

**TRIUMPH
PROPHETIC
MINISTRIES**

BIBLE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



Who Changed the Passover?

**The Incredible Plot Against
The PASSOVER!**

Lesson 15

An Open Letter from the Staff

Down through history, the Jews have observed the Passover at the end of the 14th of Nisan. Their historical records and documents show no evidence that they ever observed the Passover at the end of the 13th of Nisan, or the beginning of the 14th. As we have seen in the last two lessons of this Correspondence Course, the evidence is overwhelming that the Jews kept the Passover at the END of the 14th and beginning of the 15th of Nisan.

Why, then, have many churches which claim to observe God's annual holy days claim the Passover must be observed at the BEGINNING of the 14th of Nisan? Where did they go astray?

In a word, *who changed the Passover?* How was it changed, when was it changed, and who was behind it? Did Jesus Christ Himself change it? Yet He Himself said that He did not come to change even ONE IOTA of God's Law! (Matt.5:17-19).

The Passover is the very FIRST of the annual holy days that God gave to His people. Since confusion is so rampant, and so many are misled and confused about the Passover, it is important that we take our time to thoroughly examine WHY so many seem to think – and so many ministers nowadays teach – that the true Passover should be observed at the BEGINNING of Nisan 14 – something that the Jewish people have NEVER countenanced or observed!

In this lesson, we will investigate and document exactly what happened, when, and why!

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About Our Cover. . . The Passover is celebrated by a Jewish family in 18th century Bohemia. Notice how it is a family affair, close knit, with a festive, happy setting. God's true Passover is not a funeral dirge or mournful wake, a solemn and sad event where people are to recount their sins. Rather, it connotes deliverance! **E-Mail:** triumphpro@aol.com **Visit our Website on the Internet at:** triumphpro.com

THE AMAZING PLOT AGAINST THE PASSOVER!

Thousands of years ago, about a thousand years before the present era, an incredible plot was hatched to destroy and bury the true Passover. That masterful "Passover Plot" has continued down through the centuries, growing and developing, and deceiving millions. Among its victims are even the End-Time Churches of God! Could YOU be a modern victim of his fiendish, mind-boggling "Passover Plot"?

Strange as it may seem, there really was a "Passover Plot" that has been carefully nurtured and fostered down through the ages to obscure and hide the truth of God, and to replace the truth with confusion, and ancient PAGAN rites and ceremonies! Very few understand the significance of this fact, or know how the plot began, how it was perpetuated, and how it continues, even down to our very day, today!

Truly, Satan the devil has deceived "the whole world" (Rev.12:9). Are you, perchance, one of the deceived, deluded victims of this insidious, nefarious, cleverly devised and concealed PLOT to hide the plain truth about the Passover, and its correct time and observance?

The Original Passover

As we have seen in previous lessons, God gave the Passover to Israel when they came out of Egyptian bondage, in the middle of the second millennium before Christ. God Himself delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptian oppressors, with a series of mighty miracles, leading up to the greatest miracle of all -- the divine intervention of God to slay all the Egyptian firstborn the

night of the Passover, when God "passed over" the families of the Israelites, every household that had obediently slain a lamb and sprinkled its blood over their door posts and lintels. They were then to eat the lamb, roasted, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (Exodus 12:1-11).

This Feast was to become a perpetual observance. God declared, "So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a FEAST to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an *EVERLASTING ORDINANCE*" (Exo.12:14, NKJV).

That Passover lamb was to be slain "between the two evenings" (Exodus 12:6) - - that is, as the sun goes down in the afternoon, "at evening AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN" (Deut.16:6, Schofield Reference Bible) -- not after sunset, when the sun has already gone down. The Hebrew expression, "Between the two evenings," is the time the priests were to sacrifice the second lamb of the daily burnt offerings -- one in the morning, and the second one in the evening, or literally, "between the two evenings" (Numbers 28:4, 8). Since each day begins at sunset, and ends at sunset (see Lev.23:32), the second sacrifice of the daily sacrifice, which was offered "between the two evenings," had to be sacrificed *before sunset!* Otherwise, if it was killed *after sunset*, it would have been sacrificed at the beginning of the next day, which began at sunset!

The Jews have always understood this expression "between the two evenings" to mean between noon when the sun starts to go down, and sunset, when it has completely disappeared beneath the horizon and has

"gone down." In historic Judaism, the Passover lambs were generally slain between 3 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon of Nisan 14, the "appointed time."

The Mysterious Passover Plot

How has Satan the devil, the master of intrigue, disguises and deceptions, caused millions to ignore the Passover altogether, and many others to observe what they call the "Passover" at a different time, day, and manner?

You need to know and understand the TRUTH!

The time has come for all God's people, and those who think they are God's own chosen and elect few, to RE-EXAMINE this issue, very carefully. As the apostle Paul says, to "PROVE ALL THINGS!" (I Thess.5:21). As Paul also wrote, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor.10:12).

Are you willing to look into this matter, objectively, and with an open mind, to PROVE the truth of God? Or will you just "assume" that your present practice and belief is right, and continue right along in error? Solomon wrote centuries ago, "There is a way that SEEMETH right unto a man, but the END thereof are the ways of DEATH" (Prov.14:12; 16:25).

How Error First Crept In

1. What happened during the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon? Did the northern ten tribes of Israel break away, and form a new nation under Jeroboam? I Kings 12:1-19.

2. Did Jeroboam hatch a plot against the true religion God gave Israel? I Kings 12:25-31. Did he create new places of worship? Verse 28-30. Did he even make priests who were not sons of Levi? Verse 31.

3. Did Jeroboam even change God's festivals, and replace the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month with a NEW feast in the EIGHTH month? II Kings 12:32-33.

4. Why did God send the northern kingdom into captivity? Because of their sins and idolatry and Sabbath breaking? II Kings 17:7-15.

COMMENT: Among the statutes of God Israel forsook was the weekly Sabbath and the annual holy days.

Jeroboam set up a false Feast of Tabernacles in the eighth month, whereas God's true feast is celebrated in the seventh month (Lev.23). It would appear that his religion also kept Passover by counting the time of the slaying of the Passover after sundown on Nisan 15, by misinterpreting *ben ha arbayim*. How do we know this? Let's continue.

5. When the Assyrians carried Israel away into captivity, did they settle other foreign peoples in the land? II Kings 17:24. Were these Gentile peoples? Same verse. Did they encounter trouble in the land? Verses 25-26. What did the king of Assyria do? Verses 27-28. Did these "priests" teach them the "fear of the LORD"?

COMMENT: These were pagans! The king of Assyria sent back a former priest of Jeroboam's to teach the people the doctrines of the apostate northern kingdom. This was like a counterfeit "Judaism." These people became known as the "Samaritans," because they dwelt in the land of "Samaria" (II Kings 17:24), and followed the teachings of Jeroboam's paganized religion!

6. Were these Samaritans true worshipers of God? II Kings 17:29-33. Did they COMBINE pagan elements with the local religion – did they then become a "melting pot" of Torah teaching and heathen practices? II Kings 17:32-33. How long did this practice continue? Verse 34.

COMMENT: "Unto this day" means the day when the book of Kings was written and compiled as Scripture – it was canonized by Ezra the scribe in the sixth century B.C., over 150 years later.

In 718-721 B.C., Sargon, king of Assyria, conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and led them off into captivity beyond the Euphrates River. Israel had plunged into Baal worship, provoking the LORD to anger. Despite repeated warnings, they remained obstinate in their rebellion and idolatry, and would not listen to God's prophets -- which seems to be the eternal truth of how Israel deals with true prophets of God!

Replacing the Israelites in northern Israel, to occupy the vacated land, "The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them into the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites" (v.24). However, lions had multiplied in the area, and killed some of the people, creating fear. They saw that God was responsible for the lions, so they besought the king of Assyria to send them an Israelite priest to teach them the laws of the God of the land (v.27-28). This priest was one of the priests teaching the doctrines of Jeroboam, who led Israel into sin (compare verse 16 with I Kings 12:25-33). He lived at Bethel, the religious site for Jeroboam's false system of worship (I Kings 12:33; II Kings 17:19-23).

As a result of this policy, elements of the truth of Scripture, and misinterpreted Scripture, began to be mixed together with elements of pagan worship and idolatry. The priest taught them a schismatic system to worship the Lord, the system imposed by Jeroboam to wean his people away from the worship of the Jews and the Temple at Jerusalem. "Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made

at the high places. . . . They worshipped the Lord, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. They worshipped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought. **TO THIS DAY THEY PERSIST IN THEIR FORMER PRACTICES.** *They neither worship the LORD nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commandments* that the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel . . . [They] persisted in their former practices. Even while these people were worshiping the LORD, they were serving their idols. **TO THIS DAY** their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did" (II Kings 17:29-41).

The Samaritans were PAGANS to the core! Their paganism was not rooted out of them. They had a false, perverted, syncretic system of worship -- combining their interpretation of the "Torah" or five books of Moses with a huge dose of PAGANISM!

Says the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* about the Samaritans: "They erected images of their gods on the high places of the Israelites, and **COMBINED** their idolatries with the worship of Yahweh. . . This **DUAL WORSHIP** they kept up until after the fall of Jerusalem" ("Samaritans, p.823).

Says the *Critical Experimental Commentary* by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, "In the early period of their history the Hebrews had no proper divisions of time, and accordingly periods of the day were indicated in a very loose and general manner . . . 'Between the evenings' is a phrase of similar import, denoting the part or the day between the *declining and the setting sun*, or between **NOON AND SUNSET**. As the slaughtering of the numerous victims required would of

necessity occupy a considerable time, no particular hour was specified . . . But in order to be within the limits defined, it was necessary that it should be begun and completed between the commencement of the first and the termination of the second evening. . . In later times a controversy arose in reference to the time thus marked. The *Samaritans and Karaites considered it as the interval between sunset and darkness*. But the Pharisees and Rabbinites, who maintained that the first evening began after noon, and the second with the sunset, taught that the paschal lamb was to be killed in the interval between the ninth and eleventh hour, which, at the time of the equinox, corresponded to one, three and six o'clock P.M. Josephus states that such was the practice of the Jews in the time of our Lord" (vol.1, p.310).

Adam Clarke's Commentary elucidates this vital point of truth further: "The Jews divided the day into morning and evening: till the sun passed the meridian, all was morning or forenoon; after that, all was afternoon or evening. Their first evening began just after twelve o'clock, and continued till sunset; their second evening began at sunset and continued till night. . . .

"The day among the Jews had twelve hours, John 11:9. Their first hour was about six o'clock in the morning with us. Their sixth hour was our noon. Their ninth hour answered to our three o'clock in the afternoon. By this we may understand that the time in which Christ was crucified began at the third hour, that is, nine o'clock in the morning, the ordinary time for the DAILY MORNING SACRIFICE, and ended at the ninth hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon, THE TIME OF THE EVENING SACRIFICE, Mark 15:25, 33, 34, 37. Wherefore their ninth hour was their HOUR OF PRAYER, when they used to go into the temple AT THE DAILY EVENING SACRIFICE, Acts 3:1; and THIS was the

ORDINARY TIME for the PASSOVER" (vol.1, p.310).

Further evidence of this truth concerning the Passover comes to us from the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*. It tells us about Passover: "Passover. Heb. *pesah* from *pasah* (to pass over in the sense of sparing) . . . It was instituted in Egypt to commemorate the culminating event in the redemption of the Israelites (Ex.12:1, 14, 42; 23:15; Deut.16:1,3). THAT NIGHT was to be much observed to the Lord, when he smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, but passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood had been sprinkled and the inmates were standing, staff in hand, awaiting the deliverance promised by the Lord. The festival began on the 14th of Abib AT EVENING, THAT IS, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 15TH DAY, with the sacrificial MEAL (Lev.23:5-6). A lamb or kid was slain between the evenings, that is, TOWARD SUNSET (Exo.12:6; Deut.16:6; cf. between the 9th and 11th hours, Josephus, *War*, vi .9, 3) . . ." ("Passover," p.705).

Hastings Bible Dictionary points out: "On the evening of the 13th [end of the 13th) the head of the family searched the house with a lighted candle, that he might seek out all the leaven. The hour on the 14th at which one must refrain from eating leavened cakes was variously fixed. It was always before noon, however, the precise time being indicated by the disappearance of two cakes which were exposed before the temple. When the signal was thus given, all leaven must be burned or scattered to the winds. . . . Work ceased on the morning, or at noon, of the 14th, save in a few occupations (tailors, barbers, laundresses). . .

"The time of the Passover sacrifice is defined in the Law as 'between the two evenings' . . . This was interpreted by the Pharisees and Talmudists to mean FROM

THE HOUR OF THE SUN'S DECLINE UNTIL ITS SETTING; and this was the LATER TEMPLE PRACTICE . . . *The Samaritans, Karaites, and Sadducees*, on the other hand, held that the *period between sunset and dark* was intended" (vol.3, "Passover," p.691).

This ancient controversy, over the meaning of "between the two evenings," and its erroneous interpretation by the Samaritans, Sadducees, and their successors the Karaites in the eighth century after Christ, has led to serious consequences and errors as to the observance of Passover, even today among the end-time churches which have sought to observe this holy celebration ordained by God!

Even today, strangely, we see people attempting to keep and observe the PASSOVER -- and they call it precisely that -- not at the time the Jews observe this annual festival dinner, at night on Nisan 15, AFTER the Passover lambs were slain and roasted. Rather, we see people attempting to observe this sacred memorial at the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, twenty-four hours too early! Why is this? How did this happen? How did Satan the devil deceive so many into following the errors of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites, and misunderstanding the Passover?

Satan's Great Deception and Hoax

The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* states: "Paschal Lamb. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had a dispute as to the time when the slaughtering should take place; the former held it should be in the last three hours before sunset [near the end of the 14th], the latter, between sunset and nightfall [beginning of 15th] . . . *The Samaritans have retained the ancient rite to the present day*" (vol.8, p.406).

We read in the book *The Jewish Festivals: History and Observance*, by Hayyim Schauss, "The Samaritans and the

Jews became blood-enemies who hated and despised each other, just as in later years the Karaites and the Rabbinic Jews hated each other.

"In the days of the second Temple almost the entire central part of Palestine between Judah and Galilee, was thickly populated with this Jewish sect of Shechem; there were also many followers of the sect in southern Syria and in other eastern lands. Today, however, there are barely two hundred left; they speak Arabic and inhabit a special quarter in Nablus. They have a synagogue there and a High Priest, who is their teacher and spiritual leader.

"These two hundred Samaritans observe Pesach to this day on Mount Gerizim, in a manner that other Jews ceased practicing thousands of years ago. The custom of offering sacrifices has died out with the Samaritans, except on the fourteenth day of Nisan, when they offer the ceremonial Pesach sacrifice" (p.61).

Schauss points out that these Samaritans go up to Mount Gerizim, and half an hour before sunset, as the 14th of Nisan draws to a close, the High Priest leads the assembly in silent prayer. "Exactly at sunset the High Priest faces westward and reads that portion of the Pentateuch which orders the slaughtering of the Pesach sacrifice. About twelve or fourteen of the younger Samaritans busy themselves, meanwhile, with preparing the sacrificial animals. They form a circle about the pit of fire, holding the lambs between their legs, and as the High Priest utters the words, 'And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk,' they utter a benediction and throw the lambs, throats to the pit, where they are slaughtered by two ritual slaughterers. Six or seven sheep are slaughtered" (p.63).

Who were these strange people known in history as the "Samaritans"? And how did their practice influence people of

later generations, including end-time remnants of the Church of God? Let's open our Bibles and find out!

Religious Antagonism Grows

1. Did this proximity and practice of the Samaritans lead to religious issues with the Jews? Ezra 4:1-5. Did the Samaritans try to stop the rebuilding of the Temple? Verses 4-5. Did they temporarily succeed? Verses 6-24.

2. Did this antagonism continue down to the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles? Luke 9:51-56. Did Jews have dealings with Samaritans? John 4:4-9. Did they look down on them? John 8:48.

3. What did Jesus say about the religious beliefs of the Samaritans, and their form of "Torah observance"? John 4:21-22.

COMMENT: Notice! Jesus said the Samaritans "*worship ye know not what!*" He certainly did not endorse their religious practices, or the way they observed their "Passover." Rather, He endorsed the basic religious practices of the JEWS! He said, "We KNOW what we worship; for *salvation is of the JEWS*" (John 4:22).

Continues the *New Westminster Dictionary*: "There was early an antipathy on the part of most of the Jews to social and religious association with the Samaritans, and this feeling developed into intense antipathy as years rolled on (Ezra 4:3; Eccles.50:25-26; Luke 9:52-53; John 4:9; 8:48). The Samaritans were neither of pure Hebrew blood NOR OF UNCONTAMINATED WORSHIP. . .

"There is no agreement on the date of the BREACH between the Samaritans and the Jewish community, but it seems to have started in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and gradually widened. The political separation of Judah and Samaria and the work of Ezra made the SCHISM inevitable. It may be that the Samaritans did

not build a temple at the beginning of the cleavage because they hoped that someday they would secure at least partial control of the Temple in Jerusalem. Sanballat declared his allegiance to Alexander the Great and asked to build a temple where his son-in-law might be the high priest. Alexander gave his consent and Sanballat built the temple. . . .

"During the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes they declared that they were not of the same race as the Jews, and gratified the tyrant by expressing a desire that their temple on Mt. Gerizim might in future be dedicated to Jupiter, the Friend of Strangers (II Macc.6:2). About 128 B.C. John Hyrcanus took Shechem and Gerizim, destroying the Samaritan temple (Jos. Antiq. XIII, 9, 1); but the worshipers continued to offer their adorations on the summit of the hill where the sacred edifice had stood. They did so when our Lord was on earth (John 4:20-21)" (p.824).

The Samaritan religion was a syncretic blend of paganism and misinterpretations of the Torah, or the Law. They outright rejected the prophets and writings, and only accepted their version of the "Law" of Moses. They rejected the "oral law" handed down from Moses through the elders of Israel, the scribes, and to the Pharisees as not binding or authoritative, despite the great problems this would create concerning the holy calendar and holy day regulation! They even devised their own sacred calendar, and tried to frustrate the Jewish calendar authorities by imitating the fires the Jews originally used to notify those far from Jerusalem of the new moons.

The Samaritans, following the paganzed footsteps of King Jeroboam of Israel, REJECTED the revelation of God, and put their OWN interpretations on the Passover and Pentecost, and the Word of God! But where did they obtain their heretical views and practices concerning God's Holy Days? From the paganzed

priests of Jeroboam, of the northern kingdom of Israel! And many of their erroneous ideas have come down to MODERN times – inherited by the Sadducees and their descendants, and some branches of the end-time Churches of God!

Those who today follow the Samaritans, are therefore actually following *the ancient, original APOSTASY OF KING JEROBOAM who introduced the two calves into the worship of the Northern Kingdom of Israel*. This was utter idolatry -- the original APOSTASY! Continuing this ancient heresy and apostasy, the Samaritans followed a different, alternative path from that followed by the Jews, the Pharisees, and Rabbinic Judaism – they follow the path of the apostate Jeroboam and his priests chosen by himself of the lowest of the people in the northern kingdom!

What was Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans? Jesus had no racial prejudice against them or any other race or group. He praised the "good Samaritan" whom He used as an illustration of brotherly love and kindness, because he stopped to help a man who had fallen among thieves, and was left along the roadside wounded and bleeding (Luke 10:30-36).

However, when it came to religious doctrine and teaching, Jesus said to a Samaritan woman whom He met at Jacob's well: "*You Samaritans WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW; we [Jews] worship what we do know, for SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS*" (John 4:22).

History of the True Passover

1. After the Ten Tribes were carried off into captivity, did the southern kingdom continue to observe the true Passover? II Chron.30:1-5. Was Hezekiah a righteous king? II Chron.29:1-2. Had the nation not observed it for a long, long time? II Chron.30:5. Did they repent, and return to

God, by keeping the Passover? II Chron.30:6-9.

2. Did some of the people from the northern kingdom who had returned to the land, mock and laugh at them? Verse 10. But did some repent, and humble themselves, and observe it? Verses 11-12.

3. What month did they observe the Passover in? II Chron.30:2. What day did they sacrifice the lambs on? Verse 15. Was this all right with God? Verses 3, 12-13. Did God atone for those who were not ritually pure or sanctified? Verses 18-20.

4. Where was the Passover held – in Jerusalem? II Chron.30:3, 21, 26.

5. Where did God Almighty SAY that the Passover was to be celebrated – in Jerusalem? Deut.16:5-6.

COMMENT: God originally commanded the Passover to be kept at the place of His Sanctuary. God later chose the city of Jerusalem for His Sanctuary, and commanded David to have his son Solomon build His Temple there (I Chron.21:21-29; 22:1-19).

God told Moses, "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates . . . but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, *at the going down of the sun*" (Deut.16:5-6). The Jewish people would bring their lambs up to Jerusalem, to the Temple, have them checked and approved as "without blemish" by the priests, and then slay them, and take them back to their abodes, to roast and eat them that evening.

In the time of the Jewish general Flavius Josephus, in the first century, he says that about 250,000 lambs were so sacrificed, about ten people to a lamb, meaning that over 2.5 million people partook of the Passover in his day.

6. Was another great Passover kept in the reign of Hezekiah's grandson, Josiah? II Chron.35:1-7. Was Josiah a righteous

king? II Chron.34:1-2. Had the book of the Law become neglected and hidden, during the evil reign of his father, Manasseh? II Chron.34:8-15. What did the king do when he heard the words of the Law? Verses 19-22. Did the king make a covenant to obey God's Law with all his heart and soul? Verse 31.

7. Was this the greatest Passover since the days of the prophet Samuel? II Chron.35:15-18.

COMMENT: God approved of the Passover they kept. Josiah was a righteous king, who sought God with all his heart, and kept His commandments. Therefore, we can be sure that he observed the Passover correctly, and on the correct day and in the correct manner. The knowledge of the Passover had not been lost or forgotten in the kingdom of Judah.

The Time of Ezra

1. Did the Jews still have the true knowledge of the Passover, and did they observe it, when they returned from Babylonian captivity? Ezra 6:19-22. Did they slaughter the lambs on the 14th of Nisan, as God commanded? Verse 19.

2. Was Ezra a righteous scribe in the laws of God? Ezra 7:6. Had Ezra prepared his heart to seek God and obey Him? Verse 10.

COMMENT: There are some who teach that Ezra CHANGED God's law, and that it was he who "edited" the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 16, where God told Moses that Israel was to go to the place where His name was, to celebrate the Passover. But would a righteous, godly scribe such as Ezra even contemplate such a thing? Of course not!

3. Did God command Moses to sacrifice the Passover "in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name"? Deut.16:2. Did God originally command the

Passover was to be taken from the sheep or goats? Exo.12:5. Does Deuteronomy 16 say the Passover could be taken from the "flock and the *herd*"? Verse 2. Were some sacrifices during Passover from the herd? Numb.28:16-20. Was Passover a Feast of seven days? Ezek.45:21.

COMMENT: These are God's words to Moses. Ezra did not live until 900 years later. Some have argued that since the "herd" is mentioned, and since the Passover was elsewhere commanded to only be from the sheep or goats, that Ezra must have changed the law. However, ALL the sacrifices during Passover week are considered "Passover" sacrifices, and some of the other sacrifices ARE from the "herd"!

4. What does God say about those who would "tamper" with Scripture, and "rewrite" or "edit" His divine Word? Deut.4:1-2; 12:32. Does God say He will PUNISH those who would do such a thing? Prov.30:5-6.

5. Will those who add to, subtract from, twist or alter Scripture in any manner suffer the PLAGUES of God? Rev.22:18-19. Will God even take their name out of the Book of Life – and deny them eternal life in His Kingdom – for doing such a thing? Rev.22:19.

COMMENT: These are very serious matters! WOE unto those who tamper with Scripture, or falsify Scripture, who accuse EZRA of altering God's Word, and who themselves alter, twist, and distort God's plain commands concerning the Passover!

The Time of Jesus Christ

1. Did the Sadducees come to Jesus and question Him about a point of Jewish law? Matt.22:23-28. What did Jesus reply to these "religious leaders"? Verse 29. Did He "put them to silence"? Verse 34; Luke 20:40. Jesus plainly tells us that in all

matters of the LAW of God, we should follow the teachings of the Pharisees -- NOT the Sadducees or Samaritans! He, our Messiah and Savior, declared:

COMMENT: Notice that Jesus spared no words with these reprobate teachers who were IGNORANT of God's true laws. He said, "You are MISTAKEN [marginal reading, DECEIVED], *NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES nor the power of God*" (Matt.22:29, NKJV).

2. But did Jesus say the same thing about the Pharisees, the major opponents of the Sadducees, the ones who upheld the Law, who killed the Passover in the AFTERNOON of Nisan 14? Matt.23:2-3.

COMMENT: No He did not. Notice! He said, on the contrary: "The teachers of the law and the PHARISEES *sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey THEM [that is -- the Pharisees!] and do EVERYTHING THEY TELL YOU [that is, the things they teach from the Torah, not their "traditions" which He later condemns].* But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach" (Matt.23:2-3, *New International Version*).

Notice! Jesus did not say that the Sadducees or Samaritans sat in "Moses' seat" -- only the PHARISEES! Jesus plainly showed that the Pharisees were the legal, authoritative descendants of Moses, as the leaders of the Church of God of that time. They sat in Moses' seat of authority over religious matters.

But of the Sadducees, who numbered some among the priests and ruling classes, who even denied the truth of the resurrection and the existence of angels, He said, "YOU ARE IN ERROR because YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES or the power of God" (Matt.22:29, NIV). Or as the *King James Version* has it, He told them, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." They were "off base," as another translation has it. They were

WRONG! They were IGNORANT of the Bible!

Why, then, do some modern end-time churches of God choose to follow their example, and practice? Truly, Satan *has* deceived the "whole world" -- and many of God's people have been led off the right path, and seduced, in this manner, by his subtle and malicious errors!

3. Just how ignorant were the Sadducees? Did they even believe in a resurrection or "after-life"? Acts 23:8. Did they believe in angels? Same verse.

COMMENT: the Sadducees were ignorant of the Scriptures -- they, like the Samaritans, sacrificed the Passover after sunset -- and they were so far out of the picture that they denied the existence of a spirit world, angels or demons (Acts 23:8).

What History Says about the Sadducees

The teachings and doctrines of this ancient conspiracy continued through the vehicle of the Sadducees, a sect of Jews during the time of Jesus. The Sadducees were a sect of Jews, primarily among the wealthy and aristocratic community, with a number of the priests, who followed the Samaritan interpretation of many tenets of the Law and belief. They, like the Samaritans, considered "between the two evenings" to mean after sunset, not before, and considered the day of the "wave sheaf offering" to be the Sunday following the Sabbath which fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. They, like the Samaritans, did not believe in a literal resurrection from the dead. Says *The New Bible Dictionary* about this Jewish heretical sect: "In manner the Sadducees were rather boorish, being rude to their peers as to aliens, and counting it a virtue to dispute with their teachers. THEY HAD NO FOLLOWING AMONG THE POPULACE, but were restricted to the well-to-do. They

were more severe in judgment than other Jews. Many, but not all, priests were Sadducees; nearly all Sadducees, however, appear to have been priests, especially of the most powerful priestly families. . . . Under the Herods and the Romans the Sadducees predominated in the Sanhedrin. *The party died out with the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.* Josephus says that, even when in power, the Sadducees were compelled for fear of the people to **CONCUR WITH THE PHARISEES**" (p.1124).

Unger's Bible Dictionary adds, "The price at which the Sadducees had to secure themselves power at this later period was indeed a high one, for they were obliged in their official actions actually to *accommodate themselves to Pharisaic views.* With the fall of the Jewish state the Sadducees *altogether disappear from history*" (p.954).

The Sadducees disagreed with the Pharisees on a number of religious matters. Says the *James Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* of this ancient sect: "The Sadducees were the spiritual descendants of the priestly part in Jerusalem, which, toward the close of the Greek period of Israel's history, was **ANXIOUS TO HELLENIZE THE PALESTINIAN JEWS.** . . .

"The successors of the Hellenizers, on the other hand, were in full sympathy with the secular policy of the Hasmonean princes, and, unlike the Pharisees, *took no exception to the illegitimacy of their high priesthood.* They entered the services of the new princes as soldiers and diplomatists, and . . . formed the party, to which was given their family name of Zadokites or Sadducees. Taught by experience, this party made no violent attempts to introduce Greek customs; but they were a **PURELY POLITICAL PARTY**; their main interest was in the Jewish State as an independent State, and not, like that of the Pharisees, in the **LEGAL PURITY OF THE JEWS** as a

religious community. . . .

"Herod further diminished their influence by *appointing and removing high priests according to his own pleasures,* and by filling the Sanhedrin with his own creatures. . . [The Pharisees] were the real possessors of power; for, in order to render themselves tolerable to the people, the Sadducees were compelled to act **IN MOST MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PHARISAIC PRINCIPLES.** And when Jerusalem was destroyed and Israel ceased to exist as a nation, *they speedily disappeared entirely from history*" (vol.4, "Sadducees," p.349).

The Sadducees never had power over the preservation of God's Word or Laws. They were a political, Hellenistic party, which is why they curried favor and obtained it from the Herod family and the Romans. Their beliefs never took hold of a large following among the faithful Jews.

The Time of Christ

1. Did the Jews still keep the Passover during the time of Christ? Luke 2:41-42. Did Jesus and His parents, Joseph and Mary, observe the Passover, "according to the **CUSTOM** of the feast"? Verse 42.

COMMENT: This would surely mean that Jesus and His parents observed the **SAME PASSOVER AS THE JEWS** – their neighbors – observed, "*according to the custom*" of the Jews! What could be plainer?

2. How many Passovers did Jesus keep with His disciples? John 2:13-17, 23-25, 6:4, 11:55; 12:1.

COMMENT: Jesus' ministry began at Passover (John 2:13-17), in 27 A.D. His next Passover (John 2:23-25), was in 28 A.D.; the third Passover (John 6:4) was in 29 A.D.; what would have been His fourth Passover was in 30 A.D. (John 11:55).

3. Is there other evidence that the

Last Supper was BEFORE the Passover? John 18:28. Here, when Jesus was already bound, and taken before Pilate, had the Jews eaten the Passover yet? Same verse.

4. Was Jesus brought before Pilate to be judged prior to the Passover? Or had the Jews already eaten of it? John 19:13-14. What does the expression, “it was the Preparation of the Passover,” mean? Verse 14.

COMMENT: Here Jesus is brought before Pilate during the PREPARATION for the Passover. But when is that? Actually, the Preparation period begins on Nisan 10, when the lambs are to be selected (Exodus 12:3). It was then kept until the 14th, when it was taken to the Temple, checked over for flaws, and approved; and then slaughtered in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan. Since this was the PREPARATION time, it had to be BEFORE the Passover was eaten!

5. After Jesus was crucified as our “Passover Lamb,” on the afternoon of Nisan 14, when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered, as a picture of His supreme sacrifice, was it STILL the “preparation” time -- or last day of preparation, before the Jews would actually EAT the Passover? John 19:31.

COMMENT: Notice that Jesus had already died on the cross (John 19:30). Yet it was still “Preparation Day” for the Passover (verse 31).

6. What kind of “Sabbath” day was going to begin that very evening, after sunset? Verse 31. Was it a “high day”? Same verse.

COMMENT: The expression “high day” refers to an ANNUAL SABBATH DAY! Obviously, this “high day” had to be the FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (Exo.12:14-16), which is begun with the celebration of the Passover meal!

7. Is the Passover a term which is applied in Scripture to the entire 7 days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Ezekiel

45:21.

COMMENT: It is clear, then, that Jesus Christ did NOT “observe” the Passover just before His death on the cross as our “Passover Lamb.” How could He? He was DEAD and in the GRAVE during the time when the Passover was properly being observed!

This means clearly that the LAST SUPPER Jesus held with His disciples was NOT THE PASSOVER! *It simply could not be! It was instead a GOING AWAY, FAREWELL DINNER* – very important in its own right – but NOT the “Passover”! We will cover this subject in the next vital lesson!

How strange, therefore, that so many end-time factions and groups of the End-Time Church of God have fallen for Satan’s supreme Passover HOAX – his COUNTERFEIT, false, BOGUS “Passover”!

Rather than keep the TRUE Passover, always observed at the right time by the Jewish people, they have bought into the ersatz, counterfeit SAMARITAN thinking that Passover must be held AFTER SUNSET – but unlike the Samaritans, who do this on Nisan 15, they back it up to the beginning of Nisan 14 – BEFORE the actual Passover lambs were slain!

In this manner, Satan the devil has pulled off the greatest “con job” of all human history. He has replaced the true Passover of God with his own counterfeit, diabolical FALSE “Passover” of men!

Satan must have hatched this PLOT against the Passover from the very beginning, thousands of years ago, when he began using king Jeroboam to pervert, and alter God’s true Torah, and replaced God’s truth with his pagan golden calves, and false interpretations of Scripture to boot!

And many end-time churches have swallowed this poison pill, guaranteed to bring the fruits of DEATH!

Today, groups such as the

Worldwide Church of God, Church of God International, Philadelphia Church of God, Global Church of God, and United Church of God, and other smaller groups, have determined to follow the Sadducean practice of assuming the Passover lambs were killed after sunset. Herbert Armstrong taught that "between the two evenings" meant after sunset, between sunset and dark. This led him to believe that the lambs had to be slain after sunset of Nisan 13, when the 14th of Nisan began. He believed that the Jews of Jesus' time had lost track of the true Passover, and were observing it a day late, eating it on the 15th of Nisan!

Thus Herbert Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God observed a "Passover" consisting of the elements of unleavened bread and wine at the *beginning* of Nisan 14.

Thus this age-old Satanic conspiracy -- the real "PASSOVER PLOT" -- has taken hold once again in this END-TIME! Once again the pagan beliefs and heretical practices of Jeroboam the Apostate, and the pagan Samaritans, have been dusted off, shined up, and polished, and changed even more, so that THOUSANDS are deceived!

***The Mystery of Iniquity --
a FALSE "Passover"!***

What more diabolical deception could the devil concoct than to deceive the very Church of God as to the REAL PASSOVER? The Passover symbolizes our very belief and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, for the payment of the penalty of all our sins (II Cor.5:20-21).

1. Did God give His only begotten Son to die for our sins? John 3:16. How many times did Christ have to die? Heb.9:28. Did He die as our Passover lamb, sacrificed for us? I Cor.5:7.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ DIED for

us! The original Passover FORESHADOWED that awesome event -- the original Passover lambs foreshadowed God's Perfect Passover Lamb! As the apostle Paul wrote, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (I Cor.5:7). "So Christ was sacrificed ONCE to take away the sins of many people" (Heb.9:28).

2. Was Christ a perfect, flawless Passover Lamb? Heb.9:14. What does, "without spot" mean? Can we now enter God's presence through the blood of His sacrificial Lamb -- Jesus Christ? Heb.10:19-22.

COMMENT: To be mixed up on the right time and day to eat the Passover is a very serious error, indeed! Yet two errors contributed to the selection of the beginning of Nisan 14 as the time to celebrate the "Passover." The first deception is the error that "between the two evenings" meant after sunset, dusk, or late evening. And the second common mistake is the assumption that the final meal Jesus ate with His disciples was the original Passover, celebrated at the normal, customary time! We will cover the proof of this fact in the next lesson on Passover.

The fact is, however, NEITHER ASSUMPTION IS CORRECT! Therefore scores of thousands of people have been celebrating a false Passover at the wrong time for the last fifty or more years, during this twentieth century!

A Mournful Wake and Funeral?

But in addition to observing the Passover at the wrong time, the churches of God have been observing it in the wrong manner!

1. How was the original Passover observed by the Jews down through the centuries? Was it a JOYFUL event? II Chron.30:1, 23, 26; II Kings 23:21-25.

2. How did Jesus and His family

keep the Passover? Luke 2:41-42. Was it, "after the *custom* of the feast"? Same verses.

COMMENT: The Passover was a *joyous* affair -- a family celebration of deliverance and freedom, rescue from oppression and slavery. It was celebrated by a few families together, or about 10-20, as many as could eat one lamb (Exodus 12:3-4). It was not a big "church" event, much like a church service, with no talking, no laughter, no fun and games, no enjoyment!

But MOST of the churches of God in this end-time, omitting the true Passover from their observance, instead celebrate what more or less imitates a Roman Catholic "mass" -- a solemn, sanctimonious and quiet "communion" with worshippers reflecting on their sins and being remorseful, mournful, even to the point of tears and weeping. Those kinds of introspections and thoughts more properly belong at the "Season of Awe," the time from Rosh Hashanah till Yom Kippur, the time which celebrates God's *coming judgment* upon us all!

Why is it that the churches all keep a mournful "wake" version of Passover, on the eve of Nisan 14, instead of a Passover FEAST celebrating joy and deliverance? Should we not be celebrating our deliverance from the bondage to SIN, and freedom from the clutches of SATAN, the god of this world? Shouldn't we be rejoicing in the GREAT GIFT of eternal life that Jesus Christ has bought and paid for, redeeming us from the penalty of SIN?

End-Time Deception

1. Did the apostle Paul foretell that Satanic deception would even enter the very Church of God? Acts 20:27-31. Did Paul marvel that the Galatians were so soon "removed" from the true gospel? Gal.1:6-11. Was this actually a COUNTERFEIT gospel? – a subtle perversion of the truth? Verse 7.

2. Did Paul write to the Thessalonians, warning them that lawlessness and deception were already afoot, working underground, secretly? II Thess.2:1-3, 7-11.

COMMENT: Notice! Paul declared that even in his time, "For the secret power of lawlessness is *ALREADY AT WORK*; but the one who now holds it back [the apostles themselves] will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way" (II Thess.2:7, NIV). The King James has this verse, "For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way" (verse 7).

It was Paul himself, and James, and the other apostles, who stood in the way of this secret, clandestine, surreptitious attempt of the devil to overcome the Church and substitute FALSE BELIEFS for the Truth of God! The apostles would never fall for a false Passover. They had observed the correct Passover ALL THEIR LIVES, and for three years they kept it with Jesus Christ, at the very same time as ALL THE OTHER JEWS! They observed it with new joy, knowing that all the hidden meanings of the Passover were spiritual, referring to Christ as our Passover lamb, Egypt as a type of Satan's world and the kingdom of SIN, and our "deliverance" being from the power of Satan and his minions, and from the corrupting and deceptive power of "sin."

But Satan quickly moved to replace both the weekly Sabbath, and the annual Holy Days, especially the Passover, with his devilish counterfeits of Sunday, Easter, and Christmas, etc. He did this in stages, beginning by converting the Sabbath and Passover into *days of mourning and fasting instead of joy and feasting!*

3. Did the apostle Peter also warn that corrupting influences would enter the church, deceiving many? II Pet.2:1. Would they even "DENY" the Lord who bought

them? Same verse.

COMMENT: One way in which people “deny” Christ is by forsaking His example of how to keep the Passover, and keeping it at the wrong time, in a wrong manner!

4. Will “MANY” follow these false teachings? II Pet.2:2. Will they speak “EVIL” of the way of truth – the truth about the Passover? Same verse! Why do they do this – is it because of their lust for authority and greed for financial gain? Verse 3. Do they exploit God’s people with deceptive words? Same verse.

5. Does the apostle Jude warn us to contend EARNESTLY for the “faith once delivered to the saints”? Jude 3. Why? Verse 4. Did certain teachers creep in unnoticed – unobserved by the flock and true ministers? Same verse. What are we commanded to DO about these dangers? Jude 20-23. Should we strive to SAVE others who are in the process of being led astray, and deceived? Same verse.

6. Did Paul warn that some would not endure “sound doctrine” in the last days, but would be turned aside to “fables,” “myths,” and falsehoods? II Tim.3:1-7; 4:2-4. Will some be turned aside from the truth, and be “turned on” to fables? II Tim.4:4.

7. Did God ordain His Passover to be observed FOREVER? Exodus 12:14-16.

8. Does God CHANGE? Malachi 3:6. What about Jesus Christ – does He change? Heb.13:8. Did Jesus come to do away with or abolish God’s Law? Matthew 5:17-19. Would heaven and earth perish before the Laws of God perish? Matt.5:18.

COMMENT: Why then do so many of the people of God *erroneously* observe the Passover, at the wrong time? Why have they followed the error of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and other apostates?

God’s TRUE Passover is observed on the eve of the 15th of Nisan with great joy and rejoicing. The mournful “mass” is an

altogether DIFFERENT “Passover” -- a phony “Passover” created by Satan the devil to deceive!

Whereas God’s true Passover involves eating a FESTIVE MEAL with family and friends, around the Passover dinner table, with the recitation of the history of Israel, and God’s plan of redemption, the FALSE pagan Passover is a solemn, sorrowful, quiet (you could hear a pin drop!), stark ceremony much akin to a Roman Catholic or ancient Babylonian MASS, with the congregation huddled quietly, listening to the ministers as they solemnly intone their grave-like vocalizations, and then each person quietly eats a piece of wafer, like the mass, and drinks a tiny vial of wine.

Truly, Satan the devil has perfected a masterful “Passover Plot.” It has succeeded in deceiving millions who don’t even observe the Passover, and others who observe it in the wrong way and at the wrong time. It has grown and expanded over the centuries.

But now God Almighty has *exposed* his insidious plot! Isn’t it time we WAKE UP, come to our senses, and OBEY GOD?

Isn’t it time we observe His TRUE Passover, with love, rejoicing, and great joy?

How about you? Will you come out of deception and observe the TRUE Passover of God?

Jesus Christ declared, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult [confined] is the way that leads to life, and there are FEW who find it” (Matt.7:13-14, NKJV).

What about it? Will you obey God, and keep His true Passover, correctly, as He intended, from the beginning? Will you follow the way of TRUTH? God will bless those who do!