

A November to Remember? A great spiritual awakening, more than political?

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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

Contributors: Ted E. Bowling, Brenda Branson, Curtis Dahlgren, Ray Daly, Laura Lee, James Steinle, T. Alex Tennent

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Articles

A November to Remember?

A great spiritual awakening, more than political?

(Copyright 2022) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." – Isaiah

I DON'T KNOW if we'll live to see the Second Coming, but I do know that America is in deep doo-doo, and is in dire need of another Great Awakening. I hope to live to see that one. Maybe it will begin this November. From Wikipedia:

Great Awakening refers to a number of periods of [religious revival](#) in [American Christian history](#). Historians and theologians identify three, or sometimes four, waves of increased religious enthusiasm between the early 18th century and the late 20th century. Each of these "Great Awakenings" was characterized by widespread revivals led by [evangelical Protestant ministers](#), a sharp increase of interest in religion, a profound sense of conviction and [redemption](#) on the part of those affected, an increase in evangelical church membership, and the formation of [new religious movements](#) and [denominations](#).



Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758 (Wikipedia)

Some of the influential people during the Great Awakening were [George Whitefield](#), [Jonathan Edwards](#), and [Gilbert Tennent](#), and some of the influential groups during the Great Awakening were the [New Lights](#) and the [Old Lights](#).^{[1][2][3]} Pulling away from ritual and ceremony, the Great Awakening made religion intensely personal to the average person by fostering a deep sense of spiritual conviction of personal sin and need for redemption, and by encouraging introspection and a commitment to a new standard of personal morality. It incited rancor and division between old traditionalists who insisted on the continuing importance of ritual and doctrine, and the new revivalists, who encouraged emotional involvement and personal commitment. It had a major impact in reshaping the Congregational church, the Presbyterian church, the Dutch Reformed Church, and the German

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Reformed denomination, and strengthened the small Baptist and Methodist denominations. It had little impact on Anglicans and Quakers. Unlike the Second Great Awakening, which began about 1800 and reached out to the unchurched, the First Great Awakening focused on people who were already church members. It changed their rituals, their piety, and their self-awareness . . .

The First Great Awakening prepared the way for our Independence from England. The Second prepared the way for preserving the Union and the end of slavery in America. There were a couple of other revivals not quite so great, but the Third Great Awakening could help prepare the Way of the Lord. At least I hope so. I'll keep this brief by concluding from an excerpt from my 5/14/22 column, "The Year the tree trimmer gave the commencement address at Yale":

WELL, that's my address, but I want to conclude with some words written by the president of your school, Yale University.

Your ancestors, who leaned on the arm of God and walked in the sunshine of the Scriptures, laid here such foundations of human happiness under His guidance as were probably never laid elsewhere. In their establishment of rational freedom and just government, in their schools and their colleges, in their churches and their worship, in their exemplary life and their fervent prayers, they left a glorious inheritance to you.

On this stock you have lived and become rich, and the fund, though impaired by waste and negligence, is still large, Wantonly squandered it may vanish in a year, but carefully husbanded it may last for ages. Would you provide for your children as your ancestors provided for you?

Would you secure the favor and blessings of God? Would you escape the woes, denounced and executed on an unbelieving and profligate world? Then at the fireside, in the street, in the court of justice and in the legislature, BE AND BE SEEN TO BE THE FRIENDS AND FOLLOWERS OF GOD . . .

If you contend manfully you will be more than conquerors; if you yield, both you and your children are undone. Let me at the same time warn you that your enemies are numerous, industrious and daring, full of subtlety and zeal. Some of them are your own brethren, endeared to you by all the ties of nature. The contest is therefore fraught with hazard and alarm.

Were it a war of arms you would have little to dread, but it is a war of arts, of temptations, of enchantments, a war against the magicians of Egypt, in which no weapons will prevail but Moses' 'rod of God.' Fear not; the Christian world rises daily in prayer to heaven. The host of sleeping saints calls to you from the grave and bids you Godspeed. May you and your children to a thousand generations rise and call YOU blessed.

P.S. Those are the words of Timothy Dwight, Yale president from 1795 to 1817, spoken on January 7, 1801 from a pulpit. He was also the pastor of the campus church. It's an example of the way one man's words sparked a "revolution" – the Second Great Awakening of the United States (quoted in *DECISION* magazine, September 1961).

PPS: I couldn't have said it any better myself.

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Blessed to be a blessing
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Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

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And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Genesis 12:1-2 ESV

My friend, Todd Agnew, wrote a short devotional several years ago that has given me a different perspective on blessings from God.

“God chose Abram to start the nation of Israel. He sent him away from his family, away from all that he knew. And he made this promise: ‘And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.’

“‘I will bless you.’ Future tense.

“We have focused so much on being blessed. We have actually slipped into the same misunderstanding that the nation of Israel did. They focused so much on being the blessed ones that they forgot God had promised to bless them for a purpose. That beautiful conjunction— “SO THAT.” It’s found often in the Bible. I first noticed it doing a study of Jeremiah. It’s all through that book.

“God is continually stating his purpose. I did this SO THAT this would happen. And that’s what he does here. His end purpose is not blessing us. That is a means to an end. He says, ‘I will bless you SO THAT you will be a blessing.’

“The same is true for us today. He still has bigger plans for us than just blessing us. I believe he still wants to do that as well, but he wants to bless us SO THAT we will be a blessing. He wants to show us grace SO THAT we will show grace to others.

“He wants to forgive us SO THAT we will forgive others. He wants to love us SO THAT we will love others. And by doing these things, we will bring him glory. Our lives have a purpose. God’s plan for us did not end at our salvation. He wants to bless us So THAT we will be a blessing.”

Think back over the blessings God has given you during your lifetime. Take the time to make a list of the ones so far this year.

Were you able to work and provide for your family? What is the “SO THAT” purpose of this blessing? Could it be that you will be able to bless someone else from your abundance who is in need of help?

Have you enjoyed good health? Perhaps that blessing is SO THAT you can lend assistance to those who have chronic health issues with limited or no mobility or are confined at home without the ability to care for themselves.

Do you have a reliable vehicle or two to drive? Maybe your “So THAT” is to provide transportation to someone who needs a ride to a doctor’s appointment, to the grocery store, or to church.

What is it that you do best—some gift or talent God has blessed you with? Could your “SO THAT” be sharing your expertise with someone who needs help in that area, but who does not have funds to hire you? (Examples: car mechanic, barber/hair stylist, lawyer, academic tutor, home organizer, seamstress, lawn care, website designer, musician, chef, counselor, writer, etc.)

Has God blessed you with children and a loving family? Is it possible your “SO THAT” is to reach out to adopt a child who needs a family, or help support children in crisis situations through organizations that provide for their daily needs?

I wonder how many of us have missed the real blessing God intended because we stopped short of “SO THAT.” I also wonder how many “SO THATS” I’ve missed in my lifetime.

If we all would apply this “SO THAT” principle to our blessings, just think about the amazing impact it would have on those around us. It would change our homes, churches, neighborhoods, and world.

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I witnessed this chain effect of blessing others at a fast food restaurant drive-thru recently. When I pulled up to the window to pay for my order, the person in front of me had paid for my meal. But what was even more impressive, when the very first person decided to pay for the person behind them several minutes before I got there, it started a chain reaction that kept going from person to person down the line. I don't know how long it took before someone broke the chain, but it certainly made an impact on the girl at the drive-thru window as she repeatedly told each customer, “Your meal was paid for by the person ahead of you.”

Imagine what would happen if every time you bought yourself a bouquet of flowers, a new book, a pizza, tickets to a concert or movie, you decided to bless someone else with the same thing that brought you joy?

Just as a reminder, your “SO THAT” blessings to others are not “SO THAT” you will get anything in return. It is not a ploy to get people to like you or to make you look better, or score points with God; it is a no-strings-attached love that has flowed from the heart of God through you to someone else.

Maybe you're thinking it's a good idea, but not something you could do all the time. What about setting a goal for once a week, or once a month? Once you discover the joy of being a blessing, it will transform your life.

“God put a million, million doors in the world for his love to walk through. One of those doors is you.” (Jason Gray)

AS YOU PRAY:

Say, “I love you, Lord.”

- Thank God for his blessings to you today and ask him to show you his purpose in the blessing.
- Ask God to bring someone to mind to bless this week, and show you a specific way to do it.

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Do Not Be Afraid!

(Copyright 2022) by Ted E. Bowling (Charlotte, North Carolina)

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.” (Matthew 10:29)

Not long ago, at the end of a day of inspections in eastern Georgia, I stopped to fuel my vehicle. As I stood pumping the gas, a sparrow landed about five feet away and began pecking on some crumbs, seemingly unafraid of me. I watched him for several minutes until he flew off out of sight.

I could not help thinking of Jesus' words in Matthew and Luke informing us that our great God is mindful of this little bird. It seemed a little ironic that the whole nation fears increasing gas prices, worrying how they will cope if the gas crisis continues, and this tiny, vulnerable bird simply goes about his daily search for food without a care. It is especially ironic because Jesus uses the sparrow to teach us not to fret but trust Him in all things. He says in Matthew 10:31, “Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

Jesus chose this diminutive bird to answer the questions: Does God really notice us? Does He watch over us and love and care for each of us?

An Insignificant Bird

Understanding the context of Matthew 10 is helpful. At its beginning, Matthew lists the names of the apostles Jesus called and then launches into His instructions regarding their commission to do God's work (verses 1-10). Within His instructions are warnings that their lives will not be easy. Many people would not be receptive to their message, and the apostles would have to learn to deal with it (verses 11-15).

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In the next section (verses 16-24), He tells them directly that they will face persecution. They will suffer trials and difficult days, but He also comforts them three times—in verses 26, 28, and 31—saying, “Do not fear.” In so doing, Jesus reassures them that God was with them every step of their journey.



In Matthew 10:29-31 and in Luke’s version of the same event (Luke 12:6-7), Jesus uses the example of the sparrow to teach that nothing escapes the attention of our loving God. Why did Christ choose the sparrow? Sparrows are not majestic or powerful like raptors but just the opposite: Sparrows are extremely vulnerable, especially susceptible to birds of prey like falcons, hawks, and eagles.

Sparrows are small and nondescript. A sparrow’s average length is only five to six inches long, and one of the tiny creatures weighs less than an ounce. And most often, they go unnoticed even though they number in the billions (1.6 billion house sparrows are estimated to exist around the globe, and there are 28 true-sparrow species). They are drab brown and blend in with the ground, dry grass, or scrub.

I love to watch the cardinals perching in the small tree in our front yard, and in the trees behind our house, a family of blue jays often captures my attention until they fly off. Sparrows are there too, up on the powerline or hopping in the yard, but my eyes rarely rest on them. There is little to them to hold a person’s attention. They cannot match the brilliance of colored plumage other songbird’s sport.

No one prizes sparrows. No one gets excited when one flies into sight. No one pays big money to import a pair from abroad. People do not keep them in cages for their pleasant song; in fact, their “song” is more of a squawk. To put it bluntly, the sparrow is probably the most insignificant of all birds.

Yet, it is for this very reason that Jesus used them to teach the apostles about God’s watchful care over them and us today.

A Worthless Bird

The two instances of Jesus’ comments about sparrows say much the same thing, although a few minor details are different:

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your

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head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

As Jesus often does, He uses an example that His contemporary audience would have easily understood. Vendors sold sparrows in first-century markets as food for the lower class, and Jesus draws on this common marketplace transaction to make His point.

As mentioned above, sparrows are tiny; they typically weigh less than an ounce. One would hardly be a mouthful, and what is more, their nutritional value is meager. The sparrow was indeed a poor man’s food, and even several of them would hardly make a decent meal.

It is easy to understand how little value they had in the Roman-era marketplace. No one would get rich selling pairs of sparrows for a copper coin, typically the lowest-value coins, similar in value to our modern penny. These tiny birds hold even less value today since modern people do not use them as food.

Luke takes matters a step further by saying that for two copper coins, one could buy not only the expected four sparrows, but the merchant would throw in a fifth sparrow for free! It is as if the fifth sparrow had no value at all. The fifth sparrow was literally worthless, yet Jesus says God does not overlook even it. Luke writes, “And not one of them is forgotten before God.”

It is difficult to comprehend how this is possible. But we can take this amazing watchfulness of God even further.

God Sees Everything

Matthew phrases what Jesus says a little differently: “And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will” (Matthew 10:29).

The word “falls” (*Strong’s #4098*) is translated from the Greek word: *piptō*, which has the basic meaning of “to descend from a higher place to a lower one,” thus, “to fall.” For example, when the young man Eutychus “fell” from the third story of a house in Troas, the word Luke uses is a form of *piptō*. Luke also uses it to describe a donkey or an ox falling into a well (Luke 14:5), and Matthew uses it of a house falling or not falling due to flooding (Matthew 7:25, 27).

Alternatively, it can mean “to light upon.” The more common usage in Scripture is “to fall,” but this connotation is worth considering.

Most people assume that Jesus means that God notices when a sparrow falls to the earth and dies. This understanding is natural. But William Barclay’s commentary on Matthew 10:29 and this particular word are noteworthy:

The Revised Standard Version—and it is a perfectly correct translation of the Greek—has it that not one sparrow will fall to the ground without the knowledge of God. In such a context, the word *fall* makes us naturally think of *death*; but in all probability the Greek is a translation of an Aramaic word which means to *light* upon the ground.

It is not that God marks the sparrow when the sparrow falls dead; it is far more; it is that God marks the sparrow every time it lights and hops upon the ground. So, it is Jesus’ argument that if God cares like that for sparrows, [H]e will care much more for men and women. (Emphasis his.)

Jesus is declaring that if God cares enough to notice and acknowledge when the millions and millions of these little, brown-feathered birds light upon the ground, then how much more does He care for us, His children, whom He has made in His image?

His point is that we should never think of God as distant and uncaring. No matter what we may be experiencing in life, God is aware of it. When we have times of suffering, sorrow, persecution, hardship, separation, or even death, God is not somewhere else. He is right there with us.

In each text, Jesus gives hope, comfort, and strength to His disciples for when they would face persecution for preaching the gospel. He wants the disciples and us today to be much more focused on God and His will than the opinions of those who may test or discourage us.

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We do not know if the disciples grasped what Jesus was telling them then, but in time, they learned from their experiences and the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit. We can see it in I Peter 3:13-14 where the apostle encourages the church with the same thought:

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

Peter had no doubt that God knows everything; nothing escapes His recognition or understanding. He knows our every thought, every action, every circumstance, and every experience—good or bad. And he adds, “you are blessed,” knowing God’s protection and compassion are endless.

We live in an age when God’s love and care are continually questioned, privately and publicly. But if we believe God’s Word, we show a lack of faith when we allow ourselves to think He has less compassion for us than He has for the little sparrow.

Worthless But Chosen

It is encouraging that, right in the middle of the sparrow analogy, Jesus says, “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Jesus puts His disciples dead-center in this analogy about sparrows.

Our Savior is saying God knows us better than we know ourselves. Do we know how many hairs are on our heads? Of course, those who are follicly challenged have a far easier time counting. Yet, no matter how much hair we may have, God knows!

And we can be sure that His knowledge does not end with the number of hairs on our heads! God knows everything about us and cares about our every body part, thought, word, and action, and He still loves us.

We are like sparrows. Compared to the number of people who live on earth, compared to the great and the near great among humanity, we are so small and insignificant. Most of all, in comparison to God, we are literally worthless. We can offer Him nothing of value. Even our highest thoughts and ideas are meaningless. Paul makes this point for us in I Corinthians 1:27-29:

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

In Matthew and Luke, Jesus chose, not the strong, powerful, stately eagle but the sparrow, the weak and base of the bird family, to make His point. In the larger setting of His purpose, He has chosen you and me, the truly weak and base, those who are nothing special among human beings.

But the key words are in Paul’s repeated phrase, “God has chosen.”

We did not volunteer to become His elect. God has chosen us. We did not have any special skills or abilities that impressed Him. God has chosen us despite our insignificance. We did not have any stature in society to advance His work. God has chosen us out of obscurity. God chose those who were foolish, base, despised, and nothing.

From the beginning, the sovereign God has been working (John 5:17), creating godly children in His image and character. He has set us apart for a special purpose, sanctifying us, a process that takes a lifetime of constant refinement. He tests us, honing our ability to endure and resist sin, purifying and perfecting our character, and bringing us ever closer to His own righteousness.

Throughout that lifetime of refinement, God is there with us, watching over us and loving us. He is neither distant nor uncaring. In fact, just the opposite, as Jesus tells us in Luke 12:32: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

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This term, “Do not fear,” or similar ones like “fear not” or “do not be afraid,” appears over a hundred times in Scripture. By this repetition, God is driving home a point. Do we believe it?

Jesus wants us to be much more concerned with the will of our heavenly Father than the opinions of those that may test or discourage us. Every church member needs and desires encouragement from time to time, and we can find no greater encourager than God. Nothing is more encouraging than reading about God’s sure promises in His Word, like those we see in Matthew 10 and Luke 12 about the sparrow.

God does not forget us, not even for one minute—and definitely not when we are suffering under trials. One of the most heartening scriptures is Hebrews 13:5, where God Himself assures us, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Sparrows will never know that a loving God watches over them constantly and never forgets them. They have no idea He notices when they simply light upon the ground.

But we know. We know our great God is aware of us at every moment of the day and knows what is happening in our lives down to the smallest detail.

Why? Because, in His eyes, we are worth far more than many sparrows.

Sparrows do not be afraid!

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Holy Day Articles

Between the Evenings... **The Legal Time to Slay the Passover** **(Copyright 2014) by T. Alex Tennent (Seattle, Washington)**

Some of the confusion as to whether the Last Supper was the Passover or not comes from the English translations of the original Hebrew words meaning “between the evenings.” The Jewish sources are clear that this period—the time to slay the Passovers—was to be in the afternoon of the 14th day. However, many English translators and commentators, believing that Jesus ate the Passover at the Last Supper (and that he also died at the proper time for the Passover sacrifice), portray the period of “between the evenings” as either evening or twilight, which can imply after sunset.

This notion does not fit with Jewish history, which shows the legally allowed time for the Passover sacrifice to be between noon and sunset. Famous Jewish commentator Alfred Edersheim agrees with this, writing:

The period designated as ‘between the two evenings’ when the Paschal lamb was to be slain, was past. **There can be no question** that, in the time of Christ, it was understood to refer to the interval between the **commencement of the sun’s decline** and what was reckoned as the hour of his final disappearance (about 6 p.m.).¹

The Jewish Encyclopedia verifies this same time frame:

The time “between the two evenings” (“ben ha-’arbayim”) was construed to mean “**after noon and until**

¹ Edersheim, *Life and Times*, p. 490.

nightfall”²

The chart below illustrates the sun ascending (from 6 AM to noon) and descending (from noon to 6 PM, around sunset). If you picture the sun in relation to the vertical line and the horizontal line in the chart below, this line is “even” with the horizon at noon and is again “even” with the horizon at sunset. Thus, between the even-ings is the time between noon and sunset, as both Edersheim and *The Jewish Encyclopedia* noted.

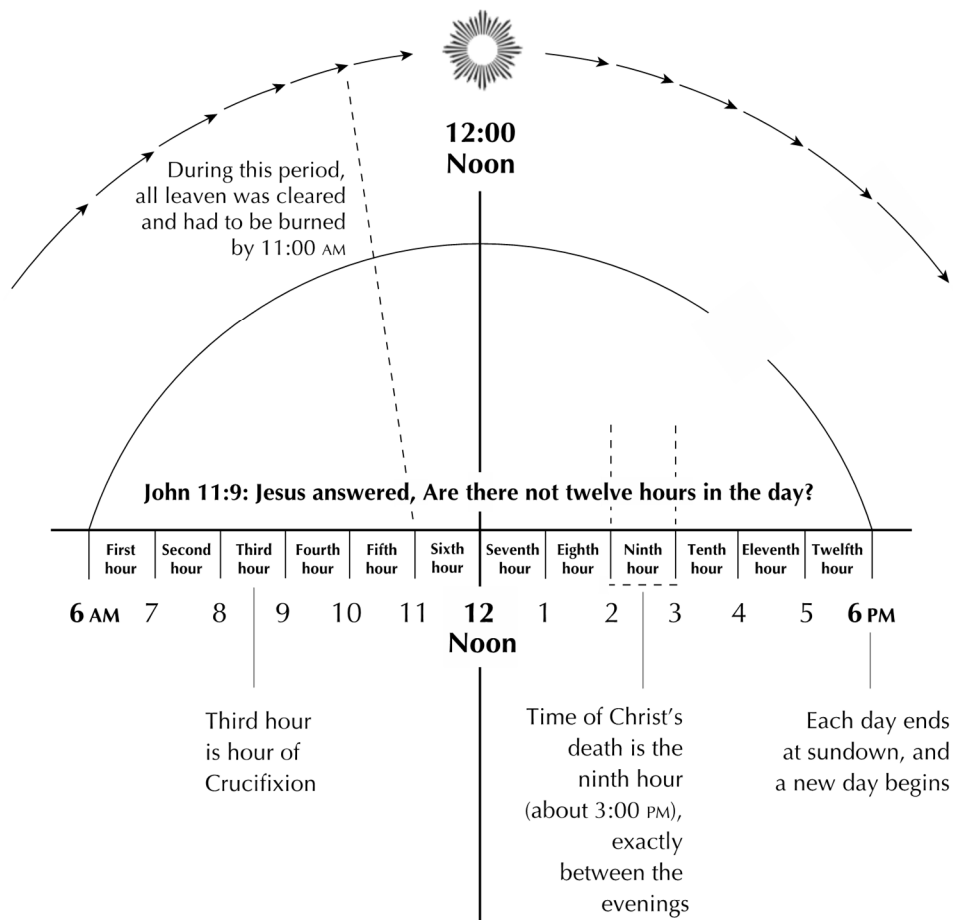


Figure 9. Between the evenings.

Part of the confusion as to whether the Last Supper was the Passover comes from the flexible meaning of the English word “evening,” for which most dictionaries include a definition of the “early part of the night.” Notice how the six English translations below give six variations (in boldface) of what began as the Hebrew phrase meaning “between the evenings”:

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

NAS Exodus 12:6 ‘And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it **at twilight**.

LXE Exodus 12:6 And it shall be kept by you till the fourteenth of this month, and all the multitude of the

² *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 553, s.v. “Passover/Paschal Lamb.”

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congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it **toward evening**.

YLT Exodus 12:6 ‘And it hath become a charge to you, until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the company of Israel have slaughtered it **between the evenings**;

NAB Exodus 12:6 You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present, it shall be slaughtered **during the evening twilight**.

JPS Exodus 12:6 and ye shall keep it unto the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **at dusk**.

We must understand how the Jews understood this Hebrew phrase and how they passed it down to successive generations, while of course giving the strongest weight to the original God-anointed Hebrew and Greek scriptures of the Bible.

Overlaying our English understanding of “evening” with its various shades of meaning onto the Hebrew and Greek scriptures can cause problems. We see this, for instance, on the day of the Crucifixion when the 15th-day high Sabbath is soon coming—the following English verse says that evening had already come (although the body of Jesus was not yet moved to the tomb):

NAS Mark 15:42 And when **evening had already come**, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

GNT Mark 15:42 *Καὶ ἤδη ὀψίας γενομένης, ἐπεὶ ἦν παρασκευὴ ὃ ἐστὶν προσάββατον,*

NAS Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

If we think of verse 42 as being correct and interpret “evening” as occurring after sundown, it would mean that prominent Jews like Joseph of Arimathea (a member of the Sanhedrin) publicly broke the Sabbath by carrying the Messiah’s body to the tomb after the 15th-day Sabbath had set in. In this particular verse the solution is easy, for the Greek word *ὀψίας* translated as “evening,” means “late”; it clearly refers to “late in the Jewish day” (which ended at sunset).

This is just one example of how the time to sacrifice the Passover became confused among commentators since Roman times. When they tried to reconcile the longstanding tradition of Jesus somehow eating the 14th-day Passover at the Last Supper, then fulfilling the 14th-day Passover at the Crucifixion the following day, this idea of sacrificing the Passover in the evening gained acceptance among some. Most Jewish sources correctly state that the Passovers were sacrificed in the afternoon and not after sunset.

The Jewish word for “eve” refers to the part of the day after noon and before sunset, as we saw in the subsection “The 14th-Day True Passover” in the chapter “The Template Challenge.” The irrefutable history as detailed below will show that the legal time to slay the Passover was indeed between noon and sunset. We will first consider the historical statements from the Talmud, then look at other Jewish sources (such as Josephus and Philo) to see that the Old Testament evidence perfectly aligns with these other sources. Then we will see that the New Testament scriptural evidence also harmonizes perfectly with these other Jewish writings.

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What the Talmud Says

Although as believers in the God-anointed scriptures, we do not get doctrine from the Talmud, it does contain a wealth of accurate information concerning the festivals that the Jewish scholars wanted to preserve and pass down to future generations. Granted, one has to sometimes weed out certain subjects where there was an ax to grind (the Talmud written by the descendants of the Pharisees, who despised the Sadducees and also the Messiah), but there is still much of value regarding the festivals.

First of all, a reminder that the scriptures show unequivocally that the Passover was on the 14th day, and that the seven-day Festival started as the 15th day began (at sundown of the 14th day) and lasted seven days:

JPS Numbers 28:16 And in the first month, **on the fourteenth day** of the month, is the LORD'S **passover**.

YLT Numbers 28:17 and **in the fifteenth day** of this month *is* a festival, **seven days unleavened** food is eaten;

Now let's turn to the Talmudic discussion concerning the time for the Jews to throw away the leaven, which gives us a major point of demarcation as to the legal time to slay the Passover (since it could not be sacrificed on the 14th day until all leaven was burned in Israel):

GEMARA: We see thus, that at the **commencement of the sixth hour**, all agree, Chometz must be burned. Whence do we adduce this? Said Abayi: From two passages, viz. [Exod. xii. 19]: “Seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses,” and [ibid. 15]: “But on the first day ye shall have put away leaven out of your houses.” According to this, then, on the first day there would still be leaven in the house and this would be contrary to the ordinance of the first passage? Hence we must say, that by “the first day” is meant **the day preceding the festival. Then why say the sixth hour?** Say that already early in the morning of the day preceding the festival (leaven should be burned). The word “but” with which the passage commences divides the day into two parts, so that in the morning leavened bread may be eaten while in the afternoon it must not.

The disciples of R. Ishmael taught: The reason **that Chometz must be removed on the 14th (of Nissan)** (the eve of Passover) is because that day is referred to as the first day (of the festival) in the passage [Exod. xii. 18]: “In the first, on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening shall ye eat unleavened bread,” etc.

Rabha said: “The reason may be inferred from the passage [Exod. xxxiv. 25]: ‘**Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven;** neither shall be left unto the morning the sacrifice of the feast of the passover,’ which signifies, that the Passover sacrifice must not be offered up as long as there is yet leaven.” If that be the case, then it might be said that the leaven should be burned by each man immediately before offering his passover sacrifice; **why designate the sixth hour?** The passage means to state, that **when the time for the Passover sacrifice arrives, there must no longer be any leaven on hand.**³

There are two particularly important points to take from this passage above. First, these writers understood Exodus 34:25 to mean that leaven (or “Chometz” above, meaning that which is leavened) must be removed by the sixth hour (which commences at 11 AM and ends at noon) since God commanded to not sacrifice the Passover with leaven (meaning while leaven still remained among the people). The *legal* time to slay the Passover was *after* noon, so all leaven had to be removed

³ Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Pesachim, ch. 1, pp. 19–20, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/psc05.htm>.

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prior to this time.

The second important point these writers make is that the “first day” (in Exodus 12:15) refers to the 14th day on which the Passover is sacrificed. They reason that if no leaven is to be in the land for the whole seven-day Festival (the 15th through the 21st), and if the “first day” of the Festival meant the 15th day of Nisan, then they would have already broken the law by still having leaven to remove during the 15th day.

The Hebrew word can mean either “first” or “previous/preceding,” as can the Greek word used here in the Septuagint. They correctly say, therefore, that in this case it means the day *preceding* the Festival (i.e., the 14th day), and they add that Exodus 12:18 calls the 14th day the “first day” as more proof. This was the common Jewish understanding, which fits perfectly with the Gospels, where in the Greek the 14th day is referred to as the “first of the unleavened” (the original Greek of Matthew 26:17 and Mark 14:12).⁴

Remember, God had said that not bringing the Passover in its appointed time would cause one to be *cut off* from Israel. God had given the Israelites a set time for a legal Passover sacrifice, and this time never confused them:

NAS Numbers 9:13 ‘But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for **he did not** present the offering of the LORD **at its appointed time. That man shall bear his sin.**

Would Jesus really have gone against the laws of God and the Temple to somehow sacrifice a Passover outside of its appointed time and thus “bear his sin”?

The following passage from the Talmud goes a step further in defining the time for an acceptable Passover sacrifice, saying that one brought before noon would ***not be valid***:

MISHNA: If the paschal lamb be slaughtered **before noon, it is not valid**, because it is written [Exod. xii. 6]: “Toward the evening.”⁵

This passage is interesting because it does not quote the Hebrew “between the evenings” but rather the Greek Septuagint, which reads “toward evening”:

LXE Exodus 12:6 And it shall be kept by you till the fourteenth of this month, and all the multitude of the congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it **toward evening**.

LXT Exodus 12:6 **καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν διατετηρημένον ἕως τῆς τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτης τοῦ μηνὸς τούτου καὶ σφάξουσιν αὐτὸ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος συναγωγῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ πρὸς ἑσπέραν**

The two words boldfaced in the Greek above are literally “toward evening.” In marked contrast to the Greek Septuagint, the English King James translation below says “***in*** the evening”:

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

⁴ The 14th day, being the first of the eight unleavened days, is covered in the subsection “The 13th-Day Question” in the chapter “The Temple Challenge” and also in the chapter “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels.”

⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Pesachim, ch. 5, p. 113, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/psc09.htm>.

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You can see from the Talmudic quotes above that their writers understood this time to sacrifice the Passover differently than the translators of the King James Version, which gives the false impression that the Passover is to be sacrificed **“in the evening.”** This would not be a problem if “evening” were understood in the first-century Jewish sense—when the sun was moving down in the sky **toward even-ing** with the horizon—but the English translations usually convey a different sense.

A big difference can exist between “in” and “toward,” for if Daniel (in Babylon) prayed toward Jerusalem, that doesn’t mean the same thing as him praying in Jerusalem. These Jewish Talmudic scholars who quoted from the Septuagint understood “toward the evening” (in Greek) to have the same meaning as “between the evenings” (in Hebrew), beginning after noon “when the sun commences to move towards the west.”

Young’s Literal Translation gives us the meaning of the Hebrew:

YLT Exodus 12:6 ‘And it hath become a charge to you, until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the company of Israel have slaughtered it **between the evenings**;

The evidence shows that the Jews saw this Greek term “toward evening” to mean the *exact same thing* as the afternoon period, a fact that the Talmudic passage below confirms:

CHAPTER V.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE SACRIFICE OF THE PASCHAL LAMB.

MISHNA: The continual (daily) offering was slaughtered half an hour after the eighth hour and sacrificed half an hour after the ninth hour; but on the day before Passover, whether that day happened to be a week-day or a Sabbath, it was slaughtered half an hour after the seventh hour, and sacrificed half an hour after the eighth hour. When the day before the Passover happened to be a Friday, it was slaughtered half an hour **after the sixth hour**, sacrificed half an hour after the seventh hour, **and the Passover sacrifice celebrated (immediately) afterwards.**

GEMARA: Whence do we know all this? Said Rabha: Because it is written [Numbers xxviii. 4], **“toward evening,”** we know that this religious duty must be discharged **when the sun commences to move towards the west (evening).** Then again, on all ordinary days, in respect to vow and voluntary offerings, as it is written [Lev. vi. 5]: “And he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offering.” And the master said that this signifies that all the other offerings must be sacrificed before the daily offering. Hence this latter was slaughtered half an hour after the eighth hour (two and one half hours after noon); but on **the day before Passover, when the paschal lamb had to be slaughtered after the daily offering, the latter was slaughtered an hour sooner.** If the eve of Passover, however, fell on Friday, when the paschal lamb must be roasted before the Sabbath set in, the literal text of the passage in the Scriptures is abided by, and the daily offering is slaughtered **as soon as the sun commences setting towards the west, i.e., half an hour after noon.**⁶

We see several important facts in the above writing:

Numbers 28:4 is explained as “toward evening” (quoted from the Greek Septuagint) and interpreted as the time **“the sun commences to move towards the west (evening).”** These Talmudic scholars would also have known that in Hebrew, this verse says “between the evenings.” Therefore, they knew that “toward evening” conveys the same meaning as “between the evenings.”

⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Pesachim, ch. 5, p. 106, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/psc09.htm>.

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To be extra careful to stay within the legal time, the Talmudic writers say that when the 14th day fell on a Friday, the daily (evening) offering was brought half an hour after noon. God had also commanded the daily evening offering to be brought “between the evenings” (Exodus 29:39), so the Talmudists correctly state that the daily (evening) offering happens during the same time period as the Passovers are brought.

Although the scriptures usually refer to the 14th day as the Passover, the Talmud and other Jewish writings often speak of “Passover” as the 15th-day Sabbath—which commemorates the day God “passed over” and brought the Israelites out of Egypt—and not the 14th day when the Passovers were slain. One reason the 15th day came to be called the Passover is that it was the entrance into the seven-day Festival, which itself was *called* Passover (Luke 22:1). Another reason for this is that after the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, Passover lambs were no longer sacrificed, so the 14th day was less important. Thus, when Talmudic writers speak of the “day before Passover” in this passage above, they mean the 14th day (which they show is the day the Passover was sacrificed).

Therefore, when the Talmudic writers state that “**on the eve of Passover** Yeshu was hanged,”⁷ they mean that he died as the 14th day was closing. This is much as we use the term “Christmas eve” (the 24th) as the time period before Christmas (the 25th). Such idiomatic changes that occurred over time as well as the use of the term “Passover”—sometimes for different days—have probably greatly contributed to the confusion on the timing of the Passover and the Last Supper.

The Jewish Encyclopedia also concurs with this time to slay the Passover:

In Temple times the paschal lamb was offered **during the afternoon of the eve of Passover**⁸

Where did the Talmudic writers get the idea that “between the evenings” (Hebrew) and “toward evening” (Greek Septuagint) indicate the same time as “When the sun commences to move towards the west?” The answer is from Deuteronomy 16:6 from the Greek Septuagint, where the God-commanded time to slay the Passover is on the 14th day “toward west sun” (πρὸς δυσμὰς ἡλίου). Notice the English translation of this scripture says, “**in the evening at sunset**”:

NAS Deuteronomy 16:6 but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover **in the evening at sunset**, at the time that you came out of Egypt.

LXT Deuteronomy 16:6 ἀλλ’ εἰς τὸν τόπον ὃν ἐκλέξεται κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐπικληθῆναι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκεῖ θύσεις τὸ πασχα ἑσπέρας πρὸς δυσμὰς ἡλίου ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ᾧ ἐξῆλθες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου

The original Hebrew in the above scripture speaks of the **going in of the sun** (which begins its descent at noon). The Jewish scholars who translated this verse from Hebrew into Greek used a Greek phrase that says “toward west sun,” which is boldfaced on the previous page. The Jewish *ArtScroll* commentary (Stone Edition, the Chumash), agrees with this timing from Deuteronomy 16:6 of “afternoon” when the sun descends:

except at the place that Hashem, your God, will choose to rest His Name, there shall you slaughter the pesach-offering **in the afternoon, when the sun descends**, the appointed time of your departure from Egypt⁹

⁷ The Soncino Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, Folio 43a, http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_43.html. *Yeshu* is the Hebrew name that is translated into English as “Jesus.”

⁸ *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 277, s.v. “Eve of Holidays.”

⁹ Scherman, Nosson. *The Chumash, the Stone Edition*. Brooklyn: Torah Educational Software, 1993. CD-ROM.

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Jewish history from the time of Christ is unanimous that the proper time to slay the lambs was from noon until sunset. It is at noon when the sun begins its descent toward the western horizon or, as the Talmudists wrote, “when the sun commences to move towards the west.” This is also why the Talmudic writers were so certain that all leaven had to be removed and burned prior to noon on the 14th day of Nisan, because from noon until sunset was the time in which the Passovers could legally be sacrificed. We saw that a sacrifice brought **before noon would not be a valid sacrifice**. This history from the Talmud is crucial, as it sheds light on why Jesus could not have sacrificed an early, invalid Passover while leaven was still on hand in Israel, and also why it would have been fine for him to eat bread at the Last Supper.

What Other Jewish Sources Say

The eminent Jewish scholar and historian Josephus, who was born around 7 years after the Crucifixion (AD 37), gives the time when the Passovers were sacrificed in his day:

So these High Priests, upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, **from the ninth hour until the eleventh**, but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves), and many of us are twenty in a company ...¹⁰

Josephus gives us a time that is **after noon** for the proper slaying of the Passovers, in clear agreement with the legal time as given in the Talmud. Obviously it was not the Jews who were confused on this issue. As we see from the chart near the beginning of this chapter, “from the ninth hour to the eleventh” would mean from around 2 to 5 PM.

God commanded several Temple duties to take place “between the evenings”: Passover, evening offering, incense offering (the time of prayer), and the lighting of the lamps. These were all carried out in the Temple after noon; none of them occurred after sunset.

Let’s look more closely at the *daily evening sacrifice*. Remember that the Jewish day ended at sundown (around 6 PM), and the time translated into English as “evening” actually meant “toward west sun” or “toward evening.” The Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek Septuagint used the word “**afternoon**” here in Exodus, but first we see two English translations:

NIV Exodus 29:39 Offer one in the morning and the other **at twilight**.

YLT Exodus 29:39 the one lamb thou dost prepare in the morning, and the second lamb thou dost prepare **between the evenings**;

Notice Young’s (YLT above) accurately translates this as “between the evenings,” which is the exact same Hebrew phrase God used in Exodus 12:6 when He commanded the proper time to slay the Passover lambs.

And here is what the Greek Septuagint has:

LXT Exodus 29:39 τὸν ἄμνον τὸν ἕνα ποιήσεις τὸ πρωὶ καὶ τὸν ἄμνον τὸν δεύτερον ποιήσεις τὸ δειλινόν

The Greek adjective **δειλινόν** means “**in the afternoon**,” as defined by *Friberg Greek Lexicon* and *BDAG Lexicon* (as an adverb it means “toward evening”). In the verse from the Septuagint (LXT), the Jewish scholars knew what they were doing when they translated this phrase into Greek as “after-noon.” Notice how the English (NIV above) usually

¹⁰ Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Jewish Wars,” 6.9.3, p. 906.

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translates it with words such as “twilight,” which is sometimes considered as the time after sunset. The English translations never say **afternoon**, which was the meaning of the Greek word the Septuagint translators used, as well as the meaning of the Hebrew phrase “between the evenings,” which also harmonizes with all of Jewish history.

Sacrificing a Passover “after sunset” of the 13th day would be invalid, because it was brought before noon of the 14th day, and because leaven would still be present in Israel. Sacrificing the Passover “after sunset” of the 14th day would be the next Jewish day (i.e., the 15th) and therefore would also be an invalid Passover.

Josephus, in regard to this daily *evening* sacrifice, wrote of the priests coming to the Temple at noon to begin this sacrificial duty:

... but for the most sacred place, none went in but the high priests, clothed in their special garments. Now there is so great caution used about these offices of religion, that the priests are appointed to go into the temple but at certain hours: for, in the morning, at the opening of the inner temple, those that are to officiate receive the sacrifices, **as they do again at noon**, till the doors are shut.¹¹

He also wrote about the Temple morning and evening daily offerings:

And any one may thus learn how very great piety we exercise towards God, and the observance of his laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations by their fear during this siege, but did still twice a day, in the morning **and about the ninth hour**, offer their sacrifices on the altar;¹²

Thus Josephus shows that this “evening” offering was sacrificed at “about the ninth hour” (around 2 to 3 PM), which was “between the evenings” (as per the Hebrew) and “in the afternoon” (as per the Greek Septuagint). In other words, it was right between the evenings. Josephus does not contradict himself—as some have thought—when he says elsewhere that the incense was offered at “sun-setting”:

... but incense was to be offered twice a-day, both before sun-rising and at **sun-setting**.¹³

Remember that those who translate Josephus into English often have a set theological viewpoint as to when to slay the Passover (because they are sure that the Last Supper was the Passover, and that Jesus was also somehow crucified as the 14th-day Passover). Again we must return to the original Greek to see what Josephus said. His actual words (translated above as “sun-setting”) are **πρὸς** (toward) and **δυσημαίς** (west). So Josephus actually said that incense was offered twice each day: before “sun-rising” (probably meaning before the sun had fully risen) and **toward west**. This is essentially the same rendering of Deuteronomy 16:6 from the Septuagint, which speaks of the time to slay the Passover as **πρὸς δυσημαίς ἡλίου** (**toward west sun**). These sources all agree with the timing mentioned in the Talmud.

Another famous Jewish writer and biblical philosopher from this time was Philo, who plainly stated that the Jews were to slay their Passovers “beginning at noonday” and “continuing till evening”:

Special laws, II:

THE FOURTH FESTIVAL

XXVII. (145) And after the feast of the new moon comes the fourth festival, that of the **passover**, which

¹¹ Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Against Apion,” 2.8.105, p. 966.

¹² Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Jewish Antiquities,” 14.4.3, p. 459.

¹³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3.8.3, <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/text/josephus/ant3.html>.

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the Hebrews call pascha, on which the whole people offer sacrifice, **beginning at noon** and continuing **till evening**.¹⁴

Philo also writes:

Why is the Passover sacrificed **πρὸς ἑσπέραν**?¹⁵ Perhaps because good things were about to befall at night. **It was not the custom to offer a sacrifice in darkness**, and for those who were about to experience good things at night it was **not proper to prepare it before the ninth hour**. Therefore it was not at random but knowingly that the prophet set a time between the turning **πρὸς ἑσπέραν**.¹⁶

So Philo completely agrees with the timing we saw earlier in the Talmud, which states “If the Paschal lamb be slaughtered before noon, **it is not valid**, because it is written [Exodus 12:6]: **“Toward the evening.”**¹⁷ Philo also agrees with the timing of Josephus, who said the Passovers were sacrificed from the ninth to the eleventh hour (Wars 6.9.3), and he agrees with what we saw from the Jewish translation of the Hebrew into the Greek Septuagint.

The New Testament Agrees

We will also see shortly how these times agree with the New Testament regarding the keeping of the Passover. It is only when we come to the *English translations* that the idea of *after sunset* appears for the time to slay the Passovers. All of the Jewish histories and the scriptures (when correctly translated) contradict such an idea. Remember that the English translations were written by people who came from a centuries-old *tradition* of Jesus eating the Passover at the Last Supper. So they wanted Jesus to both eat the Passover one night and be slain as the Passover the following day, and have both events somehow happen on the legal 14th day.

Part of the confusion over the proper time of “between the evenings” stems from the fact that the Jews *added* a late evening prayer called “Ma’ariv.” *Gateway to Judaism* describes the time for this late “evening” service as “twenty-five minutes after sundown, when three stars are visible.”¹⁸ Many Bible commentators incorrectly refer to this time of evening “when three stars are visible” as the time to sacrifice the Passovers. However, *Gateway to Judaism* also makes it clear that “actually, there were only two services in the Temple—morning and afternoon. The late evening prayer was added **after** the destruction of the Second Temple.”¹⁹

So those who take the Hebrew phrase “between the evenings” to mean the time “when three stars are visible” are incorrect, because this “late evening” prayer *did not exist in Jesus’s day*. In fact, this late evening (non-Temple) service did not even come into being until many years after Christ was crucified, and therefore it has no bearing whatsoever.

All of this brings us to the New Testament evidence, which tells us the *exact time* of the day when the evening incense offering would follow the daily continual evening sacrificial offering and therefore also shows the proper time to slay the Passovers:

YLT Acts 3:1 And Peter and John were going up at the same time **to the temple**, at the hour of the prayer, **the ninth hour**,

GNT Acts 3:1 Πιέτρος δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀνέβαινον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν

¹⁴ Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, “Special Laws II,” 27:145, <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book28.html>.

¹⁵ Philo’s two Greek words above are *pro.j* (“toward”) and *e’spe,ran* (“evening”), hence “toward evening.”

¹⁶ Marcus, *Philo Supplement II*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Pesachim, ch. 5, p. 113, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/psc09.htm>.

¹⁸ Shulman, *Gateway to Judaism*, vol. 1, p. 331.

¹⁹ Shulman, *Gateway to Judaism*, vol. 2, pp. 607–608.

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ἐνάτην.

In the Greek scriptures, the definite article “the” (τῆς) is in front of the word “prayer” (προσευχῆς), so the exact wording is the hour of *the* prayer (at the ninth hour). This was not just any random prayer; it was the time when many of the Jewish faithful would be gathered together for the prayer that accompanied the daily “even-ing” sacrifice and the Temple incense offering. They would come together in the Temple each day for these morning and evening sacrificial offerings and for *the prayer* at the time of this incense offering. The timing was highly symbolic, as it represented their prayers being acceptable to God (after the sacrifices were offered) and symbolically rising up to Him as the *evening incense offering*. We have an excellent picture of this in Luke:

NAS Luke 1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

NAS Luke 1:8 Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the *appointed* order of his division,

NAS Luke 1:9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to **enter the temple** of the Lord and **burn incense**.

NAS Luke 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were **in prayer** outside **at the hour of the incense offering**.

NAS Luke 1:11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

This was the Temple service that Peter and John were going up to, because this was when all the people would be gathered in the Temple. As mentioned, Acts 3:1 gives us this exact time for the even-ing offering of incense in the New Testament (i.e., the ninth hour, about 3 PM, which was of course “between the evenings”):

YLT Acts 3:1 And Peter and John were going up at the same time to the temple, at the hour of **the prayer**, the **ninth hour**.

Josephus agreed with this exact same time specified in scripture, stating that the service of the evening sacrifice was at the **ninth hour** and that even during the siege of the Temple by Roman troops, while soldiers were throwing stones down upon them, the priests were still careful to do everything as God had commanded:

And anyone may thus learn how very great piety we exercise towards God, and the observance of his laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations, by their fear during this siege, but did still twice a day, in the morning and **about the ninth hour**, offer their sacrifices on the altar; nor did they omit those sacrifices, if any melancholy accident happened by the stones that were thrown among them;²⁰

Now we’ll turn to the book of Revelation for more New Testament proof that in the time of Jesus, the Temple authorities kept the Passover, the evening offering, the incense offering (the prayer) at this same time—“between the evenings”—as commanded by God. In John’s vision, it was after the lamb had been slain (picturing Christ) that the bowls of incense (representing the prayers of the people) were seen as ready to be offered:

²⁰ Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Jewish Antiquities,” 14.4.3, p. 459.

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NAS Revelation 5:6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders **a Lamb standing, as if slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

NAS Revelation 5:8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden **bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints**.

Notice that the bowls of incense represent the prayers of the saints. These reverent Jews were obviously not ignorant of these pictures.

NAS Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to **the prayers of all the saints** upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

NAS Revelation 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

This picturing of the slain lamb and then the bowls of incense ready to be offered aligns with the timing mentioned in the Talmud:

The rabbis taught: “The daily (evening) offering precedes the Passover-sacrifice, and the Passover-sacrifice precedes the burning of the incense, and the incense precedes the lighting of the candles.”²¹

The Jews were acutely aware that the incense offering, which came after the daily evening sacrifice,²² represented the prayers of the believers being accepted by God as the smoke floated heavenward. This is why they would be gathered in the Temple for the incense offering, at the time of the prayer (Luke 1:10).

King David was also well aware of these meanings:

NAS Psalm 141:2 May **my prayer** be counted **as incense** before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the **evening offering**.

The scholars who translated the Septuagint show (in the Greek below) that both the evening offering and the incense offering were made every morning and every **after-noon** (δείλης), contrary to how the English reads (every “evening”):

NIV 2 Chronicles 13:11 Every morning and **evening** they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD.

LXT 2 Chronicles 13:11a θυμῶσιν τῷ κυρίῳ ὀλοκαυτώματα πρωὶ καὶ δείλης²³

Above, you can see that the Greek word in the Septuagint is “after-noon,” not “evening” (which can imply “night-time” in English). So when we connect all this together, we see that what Acts 3:1 gives is within this same time frame (the ninth hour, around 3 PM) that these three Temple services (Passover, evening offering, and incense offering) were

²¹ Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Pesachim, ch. 5, p. 108, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/psc09.htm>.

²² Or after the Passover on the 14th day of Nisan each year.

²³ Liddell and Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon* defines *dei,lhj* as “afternoon” (p. 373).

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performed. And this is the exact same time given in all the Jewish histories—the after-noon period of the day, centering around **the ninth hour**. It was also, of course, the ninth hour of the 14th day when the Jewish Messiah, “Christ our Passover”—the true Passover—fulfilled the sacrifice at God’s appointed time of “between the evenings”:

NAS Mark 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

NAS Mark 15:37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last.

We saw in “Setting the Table 1” that the Jewish Quartodecimans (Fourteenthers) were derided for their keeping of the 14th day special and for fasting until the ninth hour on this day to honor the Lord’s sacrifice, but the better history shows that their timing was correct.

What Does John Mean by the Sixth Hour?

There is a controversial verse in John that commentators have debated; John pictures the Messiah before Pilate at the sixth hour, with a band of chief priests demanding his crucifixion:

YLT John 19:14 and it was the preparation of the passover, and **as it were the sixth hour**, and he saith to the Jews, ‘Lo, your king!’

YLT John 19:15 and they cried out, ‘Take away, take away, crucify him;’ Pilate saith to them, ‘Your king shall I crucify?’ the chief priests answered, ‘We have no king except Caesar.’

YLT John 19:16 Then, therefore, he delivered him up to them, that he may be crucified, and they took Jesus and led *him* away,

Some have thought verse 14 was a scribal error, for how could Jesus be here with Pilate about noon (the sixth hour) when the other Gospels say he was on the cross at the third hour (9 AM)? Commentators have pointed to a manuscript error since a few weaker manuscripts have “third hour” in the Greek. However, in his *Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, Bruce Metzger points out that the manuscripts that change “sixth hour” to “third hour” are “an obvious attempt to harmonize the chronology with that of Mark 15:25.”²⁴ He goes on to say that while some believe the disagreement arose when copyists confused the Greek numerals 3 and 6, the manuscript evidence is “**overwhelmingly in support of**” the Greek word for “**sixth**.”

Some may jump to the conclusion that the scriptures contradict each other and that we should therefore throw our Bibles away and go home.

I believe, however, that the truth lies in the *Jewish idiom* for the sixth hour and what this hour meant to John and the other Jews as it relates to the Passover. From the Talmud, the importance of the sixth hour to Jews becomes clear, for the Passover *had to be selected* by the sixth hour, and from the sixth hour on was the *legal* time to kill the Passover. The other Greek word John used (ὡς), which Young’s properly translates into “as it were” (John 19:14 above), shows its subtle meaning. John used the Jewish natural-to-spiritual idiom²⁵ to say the “sixth hour” in the natural sense, but he *means* the sixth hour in the spiritual sense by saying “as it were the sixth hour.”

John subtly referred to Christ as the Passover in other ways also, one of them below:

²⁴ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 252.

²⁵ As explained in the chapter “Setting the Table 4.”

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NAS John 19:32 The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him;

NAS John 19:33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs;

NAS John 19:36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, **“Not a bone of Him shall be broken.”**

John connects this truth from the scripture (concerning the command for the Passover sacrifice) with something that the Jews would understand from their history and in their idiom:

NAS Exodus 12:46 “It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, **nor are you to break any bone of it.**”

Many have also wondered why there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3 PM) on the day of the Crucifixion:

NAS Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.

Some commentators believed it was a solar eclipse, but Edersheim points out that there can be no eclipse at the time of the full moon, when Passover always occurs.²⁶ Some say it was because God could not bear to look upon His son as he suffered, but if this were the true reason, then why did God not cause the darkness right at the third hour (around 9 AM) when Jesus was nailed to the cross, instead of waiting until the sixth hour?

I believe the truth is found in the fact that the sixth hour was the final time for the Passovers to be designated, and the lawful time after which the Passover sacrifice could be killed (as we saw in the earlier quotes from Philo and the Talmud). God’s causing the darkness over the land at *noon* was His way of saying He would no longer look upon or accept the animal sacrificial system. This darkness at noon also fulfilled the scripture given by the prophet Amos:

JPS Amos 8:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.

JPS Amos 8:10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

God had now sent His son as a fulfillment of the sacrificial system, and He would no longer accept the sacrifices in the Temple. Thousands of the Jewish faithful would have been making ready (with their lambs already designated) at noon for the daily continual sacrifice to commence (remember Josephus said the doors for this after-noon Temple service open at noon). They would have had their spotless lambs picked out and ready to be sacrificed in the Temple, where their blood would be poured out at the altar before the great Holy of Holies. Some of these people would have had their Passover lambs in tow as they passed by the commotion where Christ was alongside the road on the cross, not far from the Temple. The Passover was the one time of year when the common Israelite could approach this great altar and sacrifice his Passover lamb; all other sacrifices were commanded by God to be performed by the priests.

²⁶ Edersheim, *Life and Times*, Book 5, ch. 15, p. 604.

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Jesus said Peter would deny him three times before the cock crows. In fact that early morning “cock crow” (“cock summons” in Greek) was not a rooster, as many suppose, but the calling out to the priests to make ready for the morning sacrifice. There were three callings (summons) that went forth: early, middle, and late. The Talmud shows that there were twelve cocks (similar to faucets) at the laver in the Temple where the priests would first wash their hands and feet to prepare for the sacrifices.²⁷ *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (under Gebini) says this Temple crier’s voice (cock crow) could be heard for miles as he called the priests to prepare for the sacrifice.

So while the priests were being summoned to the Temple to make ready for the morning sacrifice, Christ was being led toward the Crucifixion. The reason the chief priests are pictured at the cross at the time of the Crucifixion but not seen at the time of death is that by then they were already back readying for the Passover sacrifice in the Temple (Mark 15:29–33). Those “passing by” (some even reviling the Messiah) were most likely on their way to the Temple, bringing their lamb sacrifice alongside them, all set for the day’s proceedings. They thought they were going to offer their Passover sacrifice, all the while missing the fact that Christ—the true Passover—was fulfilling God’s plan.

However, starting later this day, these lamb sacrifices in the Temple would no longer be accepted by God for atonement. Only by accepting the sacrifice of His son, Christ our Passover, is there forgiveness of sin. When Christ our Passover loudly cried out, “It is finished,” around 3 PM, the darkness fled away. The lamb of God had paid the penalty for our sins, the sacrifice was complete, and the price for our atonement was paid.

God was now going to allow each person to make their own decision as to whether they would accept God’s provision for sin, His own beloved son, the true Passover sacrifice. As the light of the sun again showed forth and the events of the day became widely known, many hearts had to wrestle with a decision. Once the sunlight came back out, there must have been pandemonium in the Temple among the priests and the multitudes who were waiting with their lambs as the darkness went away. The people beheld that the veil before the Holy of Holies was now torn in half and that the venerated place of God’s presence and glory now lay bare and open before them. Not far away at Golgotha, at the foot of the cross, the Roman centurion spoke out, declaring, “truly this was the son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

So when we think back to John’s words about the sixth hour (John 19:14), we must consider that there may be another truth being shown, before we take the position that the scriptures contradict themselves.

God’s plan of redemption for humanity was fulfilled. Just as Joseph had comforted his brethren and told them that his being sold into Egypt was all part of God’s plan from the beginning **to preserve many people alive**, so would the Lord speak similar words of comfort to all today.

NAS Genesis 50:20 “And as for you, you meant evil against me, *but* **God meant it for good** in order to bring about this present result, **to preserve many people alive**.”

The Nation of Israel, too, will see these things, as given in the following prophecy by Zechariah:

NAS Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.”

²⁷ The mention of the cock crow appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Book 3, Tract Yomah, ch. 1, pp. 27–28, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/yom06.htm>; the reference to the twelve cocks at the laver where the priests would wash appears in Book 3, Tract Yomah, ch 3, pp. 51–53, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t03/yom08.htm>.

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Questionable Article

Tell us why you believe this is a true or false doctrine and why?

Learn to Give an Answer!

The Sabbath in the New Testament (Part One)

(Copyright) by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

In the Mar-Apr 2022 issue of "The Sabbath Sentinel" was an article on the Sabbath. In the article some "26 reasons why we should keep the Sabbath", were presented by an individual named Daniel Liechly. The information came from the teachings of an individual named Andreas Fischer, from Germany, that lived in the 16th century.

For the purpose of this article, I am going to quote from four of those points.

#1). "There are Ten Commandments of God which constitute the Covenant. The Sabbath commandment is one of these. Therefore, if one breaks the Sabbath commandment, one violates them all."

#2). "Moses and the Old Testament prophets, as well as the Apostles in the New Testament, all teach that one should keep the Ten Commandments, which includes the Sabbath."

#10). "Paul and all the New Testament Apostles held their meetings for worship on the Sabbath."

#13). "Christ, the apostles, and all the earliest church fathers taught Sabbath worship."

Before covering the above four, let's go to the OT, to clarify some points regarding the Sabbath, and the command to observe it. For, there is indeed a command to "observe" given, but...?

First consider that the Ten Commandments, as listed in Ex. 20, are as they are recorded in the "Book of the Law". Which was "written with ink" by Moses. And said book of the law originated from Mt. Sinai.

Note though, that the original giving of the Ten Commandments to all of the peoples of Israel, came to them from the top of Mt. Horeb. Not mount Sinai. It only takes a simple study to see that these are two completely different mounts. Israel heard these Ten Commandments spoken to them with the "VOICE" of the Creator God Almighty.

The Almighty recorded his Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. And as the story goes, during the forty days that Moses spent on the top of Mt. Horeb, in the cloud, the children of Israel chose to worship a different God. The God that brought them out of Egypt in the cloud. Or the Angel in the cloud. Thus, when Moses did come down from the top of Horeb, he broke those original stone tablets, because they no more applied to Israel's peoples.

It ought to be noted that the Ten Commandments were recorded again on two tablets of stone. But these were written while Moses was on the top of mount Sinai. And they were later hidden away in the Ark of the Covenant. Which was in turn placed below the Mercy Seat in the inner room of the Tent of Meeting, the Holy of Holies. Thus, leaving Israel with only the book of the law to live by during all OT times.

Moving on, keeping in mind that Mt. Horeb was completely covered by the "cloud". Ex. 19:11. "...The third day the LORD [not the Almighty] will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai...V.18. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace."

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It is important to keep in mind two points in the above. First, the Almighty, as mentioned above, was in the midst of a cloud, while the LORD spoken of was in the midst of smoke from the fire.

Since we are dealing mostly with the information on the Sabbath, let's now go to Ex. 20:8. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy." The reader can read the definition of "remember" if they wish, but I will cover the meaning from Strong's Concordance when we get to Part #2 of this article, where we will deal with the Sabbath, as it is taught in the New Testament.

Now consider V.'s 9-11. "Six days shall you labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work...for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. And, rested the seventh day. Wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

If the above is indeed speaking of the Ten Commandments, as they were spoken by, and written by, The Almighty, then where in the above words does one find any "command to observe the Sabbath"? The only command given is to "rest" on this day. Not doing our normal labors. Thus, does it not seem that if any command to "observe" is intended, then is it not the command to "rest"?

The reader might ask. "Does it not then command all of Israel's peoples to assemble on the Sabbath, thus this being the meaning of observe"? Well, it says nothing in the above verses about there being any command to assemble on the Sabbath. And, if the reader will examine "all of the book of the law", it is not likely that they will find any such command given commanding assembling on the Sabbath day. I have searched it out several times and have not found any supporting evidence for assembling. Though I have found evidence of their not assembling. Now, as will be shown in Part #2, it is good for all believers to assemble. But no command is given to do so. As will be shown in the NT.

The Sabbath in the New Testament (Part Two)

(Copyright) by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

The basic lesson shown at the end of Part #1 is, that there is no mention in the words of the Law of the Ten Commandments, that even hints to the Sabbath being anything more than "a day of rest". Yes, it is a very important day, but not as it has been alluded to by most of the various "churches". "A day of rest", and no mention of a "day of observance". If there is any observance being referred to, it seems that said observance is in "resting". As well, there is also no command given in either the Ten Commandments, or the book of the law, that calls for the citizens to have to "assemble" on the Sabbath.

Thus, with the above in mind, then it would seem that there is very little need to discuss observing and assembling on the Sabbath, in the New Testament as well. Of course, claiming that said teachings have changed, and assembling is commanded, would seem to be hiding the Truth. Which, as far as the True Church is concerned, by the end of the 1st century, men like Diotrophes did indeed "change said Scriptural teaching". However, it is an individual's choice to make.

Still, let's look at some of the teachings in the NT, concerning the topics of the Sabbath, and observing and assembling.

Such topics seem to show that, when Jesus entered the temple or a synagogue, it was simply to witness the new Ten Commandment Gospel message, to those that were sold on the OT book of the law message. If Jesus was a supporter of the book of the law practices, then he would almost certainly have been accepted. With little need of miracles.

Consider the words of Heb. 12:23-24. "To the general assembly, and the church of the first born...And, to Jesus Christ, the mediator of a new covenant." IOW's Jesus was bringing forth the same message as his Father had given to all Israel when he spoke the Ten Commandments to them. The "new covenant" being taught again, to replace the old covenant law of Moses. Again, when Jesus preached in the synagogues, he was doing what his Father had done from Horeb. However, just as Israel of the past rejected the Almighty's covenant, so also did they reject the Almighty's covenant when it was spoken by his son.

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The message Jesus taught in Judea; the apostles taught to all of the tribes of Israel living in many many other areas. Of course, just as the Judean Jewish leaders had him killed, so also did the Judean and Israelite Jewish leaders killed the apostles.

I am going to interject the following teaching, and let the reader choose for himself/herself whether it makes sense or not and is True or not.

- 1) Moses' law represents the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- 2) God Almighty's Law represents the Tree of Life. True or false?
- 3) The TKGE leads to death.
- 4) The Tree of Life leads to life. True or false?

It is the individual's choice to give a yes or a no.

(An interjected thought. Consider the women that came to the tomb to see how Jesus body was laid out. They went back to prepare spices, and "RESTED on the Sabbath".) [Lk. 23:56](#)

Let's now look at an example of what occurred when Paul and Barnabss went to Antioch in Asia Minor. The first Sabbath they went into the synagogue, and Paul began to present his message to the Gentile Jews within said synagogue. Of course, they rejected his message. As those of the same mindset rejected Jesus.

Now look at [Acts 13:44](#). "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Seemingly showing us two things. First that, almost all of the gentiles living in Asia Minor were of the old covenant law of Moses. As the "circumcised" gentile Jews in the sanctuary, and the mostly "uncircumcised" gentile Jews living in the city and surrounding areas. Secondly, it shows that, even though they were of the law, the great multitude did "not attend church".

The reader might ask. "How is it possible that all of these gentile peoples could have been of the law of Moses?" The answer is found in the book of Esther. [Esth. 8:17](#). "...And many of the [gentile] people became Jews. For the fear of the [Judean] Jews fell upon them." Becoming a Jew, basically meant that the gentiles began to practice circumcision, and obedience to the other book of the law teachings.

[Esth. 9:3](#). "And all the rulers of the [127] provinces, the lieutenants, deputies, and officers of the kings, helped the Jews. Because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them." As well, likely most of their citizens became either circumcised or uncircumcised Jews.

I will conclude with the following two Scriptures, that seemingly puts the topic into clear understanding.

[Acts 15:5](#). "There rose up certain of the Pharisees which believed [in Jesus as the Messiah], saying. That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

[Acts 15:24](#). "For as much as we have heard that certain That went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying. You must be circumcised and keep the law [of Moses]. To whom we GAVE NO SUCH COMMANDMENT."

A final thought. NT Scripture tells us that many of the believing Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, either "within or upon" them. These gentiles that were not observing Moses law. Now ask yourselves. How many of the "believing in Jesus Jews, that were keeping the law of Moses, are shown to have the Holy Spirit placed within or upon them"?

Iron Sharpening Iron

(Agree or Disagree with Something Printed)
New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: Chinese Spy Balloon

Article by Rich Traver & Laura Lee

Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota) and Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

I imagine that the first balloon that was shot down off the Atlantic coast could not have been anything to do with the US "Deep State". For the balloon was something like 200' in height, and it was carrying a weight of some 2000+ pounds. As well, the ones in Alaska and northern Canada were said to have originated from the west. Meaning it would have been difficult for the "Deep State" to send them out. As well, the one that went over northern South America would as well likely not be of said same source.

Editor's Note:

I agree with Ray that this probably wasn't the work of the "Deep State" unless they are launching them from a different country.

Because the reports are so mixed it is hard to know what is true and what is not true. This morning (2-13-23) there was a report that during the Trump administration there were spy balloons, but they went undetected because the USA did not have equipment to detect them. I believe this is another false report in order to shift blame to a different administration than their own. Remember earlier reports said people saw this first balloon and if that is the case, no special equipment is required to know when these balloons are around.

I will sort of disagree with Ray that the 2023 balloons are coming from the West. I think the 2023 balloons are coming from the North because of where they are being shot down. This first one was apparently seen in Montana, the second one in Alaska, the third one in Canada and the fourth one in Lake Huron area showing they are coming from the North. If you remember the 1945 balloon bombs came from the West as they were found in Mexico, the West Coast of the USA and in Canada. The problem with either flight path is that we also had a balloon sighting in South America and in China which are out of sink with the rest of them. I have received no reports of the South America balloon, or the China balloon being shot down as of this morning, so where did those two balloons go.

Some of the 1945 balloon bombs exploded in the sky before reaching the earth. There was a report of a woman in Montana who took pictures of what could have been an explosion of something in the sky. She said it scared her and I believe what she saw, and videotaped was real even though they are trying to bury the report by saying it was something to do with her cell phone. She also heard an explosion and one report said she saw debris fall from the sky.

When the 1945 balloon bombs appeared in 1945, the government tried to cover that up to. So, if this woman witnessed a bomb blow up in the sky that is why they want to bury the story or cover it up as if it is her imagination. You can clearly see from her video she saw something.

The main reason we sent out the "Chinese Spy Balloon" story early was because we wanted people to be aware that yes balloons can and do carry bombs. Whether any of these have bombs on them or not, I do not know, but it is a little funny it took a week to shoot down the first balloon and then they immediately shot down the other three as they appeared. There must have been something in the wreckage of the first balloon to warrant shooting down the other three almost immediately after sighting them.

Today's news is not accurate, so be aware that balloons can carry bombs so don't stand there watching these balloons and thinking they are just balloons. If you believe they are going to land on you or your house get away from there immediately and if one blows up in the sky do not touch the debris, call whoever you deem to be the proper authorities to call for such an event. If you see a strange object on the ground do not touch it, call the proper authorities. (Laura Lee)

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February 18, 2023 – What a strange ride we are taking on these balloons. We still don't know what happened to the South America balloon and we also don't know whether China shot any of their balloons down, if they had any to start with.

What we do know at this point is that they shot down three other objects, one in Alaska, one in Canada and one over Lake Huron. We are told that the one in Alaska made sensors on airplanes not work and that they have not recovered any debris from these last three balloons. We also know that at some point the last three went from being balloons to being objects so they could call them UFOs and make people afraid. Senator Kennedy even told us to "Keep Your Doors Locked". The one they shot down over Lake Huron apparently started in Montana or at least radar picked it up in Montana and was able to track it all the way to Lake Huron before they shot it down.

Then yesterday a report came in about some eleven year old boys in a balloon club who put tracking devices on their balloons and at least one of them may have been the one shot down over Canada.

Biden Humiliated After Hobby Club's Science Balloon Is Reported as 'Missing in Action' (westernjournal.com)

What we can conclude is our government is lying to us again. The media is not on the same page, meaning many of them are also lying to us. The government is getting ready to tell us we are being attacked by space aliens. I have no idea where this story is going or if they have just decided to end the whole thing leaving us all with more questions than we have answers to. (Laura Lee)

In regard to: The Sabbath in the New Testament (Part One)

Article by Ray Daly

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Ray's Article:

In the Mar-Apr 2022 issue of "The Sabbath Sentinel" was an article on the Sabbath. In the article some "26 reasons why we should keep the Sabbath", were presented by an individual named Daniel Liechly. The information came from the teachings of an individual named Andreas Fischer, from Germany, that lived in the 16th century.

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#2). "Moses and the Old Testament prophets, as well as the Apostles in the New Testament, all teach that one should keep the Ten Commandments, which includes the Sabbath."

#10). "Paul and all the New Testament Apostles held their meetings for worship on the Sabbath."

#13). "Christ, the apostles, and all the earliest church fathers taught Sabbath worship."

Before covering the above four, let's go to the Old Testament, to clarify some points regarding the Sabbath, and the command to observe it. For, there is indeed a command to "observe" given, but...?

First consider that the Ten Commandments, as listed in Ex. 20, are as they are recorded in the "Book of the Law". Which was "written with ink" by Moses. And said book of the law originated from Mt. Sinai.

Laura writes:

Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Exo 20:9** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: **Exo 20:10** But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: **Exo 20:11** For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the

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LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

The book of the law existed from the beginning and is written in the first five books of the bible, which is called the books of the law.

Ray's Article:

Note though, that the original giving of the Ten Commandments to all of the peoples of Israel, came to them from the top of Mt. Horeb. Not mount Sinai. It only takes a simple study to see that these are two completely different mounts. Israel heard these Ten Commandments spoken to them with the "VOICE" of the Creator God Almighty.

Laura writes:

Although most scholars consider Sinai and Horeb to have been different names for the same place, there is a minority body of opinion that they may have been different locations. [Mount Horeb - Wikipedia](#)

It does not matter whether you believe that Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai were the same mountain or two different mountains, the Law of God did not change from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Ray's Article:

The Almighty recorded his Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. And as the story goes, during the forty days that Moses spent on the top of Mt. Horeb, in the cloud, the children of Israel chose to worship a different God. The God that brought them out of Egypt in the cloud. Or the Angel in the cloud. Thus, when Moses did come down from the top of Horeb, he broke those original stone tablets, because they no more applied to Israel's peoples.

Laura writes:

Exo 32:19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

Moses was angry because they were worshipping a golden calf, not because the tablets no longer applied. Don't read things into scripture that are not there.

Ray's Article:

It ought to be noted that the Ten Commandments were recorded again on two tablets of stone. But these were written while Moses was on the top of mount Sinai. And they were later hidden away in the Ark of the Covenant. Which was in turn placed below the Mercy Seat in the inner room of the Tent of Meeting, the Holy of Holies. Thus, leaving Israel with only the book of the law to live by during all OT times.

Laura writes:

The ten commandments are also in the book of the law and both sets of tablets were given to Moses on Mount Sinai which is also called Mount Horeb.

Ray's Article:

Moving on, keeping in mind that Mt. Horeb was completely covered by the "cloud". **Ex. 19:11**. "...The third day the LORD [not the Almighty] will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai...**V.18**. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace."

It is important to keep in mind two points in the above. First, the Almighty, as mentioned above, was in the midst of a cloud, while the LORD spoken of was in the midst of smoke from the fire.

Laura writes:

Exo 19:11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

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Exo 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

The Lord spoken of in both verses is Christ.

Ray's Article:

Since we are dealing mostly with the information on the Sabbath, let's now go to **Ex. 20:8**. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy." The reader can read the definition of "remember" if they wish, but I will cover the meaning from Strong's Concordance when we get to Part #2 of this article, where we will deal with the Sabbath, as it is taught in the New Testament.

Now consider **V.'s 9-11**. "Six days shall you labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work...for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. And rested the seventh day. Wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

If the above is indeed speaking of the Ten Commandments, as they were spoken by, and written by, The Almighty, then where in the above words does one find any "command to observe the Sabbath"? The only command given is to "rest" on this day. Not doing our normal labors. Thus, does it not seem that if any command to "observe" is intended, then is it not the command to "rest"?

The reader might ask. "Does it not then command all of Israel's peoples to assemble on the Sabbath, thus this being the meaning of observe"? Well, it says nothing in the above verses about there being any command to assemble on the Sabbath. And, if the reader will examine "all of the book of the law", it is not likely that they will find any such command given commanding assembling on the Sabbath day. I have searched it out several times and have not found any supporting evidence for assembling. Though I have found evidence of their not assembling. Now, as will be shown in Part #2, it is good for all believers to assemble. But no command is given to do so. As will be shown in the NT.

Laura writes:

When people don't want to do something, they will weave many fables in order to get out of it. The command to assemble on the Sabbath is here:

Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day *is* the sabbath of rest, **an holy convocation**; ye shall do no work *therein*: it *is* the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. (KJV)

Lev 23:3 Work is to be done six days, and in the seventh day *shall be* a sabbath of rest, **a holy gathering**; you shall do no work; it *is* a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings. (LITV)

Lev 23:3 Six days you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, **a sacred assembly**. You are not to do any work. It's a Sabbath to the LORD wherever you live. (ISV)

Lev 23:3 "For six days work is to be done, and on the seventh day *shall be* a Sabbath of complete rest, **a holy assembly**; you shall not do any work; it *shall be* a Sabbath for Yahweh in all your dwellings. (LEB)

Lev 23:3 For six days work may be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, **a day of sacred assembly**. You must not do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD. (BSB)

Lev 23:3 You have six days when you can do your work, but the seventh day of each week is holy because it belongs to me. No matter where you live, you must rest on the Sabbath and **come together for worship**. This law will never change. (CEV)

Iron Sharpening Iron In regard to: The Sabbath in the New Testament (Part Two)

Article by Ray Daly
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Ray's Article:

The basic lesson shown at the end of Part #1 is, that there is no mention in the words of the Law of the Ten Commandments, that even hints to the Sabbath being anything more than "a day of rest". Yes, it is a very important day, but not as it has been alluded to by most of the various "churches". "A day of rest", and no mention of a "day of observance". If there is any observance being referred to, it seems that said observance is in "resting". As well, there is also no command given in either the Ten Commandments, or the book of the law, that calls for the citizens to have to "assemble" on the Sabbath.

Laura writes:

Lev. 23:3 gives you the command to assemble on the seventh day Sabbath. Why are you ignoring that said command is in the books of the law. Leviticus is one of the five books of the law.

Ray's Article:

Thus, with the above in mind, then it would seem that there is very little need to discuss observing and assembling on the Sabbath, in the New Testament as well. Of course, claiming that said teachings have changed, and assembling is commanded, would seem to be hiding the Truth. Which, as far as the True Church is concerned, by the end of the 1st century, men like Diotrophes did indeed "change said Scriptural teaching". However, it is an individual's choice to make.

Laura writes:

That would be true, all people have been given free will to choose what they will and will not do, however it is a sin if your free will leads you to break the laws of God. There is a command to assemble on the Sabbath and it is in the book of the law and if you have people you can meet with and you intentionally break that command then you will answer to God for that at some point.

Ray's Article:

Still, let's look at some of the teachings in the NT, concerning the topics of the Sabbath, and observing and assembling.

Such topics seem to show that, when Jesus entered the temple or a synagogue, it was simply to witness the new Ten Commandment Gospel message, to those that were sold on the OT book of the law message. If Jesus was a supporter of the book of the law practices, then he would almost certainly have been accepted. With little need of miracles.

Laura writes:

The entire bible is the inspired word of God, and you are trying to tell everyone that Christ was not a supporter of His own laws. Who are you trying to fool with all this foolishness?

Ray's Article:

Consider the words of [Heb. 12:23-24](#). "To the general assembly, and the church of the first born...And, to Jesus Christ, the mediator of a new covenant." IOW's Jesus was bringing forth the same message as his Father had given to all Israel when he spoke the Ten Commandments to them. The "new covenant" being taught again, to replace the old covenant law of Moses. Again, when Jesus preached in the synagogues, he was doing what his Father had done from Horeb. However, just as Israel of the past rejected the Almighty's covenant, so also did they reject the Almighty's covenant when it was spoken by his son.

Laura writes:

[Heb 12:23](#) To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, [Heb 12:24](#) And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the

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blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

Christ was the one who gave the ten commandments on Mount Siani/Mount Horeb (same mountain). The Law of Moses is still the law of the New Testament. The Law has not changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **Jer 31:32** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **Jer 31:33** But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

There is no change of the law, just how it is administered.

Ray's Article:

The message Jesus taught in Judea; the apostles taught to all of the tribes of Israel living in many many other areas. Of course, just as the Judean Jewish leaders had him killed, so also did the Judean and Israelite Jewish leaders killed the apostles.

I am going to interject the following teaching, and let the reader choose for himself/herself whether it makes sense or not and is True or not.

- 1) Moses' law represents the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- 2) God Almighty's Law represents the Tree of Life. True or false?
- 3) The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (TKGE) leads to death.
- 4) The Tree of Life leads to life. True or false?

It is the individual's choice to give a yes or a no.

Laura writes:

Let's hope no one believes any of this. God's Law is not Good and Evil. Moses does not have a law. Moses is the one that delivered God's Law on God's command, and that is the only reason it is called Moses Law.

Ray's Article:

(An interjected thought. Consider the women that came to the tomb to see how Jesus body was laid out. They went back to prepare spices, and "RESTED on the Sabbath".) Lk. 23:56

Laura writes:

Luk 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day **according to the commandment.**

Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day *is* the sabbath of rest, **an holy convocation**; ye shall do no work *therein*: it *is* the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

In Luke 23:56 it says she rested according to the commandment. That means she kept Lev. 23:3 which is the Sabbath commandment.

Ray's Article:

Let's now look at an example of what occurred when Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch in Asia Minor. The first Sabbath they went into the synagogue, and Paul began to present his message to the Gentile Jews within said synagogue. Of course, they rejected his message. As those of the same mindset rejected Jesus.

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Now look at Acts 13:44. "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Seemingly showing us two things. First that, almost all of the gentiles living in Asia Minor were of the old covenant law of Moses. As the "circumcised" gentile Jews in the sanctuary, and the mostly "uncircumcised" gentile Jews living in the city and surrounding areas. Secondly, it shows that, even though they were of the law, the great multitude did "not attend church".

Laura writes:

Act 13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Acts 13:44 shows that they assembled on the sabbath day. The Law of God has not changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament, so the Sabbath Command found in Leviticus 23 is still in effect today.

Ray's Article:

The reader might ask. "How is it possible that all of these gentile peoples could have been of the law of Moses?" The answer is found in the book of Esther. Esth. 8:17. "...And many of the [gentile] people became Jews. For the fear of the [Judean] Jews fell upon them." Becoming a Jew, basically meant that the gentiles began to practice circumcision, and obedience to the other book of the law teachings.

Esth. 9:3. "And all the rulers of the [127] provinces, the lieutenants, deputies, and officers of the kings, helped the Jews. Because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them." As well, likely most of their citizens became either circumcised or uncircumcised Jews.

I will conclude with the following two Scriptures, that seemingly puts the topic into clear understanding.

Acts 15:5. "There rose up certain of the Pharisees which believed [in Jesus as the Messiah], saying. That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Acts 15:24. "For as much as we have heard that certain That went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying. You must be circumcised and keep the law [of Moses]. To whom we GAVE NO SUCH COMMANDMENT."

A final thought. NT Scripture tells us that many of the believing Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, either "within or upon" them. These gentiles that were not observing Moses law. Now ask yourselves. How many of the "believing in Jesus Jews, that were keeping the law of Moses, are shown to have the Holy Spirit placed within or upon them"?

Laura writes:

The issue here was circumcision and not the law of Moses.

Ray, this whole story you just told us is nothing but a fable. If you don't want to keep the Sabbath that is fine and totally within your free will to do so, but teaching others to break the Sabbath command is not right. Do you honestly believe that Moses wrote his own law? Christ taught the Law of Moses because it was God's Law.

Other Items

(Poems, Jokes, Questions etc.)

Do Movies Warn Us of Coming Disasters?

(Copyright 2023) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

The Movie "White Noise" is a film about a train wreck in Ohio filmed in 2022 – and then a train wreck happened a few months later in 2023.

https://allnewspipeline.com/Thousands_Of_Farms_Downstream_From_Ohio_Armageddon.php

...with actors from East Palestine involved, with explosions filling the air with dangerous toxins. "Predictive programming"

They appear to want to warn us first.

Knee Pain, Foot Pain

(Copyright 2023) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

Found this information while looking in my documents on my pc.

Castor

The beans themselves are a deadly poison from which the bioweapon "ricin" is made. But oil pressed from the plant has a long and revered history of healthful use in the treatment of bronchitis, lung inflammation, pneumonia, warts, skin problems, arthritis, fungal and parasitic infections and more. Warm compress to affected area, or simple massage with oiled fingers and palms, works wonders if not miracles.

Here is a possible help I had sent to someone else.

I was reading up about your foot pain and the thought occurred to me – what about hot (not so you hurt yourself) castor oil on a cotton pad placed on your foot? I would just smear the oil on one side of the cloth, place it on the foot and put a heating pad over it to keep it warm. I would also place some plastic between the pad and the heating pad as the oil takes a little bit to clean off whatever it touches including the skin. A person can leave it on for say, 20 minutes at a time. I have no idea if it would do anything for the pain but for helping heal the body it is well known. I throw the idea out there in case it might be a consideration.

Holy Days 2023

Passover – April 6, 2023 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 6-12, 2023

Pentecost – May 26, 2023

Trumpets - September 16, 2023

Atonement – September 25, 2023

Tabernacles –September 30, 2023 to October 6, 2023

Last Great Day – October 7, 2023

Notes