiah (Matthew 23:37-39).

Yeshua then left the Temple area and went to the Mount of Olives, where the disciples questioned Him about His prophecies concerning the destruction of the Temple, the End-Times, and His return. Yeshua explained these things to them directly and in parables (Matthew 24 and 25). He also prophesied that in two days (Wednesday), He would be delivered up for crucifixion (Matthew 26:2).

YESHUA ANOINTED BEFORE HIS DEATH

Yeshua spent His last day before the crucifixion among His disciples and friends in Bethany. At the house of Simon the leper, a woman anointed His head with a very costly perfume. Though the disciples thought it would have been better to sell the perfume and give the money to the poor, Yeshua again made reference to His approaching death in saying she had done a good deed by anointing Him in preparation for His burial (Matthew 26:6-13).

YESHUA CONSECRATES HIS DISCIPLES AS PRIESTS OF THE NEW COVENANT

At the Last Supper on Tuesday evening (14th of Nisan), Yeshua washed the feet of His disciples, signifying their consecration as priests of the New Covenant.

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

and He [Yeshua] has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:6).

According to the Mosaic Covenant, God commanded that the priests wash their hands and feet before coming into His presence and performing service in the Tabernacle or Temple (Exodus 30:19-21). In washing the feet of His disciples, Yeshua showed that they were consecrated for service to God in sharing the Good News of salvation in Messiah Yeshua (John 13:5-7).

Yeshua said that all His disciples (except one, Judas) were clean, meaning they were spiritually clean, their hearts right before God (John 13:10). They were ready for service to God as part of Yeshua's New Priesthood of the New Covenant. Only their feet required washing, symbolically preparing them for the new path they would take in service to God in taking the message of salvation in Messiah Yeshua to the world.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

Yeshua said that one of the disciples was unclean, meaning spiritually unclean, with a wrong motive of the heart. This was Judas, the one Yeshua knew would betray Him to the religious authorities (John 13:10-11, 21). Yeshua sent him away before He broke the consecrated Showbread that represented His body to be broken for the sins of humanity. Judas was not

allowed to partake of the Last Supper Showbread. In a metaphorical way, Judas, like the leaven representing sin, had to be removed before Yeshua broke the consecrated bread.

Peter at first refused to allow Yeshua to wash his feet, but Yeshua told Peter that he would not have any part with Him if he did not allow it. Yeshua meant that if Peter were not prepared for service by having his feet symbolically washed, he would not be a part of Yeshua's new priestly order. Beginning to understand the symbolic significance, Peter asked that Yeshua wash not only his feet, but also his hands and his head. However, Yeshua replied that his head (representing his mind), and his hands (representing his works), were already clean, and so it was not necessary for them to be washed.

In instructing the disciples to wash each other's feet, Yeshua symbolically conveyed to them that they are to serve each other and be in an equal relationship as part of His New Priesthood, including all believers, with Messiah Yeshua as the one and only head (John 13:12-16).

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE LAST SUPPER BREAD AND WINE

At the Last Supper, Yeshua took the bread and wine to SYMBOLIZE His body and blood.³¹

And while they were eating, Jesus [Yeshua] took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28).

³¹ The doctrine that the bread and wine literally turns into the body and blood of Yeshua is an erroneous and false doctrine. God forbids the consumption of blood (Leviticus 17:10) and would never contradict His Word. Yeshua said He had to leave this Earth in order for the Holy Spirit to come into the world by indwelling believers (John 16:17). Therefore, the bread and wine cannot be His literal body and blood. Yeshua continued to refer to the wine as wine, not His blood, after He used it to symbolize His blood (Matthew 26:29). What Yeshua meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood was to receive eternal life by trusting in His sacrifice for sin (John 6:53-54).

Similarly, Yeshua referred to Himself symbolically as the Bread of Life, the Bread of God from Heaven that gives eternal life:

Jesus [Yeshua] therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” They said therefore to Him, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” Jesus [Yeshua] said to them, “**I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst**” (John 6:32-35, emphasis added).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **I am the living bread that came down out of heaven;** if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh” (John 6:47-51, emphasis added).

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God miraculously provided Manna from Heaven. They were to collect no more than their daily need, except the day before Sabbath, when they were to collect twice as much so that they would not have to work on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:16, 22). By following God’s instruction, the people showed their faith (trust) that He would provide for their daily needs. The amount collected was called an *omer* and provided total and complete sustenance.

The *omer* can also be seen to symbolically represent the Messiah, the Bread of Life. In this regard, it is highly significant that Aaron, the first High Priest, was instructed to keep one *omer* of Manna in a jar in the Holy of Holies, in front of the Ark of the Covenant, as a sign to all the generations of God’s providence (Exodus 16:33). The *omer* of Manna represented Yeshua, the spiritual Bread from Heaven. In Him, all of an individual’s spiritual needs are met.

Yeshua told His disciples to partake of the bread IN REMEMBRANCE of His sacrifice:

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me**” (Luke 22:19, emphasis added).

After offering the disciples the bread, Yeshua offered them the wine SYMBOLIZING Yeshua’s blood, shed to seal the New Covenant for the forgiveness of sins:

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is **My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins**. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:27-29, emphasis added).

Yeshua’s blood had to be shed for the forgiveness of humanity’s sins:

And according to the [Mosaic] Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and **without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness** (Hebrews 9:22).

The blood of innocent animals could only provide a temporary covering for sin. Only the blood of Yeshua could provide the all-sufficient and complete atonement for the sins of humanity:

But when Christ [Messiah] appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and **not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption**. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ [Messiah], who

through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason **He is the mediator of a new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:11-15, emphasis added).

YESHUA'S ARREST BY THE LEVITE TEMPLE GUARD, NOT ROMAN SOLDIERS

After the Last Supper meal, Yeshua and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives, where they had often enjoyed one another's company. This time, however, it was not a pleasurable time of relaxation, for Yeshua felt the crushing weight of what He was about to endure. He selected His closest disciples to come away from the group in order to pray. He then moved apart from them to pray to His Father to spare Him, if possible, from the terrible suffering to come. Nevertheless, He asked that the will of the Father be done, knowing that the only way to bring salvation to humankind was through His own sacrifice (Matthew 26:36-39).

Sadly, when Yeshua needed the support of his closest disciples, they fell asleep. Knowing that His time was at hand, He woke His disciples. Then Judas Iscariot approached with the Levite Temple Guard, who took Him to the High Priest.

If we remember that the Sanhedrin usually held their sessions in the Temple area, we can have little doubt that the band sent by this authority to arrest Jesus (Mark 14.43; Matt. 26.47; Luke 22.47; John 18.3, 12), consisted of these **levitical police from the Temple, reinforced by servants of the high priest** (Matt. 26.51 par.). ... John very properly distinguishes between the servants (of the high priest) and the officers (Levite Temple police) (emphasis added).³²

³² Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, p. 210.

There were no Roman soldiers involved in the arrest of Yeshua although misinterpretation and mistranslation have caused this common misunderstanding. For example, in the New American Standard Bible, John 18:3, 12, the word “Roman” appears in italics, showing that this is an added word not found in the Greek text. Also, the Greek word *speira* (Strong’s #4686), meaning “band” or “squad”, is incorrectly translated “cohort”, referring to a Roman military unit. But the context clearly shows that those who arrested Yeshua were acting under the authority of the chief priests, not the Roman authorities.

Judas then, having received the *Roman* cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons (John 18:3).

So the *Roman* cohort and the commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus [Yeshua] and bound Him (John 18:12).

Other English translations do not include the word “Roman.” The King James Version (KJV) adds the words “of men” in John 18:3.

Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons (John 18:3, KJV).

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus [Yeshua], and bound him (John 18:12, KJV).

The *Concordant Literal New Testament with the Keyword Concordance* provides a good literal translation:

Judas, then, getting **a squad and deputies of the chief priests and Pharisees**, is coming there with lanterns and torches and weapons (John 18:3, emphasis added).³³

³³ *Concordant Literal New Testament with the Keyword Concordance*, p. 271.

The **squad**, then, and the **captain** [*chiliarchos*], and the **deputies of the Jews** apprehended Jesus [Yeshua] (John 18:12, emphasis added).³⁴

In John 18:12, the Greek word *chiliarchos* (Strong's #5506) is translated "captain" in the *Concordant Literal New Testament*, KJV, NKJV, and Amplified Bible; and "commander" in the NASB and NIV. The literal meaning of *chiliarchos* is "commander of a thousand soldiers"³⁵; "chiliarch"³⁶ refers to "a military rank dating back to Antiquity".³⁷ In this context, "chiliarch" refers to the Captain of the Temple Guard.

Luke explicitly states that officers of the Temple came to arrest Yeshua:

And a certain one of them struck **the slave of the high priest** and cut off his right ear. But Jesus [Yeshua] answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. And Jesus [Yeshua] said to the **chief priests and officers of the temple** and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a robber?" (Luke 22:50-52, emphasis added).

According to Edersheim:

By day and night it was the duty of the Levites to keep guard at the gates. ... To them the duties of the Temple police were also entrusted, under the command of an official known to us in the New Testament as the 'captain of the Temple' (Acts 4:1, etc.), but in Jewish writings chiefly as 'the man of the Temple Mount.' ... At night guards were placed in twenty-four stations about the gates and courts. Of these twenty-one were occupied by Levites alone; the other innermost three jointly by priests and Levites.¹³ Each guard consisted of ten men; so that in all two

³⁴ *Concordant Literal New Testament with the Keyword Concordance*, p. 272.

³⁵ Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, New Testament Dictionary, p. 2310

³⁶ Alfred Marshall, *The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, p. 329.

³⁷ Wikipedia, article: Chiliarch - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiliarch> - accessed 2015.

hundred and forty Levites and thirty priests were on duty every night.³⁸

It was also the Temple Guard who sealed the stone to Yeshua's tomb and set up watch (Matthew 27:62-66), and reported to the chief priests (not the Roman authorities) after the Resurrection (Matthew 28:11-15).

Now on the next day, which is *the one* after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate. ... Pilate said to them, **“You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.”** And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone (Matthew 27:62, 65-66, emphasis added).

Now while they were on their way, behold, some of **the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests** all that had happened (Matthew 28:11, emphasis added).

Knowing the purpose of the arresting party, Yeshua asked whom they sought. When they replied “Yeshua the Nazarene”, His response was: “I am”.³⁹ Immediately, they backed away and fell to the ground (John 18:5-6). They seem to have been overcome by the power of God, whose name is I AM (Exodus 3:14). Yeshua voluntarily gave Himself over to them in order to fulfill His purpose of redeeming humankind. Prior to this, whenever His enemies had desired to seize Him, they had never been able to do so. However, this was God's appointed time for the sacrifice of His Passover Lamb (Matthew 26:56).

YESHUA CONDEMNED BY A CORRUPT SANHEDRIN IN AN ILLEGAL TRIAL

Yeshua asked that His disciples not be arrested along with Him. As He allowed Himself to be led away, the disciples fled in fear. Only Peter and John followed at a safe distance as the arresting party led Yeshua to the high priest, Caiaphas. Yeshua was questioned first by Annas, former

³⁸ Edersheim, p. 111.

³⁹ Translations add the word “he” – “I am he” – although the word “he” is not in the original Greek text.

high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas (John 18:13). Caiaphas and Annas were members of the priestly aristocracy made up primarily of Sadducees, who also dominated the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish legal authority that tried Yeshua.

The trial of Yeshua was illegal for a number of reasons, one being the attempt to condemn Yeshua to death based on the testimonies of false witnesses.

Now the chief priests and the whole Council [Sanhedrin] kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus [Yeshua], in order that they might put Him to death; and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward (Matthew 26:59-60).

Now the chief priests and the whole Council [Sanhedrin] kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus [Yeshua] to put Him to death; and they were not finding any. For many were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent (Mark 14:55-56).

To these false accusations, Yeshua did not reply. At this point, Caiaphas directly asked Yeshua: “Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” Yeshua responded: “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:61-62). This evoked a judgment of blasphemy by the High Priest and condemnation by all to a death sentence (Mark 14:64). But, in fact, those passing judgment condemned themselves. Indeed, they violated their own law by holding an illegal trial (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:1):

In cases involving capital punishment, the sentence could not lawfully be delivered until the day following the trial, and therefore such trials were also prohibited on the eve of either a Sabbath or a feast day (San 4:1). Cases involving potential capital punishments were similarly barred from taking place at night (San 4:1). According to Tosephta (San 7:1), the hours of meeting on regular days were from the time of the morning sacrifice to the evening sacrifice.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5, p. 271.

YESHUA FOUND INNOCENT BY PILATE

Although the High Priest and Sanhedrin condemned Yeshua to death for blasphemy, they accused Yeshua of inciting the people to rebellion against Roman authority in order to have the Roman authorities carry out the execution.

And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ [Messiah], a King” (Luke 23:2).

From their perspective, Yeshua committed blasphemy for claiming to be the Messiah, which also meant He was King of the Jews. They used this line of reasoning to accuse Yeshua of claiming to be King of the Jews, which would lead to rebellion against Rome.

For this reason, Yeshua was taken before to the Praetorium to stand judgment before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea. In previous editions of this book, we located the Praetorium in the Antonia Fortress, just north of the Temple. However, new archaeological evidence shows that the Praetorium was located at Herod’s palace on the western side of the city.

Tradition dating back to the medieval period places the *praetorium*—where the trial of Jesus was held, according to the Gospels²—in the Antonia Fortress in the northeastern part of the Old City. The Antonia Fortress, however, would have been too small to be the residence and headquarters of the governor; its main purpose, furthermore, was to serve as a military observation tower. **Scholarly consensus today associates the *praetorium* with Herod’s palace on the western side of the city.**³

“Herod’s palace was not a building—it was a compound,” Shimon Gibson told *Bible History Daily*. “The compound was ideal for Roman governors.”

In *The World of Jesus*, Gibson explains why it's likely the *praetorium* was located in Herod's palace complex:

[T]here can be no doubt that on the occasions when [Pilate] stayed in Jerusalem, particularly during the Jewish festivities, he took up residence at Herod's old palace situated on the west side of the city, also known as the *praetorium*. **The word *praetorium* might refer to a palace or a judicial military seat, but it is likely that in Jerusalem it referred to the entire palace compound**, which on the north included palatial buildings used for residential purposes and on the south, military barracks.⁴

(bold emphasis added).⁴¹

Locating the Praetorium at Herod's palace is consistent with Mark's account that identifies the Praetorium in association with the palace:

And the soldiers took Him away into **the palace (that is, the Praetorium)**, and they called together the whole *Roman* cohort (Mark 15:16, bold emphasis added).

The [Gospel of Mark](#) uses the word *aulē* ("hall", "palace") to identify the praetorium.^[1] Outside the praetorium proper, there was an area called the Pavement.^[Jn. 19:13] Pilate's judgement seat (**Greek: bēma**), in which he conversed with the Jews, was located there.^[1]⁴²

⁴¹ Robert Ngo, "Tour Showcases Remains of Herod's Jerusalem Palace – Possible Site of the Trial of Jesus", *Bible History Daily*, March 1, 2016 (originally published in 2015) – <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-places/herods-jerusalem-palace-trial-of-jesus/> - accessed October 6, 2016.

⁴² Wikipedia, article: Pilate's court, section: Praetorium site - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilate%27s_court - accessed October 6, 2016.

The religious leaders did not go into the Praetorium for fear of becoming defiled (John 18:28). In their religiosity, they adhered to certain strict legalisms, yet violated the spirit of the Law for the sake of power and position, as they falsely condemned Yeshua.

Pilate asked what accusation they brought against Yeshua. Even at the initial stage of his involvement, Pilate revealed a reluctance to deal with this case. He told the religious leaders to “judge Him according to your law” (John 18:31). It seems he was trying to heed the warning given to him by his wife, who had experienced a foreboding dream concerning Yeshua the night before (Matthew 27:19).

However, the religious leaders forced the issue by stating that they could not lawfully perform execution without Roman permission. When Pilate heard that the accused was a Galilean, he sent Yeshua to King Herod. Herod had heard of the amazing miracles Yeshua had performed and was most eager to become a firsthand witness. Yeshua’s refusal to perform “signs and wonders” for Herod provoked cruel ridicule and abuse (Luke 23:9-11). After Herod and his men were through with Yeshua, He was returned to Pilate.

Pilate then asked Yeshua: “Are you the King of the Jews,” to which Yeshua responded: “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews [Jewish authorities]” (John 18:36).

At this point, it is essential to clarify the meaning of the Greek words *hoi Ioudaioi*, translated “the Jews” in John 18:36 According Malcolm Lowe, a Christian writer, editor and lecturer residing in Jerusalem:

Sometimes *hoi Ioudaioi* means the Judean population in general, sometimes specifically their leaders....

Moreover, John’s Gospel says that the people of Judea stopped opposing Jesus. After he raised Lazarus from the dead, most of the people changed to admiring him. **When John 19 is read carefully, one finds that the people had no role in**

the death of Jesus. Even those who call for the freeing of Barabbas are not a crowd of people, but just the chief priests and their officers (emphasis added).⁴³

A careful reading of the Word of God confirms that the Jewish people as a whole admired Yeshua and considered Him to be a great prophet from God. It was the political and religious leadership who were threatened by Him and desired to kill Him. When Pilate asked Yeshua if He were King of the Jews, he was referring to “the Jews”, meaning the general Jewish population. When Yeshua answered Pilate, He referred to being delivered over to “the Jews”, meaning the corrupt Jewish leadership, not the people.

Pilate judged Yeshua innocent (Luke 23:4, 14; John 18:38) and understood that the religious leaders wanted Him dead because of envy (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10).

THE EDMITE CONNECTION TO THE CRUCIFIXION

Herod the Great founded the Herodian dynasty. Herod was not Jewish by birth – his father was an Edomite (Idumean), from the line of Esau, and his mother was a Nabatean Arab, from the line of Ishmael.⁴⁴ From ancient times (to the present), the descendants of Esau and Ishmael, who have intermixed, have been in conflict with the descendants of Judah, the Jews.

At the time the Maccabean Hasmoneans annexed Idumea, the Edomites living there were compelled to adopt Judasim. For this reason, Herod considered himself to be a Jew. However, the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of the people, and the Jewish people never accepted Herod and his descendants as legitimate rulers. Only by the might of Rome was Herod’s position as ruler of the Jews secured.

According to Jewish interpretation, Zechariah prophesied concerning the Edomite Herod and his house ruling Israel:

⁴³ Malcolm Lowe, “Understanding John’s Gospel (II),” *Christians and Israel*, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder (Editor), *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, p. 436.

And the LORD said to me, “Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs. Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered, and his right eye will be blind” (Zechariah 11:15-17).

Based on this understanding, Judah was to be ruled by an evil shepherd from the line of Esau. This found its fulfillment in Herod and his descendants, who were not true Jews, and ruled Judah under Roman domination.⁴⁵ The power of this prophecy is more fully appreciated when understood in its Biblical and historical context. Most importantly, the political power at the time of Yeshua was held by the Edomites, not the Jews. The Edomites, the descendants of Esau intermixed with the descendants of Ishmael, had always been a bitter enemy of the Jews. For a complete picture, a brief summary of relevant Biblical and historical facts is helpful.

Esau and Jacob were brothers, the sons of Isaac. After selling his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:29-34), Esau resented his brother and swore to kill him (Genesis 27:41-45). Subsequently, Esau’s descendants intermarried with the Canaanites and occupied Edom, the area south and east of the Dead Sea.⁴⁶ The Edomites became the historical enemy of Judah, as highlighted by their rejoicing at Jerusalem’s destruction by the Babylonians. Having allied themselves with Babylon, they subsequently occupied southern Judea.

During the fifth century B.C., Edom came under Arab control. By the fourth century B.C., the Edomites were overrun by the Nabateans, who pushed them out of their native lands. Eventually, some Edomites were absorbed by the Nabatean Arabs, while others moved back into southern Judea, which was called Idumea.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ A. J. Rosenberg, *Twelve Prophets: Zechariah*, Vol. 2, p. 379.

⁴⁶ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, pp. 202-203; Vol. 3, p. 41.

⁴⁷ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 204.

About 120 B.C., John Hyrcanus, of the Hasmonean dynasty, forcibly annexed Idumea and compelled the Edomites to adopt Judaism.⁴⁸ In 63 B.C., Rome occupied the entire area of Palestine and installed an Edomite governor, Antipater, father of Herod the Great, who killed all male children under the age of two years in an attempt to eliminate the Jewish Messiah.

History therefore verifies that the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, were the controlling power at the time of Yeshua. The Crucifixion involved the ancient spiritual conflict between the House of Esau and the House of Jacob, a conflict that persists to this day in the Middle East. This perspective clarifies Zechariah's prophecy concerning Esau and the house of Herod. They represent the "foolish and worthless shepherd" described in Zechariah 11:15-17.

God allowed His lost sheep of the House of Esau the opportunity of reconciliation with Jacob through salvation in Messiah Yeshua. However, Esau rejected the only true Messiah, leaving Him for the House of Jacob, the House of Israel, and the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 11:10; 49:6; Galatians 3:13-14). Eventually, the later descendants of Esau as a whole accepted Islam's counterfeit of God's covenant, i.e. that God's promise to Abraham was to come through his son Ishmael, not Isaac. As the descendants of Esau also intermixed with the descendants of Ishmael (the Arabs), we can see a continuation of the battle between Jacob and Esau for the birthright blessing. The end result is that Esau is cut off and eventually destroyed by God Himself (Isaiah 34:5-8; Jeremiah 49:8-22; Obadiah 1:18).

This is not to say that an individual of this line is not given the freewill choice for salvation through Yeshua. Any individual, regardless of race or any other factor, is given the opportunity to accept God's one true Messiah. In fact, it is being reported that over the past several years, tens of thousands of Muslims across the Muslim world are coming to faith in Messiah Yeshua. Many of these conversions involve supernatural dreams and visions of Messiah Yeshua.^{49,50}

⁴⁸ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 204; Vol. 3, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁹ Joel C. Rosenberg, *Inside the Revolution*, Chapter 25 The Big Untold Story – Part One: "The greatest spiritual awakening in the history of the Middle East is under way", Chapter 26 The Big Untold Story – Part Two: "More evidence of a dramatic revival in the Middle East."

CORRUPT RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONDEMNED YESHUA TO DEATH

Not only was the Edomite kingship and political leadership secured by working with and for Rome, but the religious leadership also worked with the Roman authorities to maintain their power and position. The office of the High Priest, who was both head of the priesthood and the Sanhedrin (highest court and council), was no longer legitimate according to God's law.

Up until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the legitimate Zadokite line filled this life-long and hereditary position of the priesthood. However, Antiochus deposed the Zadokite line in order to install high priests totally controlled by him. Likewise, the Herodian Edomites along with Rome controlled the office and filled it with illegitimate priests based solely upon political considerations. The term of office was considerably shortened and given to the highest bidder.⁵¹ The resulting corruption of the high priesthood spread throughout the priestly aristocracy, which was mostly Sadducean at the time. The Jewish people knew that the High Priest was nothing more than a corrupt puppet of the political regime and that the Sanhedrin was controlled by a corrupt leadership.

It was the Sanhedrin that condemned Yeshua to die but they had to get permission from the Roman authority, Pontius Pilate, to carry out the execution because they feared the people's reaction:

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. And the **chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people** (Luke 22:1-2, emphasis added).

⁵⁰ *More Than Dreams* (DVD) and free online access - <http://morethandreams.org> - "More Than Dreams tells the compelling, true stories of five Muslims from five countries who share one life-changing experience. Each saw Jesus Christ in a dream or vision and their lives were forever transformed."

⁵¹ Hersh Goldwurm (Adapter), *History of the Jewish People: The Second Temple Era*, p. 149.

There were certain Sanhedrin members who were not corrupt and did believe Yeshua was the Messiah, for example, Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50; 19:39). It must have also been the case that those Sanhedrin members who supported Yeshua were not a part of the secret illegal night trial.

With this understanding, let us return to Pilate's questioning of Yeshua. His final response to Pilate was that He had come to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37), to which Pilate responded, "What is truth?" Judging Yeshua an innocent man, Pilate still had one last hope of releasing Him even though the priests had found Him guilty.

At Passover, the people could choose to release one man condemned to die. Pilate offered Yeshua as that man, but the corrupt religious leaders and their associates chose Barabbas. The people were not present and so not represented. The Word of God clearly indicates that the Jewish people as a whole accepted Yeshua as a prophet from God, and that it was the chief priests (the religious leadership) and the Edomites (the political leadership) who were responsible for condemning and crucifying Him:

And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus [Yeshua] the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how **the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him**" (Luke 24:19, 20, emphasis added).

A decision to override them could easily have turned very ugly and very violent. Unable to afford the risk of revolt against Rome, Pilate washed his hands of the entire affair.

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