

III. The Passover

Now as Exodus 12:1-2 indicates, this is the beginning of the month of Abib or Nisan, which is now to become the springtime beginning of the new Hebrew calendar God is giving to Israel. The Jewish ceremonial calendar starts in month Abib (or alternately called Nisan), corresponding roughly to our month of April. This is a lunar calendar. When God said this in verses 1-2, it was more than likely the 1st of Abib or Nisan. **“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you” (Exodus 12:1-2, KJV).** God then told the Israelites to wait until the 10th of Abib (or Nisan), and then to select a lamb, one per family. Each lamb was to be a one-year-old male without any defects on him. Each family was to take care of its lamb within its household until the evening of the 14th Abib or Nisan. [Comment: Hebrew days begin and end at sundown. Say April and the month Nisan perfectly lined up one year. The first of April for the Hebrew would start at sundown on March 31st. The second of April would start on the next sundown, at the end of the daylight portion of April 1st.] **Exodus 12:3-6, “Speak unto the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from that goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.”** So they were each to keep their lamb until sundown of the 14th Abib or Nisan, which would have been the beginning of the 14th Nisan, as we will come to see (at the end of the 13th Nisan at sundown). The Israelites were to set a perfect lamb apart from the flock on the 10th day, and it was to be kept for four days. No doubt, as they looked at the little lamb, they realized ‘*That little lamb is going to be the substitute for our family. That little lamb is going to die, in order that our child, firstborn child, won’t have to.*’ This lamb was a type of Jesus Christ, who on the 10th day, was presented to Israel (Judea, the Jews) as their Messiah [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/lamb/lastsix.htm>]. But then he was crucified, or slain, on the 14th day of the first month, Nisan, for the sins of the people, and ultimately for the sins of the world (John 3:16). The lamb is to be without blemish or spot: A blemish is an acquired defect. If a lamb got tangled up in barbed wire, ripped its skin, or had a scar, you couldn’t use it. If it had been grabbed and rescued from a wolf and had been ripped open, you couldn’t use it. It had to be without blemish. Peter tells us, we were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19). A spot is an inherited defect. That’s a part of the genetic structure. A blemish is an acquired defect. Jesus was without inherited sin. He did not sin. He was the Lamb without spot or blemish, the sinless

One. God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). And so, for this lamb to be a true type of Jesus, Yeshua, it had to be without spot or blemish.

Lambs blood and unleavened bread, what they symbolize

Exodus 12:7, “**And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.**” Then each family, after slaying their lamb, was to collect some of the blood from their slaughtered lamb and take some hyssop and brush this blood from their lamb onto the side-posts and upper top-posts of the front door of their house. **Exodus 12:8**, “**And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.**” Then that same evening, now after sundown on the 14th Nisan, they were to roast the lamb over fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast (unleavened bread). No leaven was to be used in the bread they baked for this meal. Leaven throughout the Bible is used as a type or symbol for sin. A little bit of leaven is all it takes for a loaf of bread to rise. A little sin tolerated in your life begins to permeate it until it fills your whole life. And so they were to use unleavened bread. Again, unleavened bread is a type for Jesus Christ, Yeshua haMeshiach. In the first chapter of John Jesus is called the Word of God. John 1:1-14, “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. He was not the Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth up every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. **And the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The written Word of God, the Bible, is merely Jesus, Yahweh-shua in print. In John 6:41 Jesus said “I am the bread (Manna) which came down from heaven.” During this Passover meal, they were supposed to eat unleavened bread, symbolizing eating Jesus, the Bread of Life. In John 6 Jesus said that is exactly what the Jews were supposed to do. They didn’t understand, thinking he was referring to cannibalism. What eating Jesus, the Unleavened Bread of Life, is really all about is living a life filled with Jesus, and filled with studying the Word of God on a daily basis, eating, taking in Jesus, the Word of God. During the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Messianic

Jewish and Sabbatarian Church of God Christians eat Unleavened Bread for seven days, as it is commanded here, which symbolizes living a Christ or Messiah filled life, a life also filled with a study of the Word of God, Jesus in print, the Bible. Eating that unleavened bread for seven days is merely a symbol, and does not put Jesus into your life. You have to ask him into your life. And thereafter, you have to keep him front and center, in daily prayer and Bible study. That's what eating unleavened bread for seven days symbolizes. That's a pretty important symbol if you ask me. John 6:33, 41-56, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world...The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, **I am the bread which came down from heaven.** And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. **I am that bread of life.** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? **Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.**" So we see that the blood of these slain Passover lambs represented the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, and the unleavened bread to be eaten during these seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread directly pictured eating, taking in, the Word of God on a lifelong daily basis. The Israelites partook of the same symbols in a slightly different way during this first Passover, which ended up saving their physical lives. With us, we are saved from the second death, and given eternal life, as well as being set free from Satan and his evil world. Jesus told Satan when he was being tested in the wilderness, in Matthew 4:4, "But he answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'" Jesus is both that written and spoken Word of God, the real Manna, the real unleavened Bread of Life. ***So are the symbols of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread mere Old Testament symbols?*** Far from it, Jesus incorporated them into the New Testament, with the bread and wine of the New Testament Passover service, or what many know as Holy Communion. The lambs blood represented the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus, and the unleavened bread represented his broken body, as well as who he is, the Living and written Word of

God. *Are Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread passé?* I don't think so. Neither do 500,000 Messianic Jewish believers in Jesus.

Further instructions about the lamb

Exodus 12:9-11, “Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover.” They weren’t to leave any of the roasted lamb until morning, but they were to burn whatever remained (verse 10). They were instructed to eat it dressed and ready to march on a moments notice, cloaks tucked into their belts, sandals or shoes on, and eat it in haste---“It is the LORD’S Passover.” Then God says, **“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (verses 12-14).**

Details given for the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The actual details for these commanded Holy Days of Unleavened Bread are given in **Exodus 12:14-20, “And this day [the Passover, on the 14th Nisan] shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses:**

for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.” That gives the details for observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It starts with the Passover sacrifice, which occurred at the beginning of the 14th Nisan right at sundown. (As Israel observed this as a nation centuries later, the killing of the lambs started even a little before then and went on throughout the daylight portion of the 14th Nisan, there were so many lambs that needed slaughtering.) The next day, which began at sundown at the end of the 14th Nisan, was the 15th of Nisan, and it was the first Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days later the last Holy Day of this feast week occurred. At sundown at the end of the seventh day, the Israelites could eat leavened bread and products again. The tremendous spiritual symbolism for believers can be found in John 1:1-14, where Jesus, Yeshua is identified as the Word of God, as we just read. The Bible is literally the written version of Jesus, the Word of God. In John 6:33, 41-48 Jesus calls himself the Bread of Life, and describes how he is actually the Manna from heaven mankind is now supposed to eat. Jesus, by the very symbolism of manna from heaven, would be unleavened. So the actual manna they ate in the wilderness across the Red Sea had to be unleavened as well. Jesus then spoke of the importance of ‘eating him’ in verses 49-58, as we also just read. Those passages add tremendous Biblical meaning for the Days of Unleavened Bread, and the redemption and sanctification we receive through Jesus Christ, both his sacrificial death, and the new life he lives within those who partake of him, the Unleavened Bread of Life.

Moses summons all the elders

Now on the 13th/14th Nisan, the beginning of the 14th Nisan at sundown, Moses summons all the elders and told them, **“Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*...”** (verses 21-23) Notice, no one was allowed outside his house until morning, when the daylight portion of the 14th Nisan came. That is an important observation in calculating just exactly when it was that the Israelites actually started their journey out of Egypt. It could be no earlier than the daylight portion of the 14th Nisan. It will be even later than the beginning of this daylight portion of 14th Nisan, as we will see. **“...And it came to pass, that at midnight**

the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all firstborn of cattle. 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. And he [Pharaoh] 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. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We *be* all dead *men*.” (verses 29-33). At this point, midnight, the firstborn were dying all over Egypt. It is the evening portion of the 14th Nisan (Abib). That very same night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron (Moses and Aaron didn’t actually go and see Pharaoh, Pharaoh just sent them a message). He told Moses and Aaron, “Leave my people, you and all the Israelites. Take your flocks and herds as well, and go, and bless me also.” This guy must have been scared at this point, as well as all of Egypt. The Egyptians urged the Israelites to hurry and get going.

The daylight portion of the 14th Nisan spent packing, and spoiling the Egyptians of gold and silver

Evidently the Israelites spent much of the daylight portion of the 14th Nisan packing, and also asking of the Egyptians gold and silver and fine apparel. To organize 2.5 million people, along with all their belongings and flocks and herds would take the better part of a day anyway. Exodus 12:34-36, “**And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians.**” Eventually that day they get going, but as verse 42 indicates, it was already night-time, the beginning of the 15th Nisan when they actually start their march out of Egypt, by the time they were finished packing all their belongings, rounding up their flocks and herds, and spoiling the Egyptians of costly silver and gold jewelry and clothing. Exodus 12:37-42, “**And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, *even* very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was***

four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.” God instructed Israel to make this night a *“night to be much observed”*, that night they marched out. It was to be a night of celebration, celebrating the very evening they started their march to freedom from slavery. This celebratory evening was just 24 hours after the Passover, and today marks the beginning of the first day of Unleavened Bread, the first Holy Day of that feast. This is the evening when they literally started to march out of Egypt. There is a very special significance to this day for New Testament believers in Jesus, Yeshua. We’ll read about that next. Now they may have already started their march for a couple hours, during the end of the daylight portion of the 14th, but stopped at a good resting place (Succoth) to camp and celebrate their release from slavery as the sun was going down, making the timing of this celebratory meal the beginning of the 15th Nisan. [To see an example of a Christian Passover Service, click on: <http://www.unityinchrist.com/E-Mails/2009/14th%20Nisan%20Christian%20Passover%20Service%20Scripture%20Readings.htm>.]

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