

Our Passover Lamb

Some ways in which our Passover Lamb mirrored the Exodus Passover

I would like to highlight some of the ways in which Jesus the Messiah (Hebrew: Yeshua HaMassiach) is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7-8). *Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

God tells us in Rev 13:8 that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. Clearly Jesus was not crucified at or before the universe was created. So what does God mean here?

He is telling us that he had planned the crucifixion of Yeshua from the very start¹.

Therefore, it should not seem too unbelievable that the Messiah's story of his 'Passover' could so incredibly match the first Passover², the Exodus from Egypt. The Exodus story typifies the story of Yeshua and is I think the second most amazing story of God's grace and redemption in the history of our universe so far.

God seems to like creating amazing 'co-incidences' – the Hebrews left Egypt 430 years to the same day that they entered:

Ex 12:41 And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the host of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt.

Before we look at these amazing coincidences, let us first look at when the Passover celebration occurs each year [You may have noticed that Israel will celebrate the Passover in 2009 some 2 days earlier than Easter this year (based on a Rabbinic calendar)].

The Biblical determination of the time to remember the Passover of Egypt (and also the Passover of our Lamb, Messiah Yeshua) is based on when the first month of the biblical years, the month of Nisan is to start. Each biblical month is a lunar month of some 29 or 30 days and begins when the New Moon is seen, or more accurately on the night (the beginning of a biblical day, as it starts at sunset) that the first crescent sliver is seen after the days/nights of the New Moon.

The New Moon is the opposite of the Full Moon, that is, it occurs when there is no sunlight reflecting off the moon's surface because the moon is between the sun and the earth. This lasts for between 1.5 – 3.5 days every lunar phase and around 2.5 days in the Middle East. Thus it would be difficult to know which of these 2 to 3 days to start the month on, **if** you based the start on the New Moon itself rather than the first sliver of light or crescent reflection after the New Moon³.

As in ancient times the people worked from dawn to dusk, they would have observed that the moon was still a 'new moon' when they started work on the 2nd or 3rd day and then seen the beginnings of the bright crescent caused by the sunlight reflecting off the moon's surface that night as dusk arrived and they finished work (if there was cloud cover, this was made a little difficult). There is also no sunlight reflecting off the moon when we have a total lunar eclipse, but this is quite a rare and separate event.

Thus Hodesh, the Hebrew word for month, while it literally means 'New Moon'; actually refers to when the first crescent sliver appears as just explained.

¹ We read in Acts 4: 24-28 where Peter quotes Ps 2 in explaining that it had always been God's plan (see v28) to pour out a libation on His Holy Hill i.e. to have the Messiah sacrificed on Mt Zion (see my article on Ps2:6 for more detail on this).

² The Hebrew word which has been translated into English as Passover is 'Pesach' פֶּסַח which some Jewish scholars contend actually means 'to protect, guard or make a defence'. This it is argued, can be seen for example, in Isaiah 31:5 "Like hovering birds overhead, the LORD Almighty will SHIELD Jerusalem; He will DEFEND and deliver it, He will PASACH it and will cause it to escape." Pesach (or Pasach) here can only mean "'to protect, guard or make a defence' not 'pass or skip over' as most translations render this passage. If God were to pass or skip over His protection would not remain or 'hover'. Protecting also conveys a more active participation and is especially helpful when we think of our Messiah's blood, his Pesach 'protecting' us in an active and permanent sense until He returns and we enter the Kingdom of God.

³ The dates of the New Moon being referred to here are those in Jerusalem. We are a few hours different here in Australia.

Ps 104:19 *"He created the moon for Mo'adim [appointed times]"* Or in the NASB *"He made the moon for the seasons;"*

Lev 23:2: *"These are the Mo'adim [appointed times] of YHWH, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed times [Mo'adam]."*

Or in the NASB: *"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD'S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--My appointed times are these:"*

These passages show us that it was God's plan for us to use the moon (or moon's phases) to determine the times of His special days.

In 1 Sam 20:5 David says to Jonathan *"Tomorrow is the New Moon (Hodesh)"*. Here you can see that while the Hebrew word Hodesh is taken to mean month, strictly speaking it refers to the first day of the month, the 'New Moon' or the first crescent sliver.

Look at Ex 13:

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine." 3 And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.

As we shall see, God changed this month's name to Nisan (meaning first or first fruits). But what does Abib mean?

Abib (pronounced Aviv) indicates a stage in the development and ripening of the barley crops. This stage is indicated in Ex 9:31-32 which describes the devastation caused by the plague of hail:

"And the flax and the barley were smitten, because the barley was Abib⁴ and the flax was Giv'ol. And the wheat and the spelt were not smitten because they were dark (Afilot)."

Being Abib meant that the barley had reached a stage of its ripening where it was brittle and therefore more susceptible to damage from the hail.

Most versions translate this poorly and therefore miss this connection.

The NIV is helpful here: Ex 9:31 *(The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. 32 The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)*

From this it is clear that the barley, which was Abib at the beginning of the month, has become harvest-ready 15-21 days later (i.e ready to be used in the 'first-fruits' or wave-sheaf offering on the first day after Sabbath during Passover). Therefore, the month of the Abib can not begin unless the barley has reached a stage where it will be harvest-ready 2-3 weeks later⁵.

That the barley must be harvest-ready 2-3 weeks into the month of the Abib is also clear from Deut 16:9 which states: *"From when the sickle commences on the standing grain you will begin to count seven weeks."*⁶ (This passage is referring to celebration of the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost.)

As a result sometimes (as in 2006), Barley was not ready, that is, was not Abib in Jerusalem, and so another month called VEADAR was added (the 13th month of the Biblical year and hence it was a biblical leap year) and this resulted in Passover being a month after Easter⁷.

⁴ Strong's number 24 (see also Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (p 1b – 'fresh young ears of barley'). NIV has 'had headed'

⁵ In summation, barley which is in the state of Abib has 3 characteristics: 1) It is brittle enough to be destroyed by hail and has begun to lighten in colour (it is not "dark"), 2) The seeds have produced enough dry material so it can be eaten parched., 3) It has developed enough so that it will be harvest-ready 2-3 weeks later. <http://www.karaite-korner.org/abib.shtml>

⁶ Deuteronomy 16 also declares that the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread must be celebrated at the Temple in Jerusalem, which has not strictly been possible since 70 AD.

⁷ Thanks to the Karaite Jews for this information <http://www.karaite-korner.org/abib.shtml>

Determining when and how best to share in the remembrance of the Passover of our Lamb at the appropriate time is a significant challenge⁸. Even Sir Isaac Newton, perhaps the greatest theologian of his time, spent much time and effort on this question and clearly understood the significance of the ripening of the barley crop.

I want now to illustrate how incredibly the Passover in Egypt and our Lord's Passover or death, burial and resurrection match so amazingly!

To do this let me set the scene a little.

The Last Supper was taken the night before Yeshua was crucified.

There is some controversy over whether this was a Passover meal (obviously the *original* Passover meal was after the lamb was slaughtered) or not. Also related to this is the controversy over whether the crucifixion day was a Thursday or Friday or even a Wednesday!

Many learned theologians have argued this point and appear to have some good grounds for their respective positions, with the Friday obviously being the most popular choice.

What we can be much more sure of is that Yeshua's timing reflected very significantly the timing of the first Passover. God was fairly specific about the dates of the first Passover. That is when they were to take the Lamb or goat into their home; when they were to sacrifice it; how their obedience in an action involving its sacrificial blood would protect them and their firstborn and when they were to leave behind their old life of slavery in Egypt.

The actual days of the week as opposed to dates are a little more confusing.

Please bear with me as I present the position I currently feel best fits the apparently conflicting information we are given. It also is made difficult by our translations and understanding of the Hebraic methods of calculating the feast days.

Let us turn to Exodus 12 & Lev 23: 1-11. God told Moses that the month of Nisan was from then on to be considered the first month of the year and that on the 10th day of this month they were to take an unblemished lamb into their houses and keep it for 4 days until the 14th of Nisan when they were to sacrifice the lamb at dusk (i.e. this was understood to mean between 3 pm and sunset),

Ex 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.

and put its blood on the doors so that their firstborn would be spared by the angel of death, who would Passover Egypt at midnight.

Ex 12: 29 And it came to pass at midnight, that God smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.

This destruction of the first-born of Egypt occurred on the 15th Nisan (the lamb or goat which was to be sacrificed was to be sacrificed late on the 14th Nisan (remembering that in Hebrew reckoning the day starts at Sunset (around 6 pm) and concludes at the following sunset).

The Israelites left Egypt sometime late (around dusk⁹) on the 15th¹⁰.

⁸ You may well be asking, if this is the true biblical understanding of when the Passover (and Easter?) should occur, why is it ignored by the great majority of Christian leaders and churches? The answer to this question is disturbing and does not, I believe, reflect well on the Christian church. I will leave it unanswered here so as not to distract from the uplifting purpose of this article.

⁹ Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. Deut 16:1 (KJV)

That is, during the day after the night in which the angel of death had passed over the land. Thus the original Passover meal occurred at the beginning of the 15th Nisan.

We read in John 12:1 that Yeshua entered Bethany (just outside of Jerusalem) 6 days before the Passover, before the 14th Nisan. This was not a Sabbath Day (a Saturday) as Yeshua was an observant Jew and would not have walked further than a 'Sabbath day's walk on the Sabbath (less than 2 kms.) In fact it was probably a Friday. Then having spent the Sabbath in Bethany with Lazarus' family, he entered Jerusalem on the 10th Nisan (many believe it was a Sunday - what we call Palm Sunday - although it was probably on the Saturday or Sunday evening (Mark 11:11 - 'the hour was already late').

Yeshua shared the Passover meal or 'Last Supper' on the 14th Nisan - remembering that the Hebrew date starts at sunset on the day before - thus it was by Hebrew reckoning the same day when Yeshua was crucified about the sixth hour (Noon to 3 PM), probably around noon as there was darkness over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour (Matt 27:45) and died at the ninth hour (between 3 PM & Sunset/dusk).

After Yeshua shared the Passover Meal and was arrested, he was then taken that night and '**led like a lamb to the slaughter**' (Isaiah 53:7 - this helps confirm the parallel between our Passover Lamb and the original Passover).

In Matt 26:17 we read "*And on the first day of Unleavened Bread¹¹ the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, 'Where do You wish us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?'*". In other places the day is referred to as the Preparation Day (i.e. Nisan 14) - see Jn 19:31 *Therefore, since it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the stake on the Sabbath - for that Sabbath was a high one - the Jews asked Pilate to have their legs broken, and that they be taken away. And the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover had to be slaughtered. And He sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us to eat'*" (i.e. the day before the Holy Assembly and Sabbath day.) In Luke 22:7 it is called the 'Day of Unleavened Bread'. Clearly this day could not be the Holy Assembly and Sabbath Day as it was the day the lamb was killed, but was really a preparation day (and not necessarily a Friday, as in preparation for the weekly Sabbath).

And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even¹², ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even Ex 12:17-18 (KJV)

In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein Lev 23:5-7 (KJV)

We see in Exodus 12 that the Lambs were to be sacrificed at twilight on the 14th Nisan. This would have been fairly straightforward in Egypt as every household killed their own lamb, so they could all have been killed within a few minutes of each other. In Yeshua's time though, these sacrifices took place at the temple and thus became a significant logistical issue.

Apparently, during Yeshua's time, the Passover lambs were killed over a two day period to accommodate Jews from the diaspora, and for this and other biblical reasons¹³ the Passover meal was also taken over 2

¹⁰ *And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.* Num 33:3 (KJV). You may recall from Ex 3:21 that the Hebrews 'plundered' the Egyptians. This would have taken some time, hence the day the transpired between the Passover meal and their departure. Some scholars therefore argue that, if the night of the 15th meant at the start of the 15th after sunset, then the Passover sacrifice actually occurred 'between the evenings' of the 13th and 14th (that is, after 3 pm on the 13th) with the meal therefore occurring at the start of the 14th Nisan.

¹¹ "... all the leaven was carefully removed from the houses on the evening before the fourteenth Nisan. To the present day leaven is removed from the houses of the Jews on the night between the thirteenth and fourteenth. Hence the day could be very fittingly called "the first day of unleavened bread." —*Four-Fold Gospel* by J. W. McGARVEY and PHILIP Y. PENDLETON 1914

¹² 'at even' -- that is, the interval between the sun's beginning to decline, and sunset, corresponding to our three o'clock in the afternoon.—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

¹³ <http://www.bibleinsight.com/passover.html>

nights. Jewish sources¹⁴ estimate that there may have been at least 2 million Jews in Israel around 30 AD (with an expectation to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover). Thus there would have been around 200,000 lambs and goats (1 lamb or goat per household) to be killed and skinned by the temple priests. To achieve this two days of sacrifice were apparently needed¹⁵.

So Yeshua's death occurred while lambs were still being sacrificed at the temple.

As mentioned above we read in Mathew 26 that the disciples prepared the Passover meal.

Yet look at John 18:28,29 *Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"* and we see that the Pharisees had not yet partaken of the Passover meal when they took Yeshua to face Pilate.

Many commentaries have argued about this and suggested a number of understandings, including that there were two nights on which the Passover Meal could be taken.

God also told Moses to celebrate a 7 day Festival (The Festival of Unleavened Bread) to commemorate this event. These 7 days started with the 15th Nisan which God said was to be a day for a Holy Assembly and a day on which no work (other than preparation of the meal) was to be done.

Thus, this day was to be a Sabbath day. In the week of Yeshua death it appears that this day, the 15th Nisan was the Thursday eve/Friday and was followed by the weekly Sabbath (Friday eve/Saturday). Therefore the Jews asked for Yeshua to be removed from the cross because the next day was a Sabbath.

After 4 days from when Yeshua entered Jerusalem, he was crucified.

The Passover (what Christians normally now call Easter, thanks to the Roman Emperor Constantine around 325 AD) is a time for rejoicing, not a time for mourning.

Just as in the first Passover at the exodus from Egypt, our Passover is a new beginning. Just as the Jews with their Passover commemoration, celebrate their escape from slavery and a new beginning in a land of milk and honey; we celebrate at Passover a new birth and our opportunity through the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb to enter our land of milk and honey, the coming Kingdom of God.

A possible chronology then, is shown below:

Hebrew Date	Possible equivalent evening and day of the week	
10 th Nisan	Saturday eve (Yeshua enters Jerusalem)	Sunday
11 th Nisan	Sunday eve	Monday
12 th Nisan	Monday eve	Tuesday
13 th Nisan	Tuesday eve	Wednesday
14 th Nisan	Wednesday eve (Yeshua shares the Passover Meal)	Thursday (Day 1) (Yeshua is crucified)
15 th Nisan	Thursday eve (Night 1)	Friday (Day 2)
16 th Nisan	Friday Eve (Night 2)	Saturday (Day 3)
17 th Nisan	Saturday eve (Night 3)	Sunday (Yeshua is resurrected)

Paul wrote about our Lord being raised from the dead as "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Cor 15:20).

14 "Study traces worldwide Jewish population from Exodus to modern age" Haaretz.com 2005. Also see end note – quote from Josephus

15 Some argue that the Northern part of the country (Samaria and Galilee, etc) went with the old way of dating (starting from morning and going to the following morning). The Southern part of the country followed the official dating method (from evening to evening). Thus, there were two times when lambs were being killed in the Temple for sacrifice. With two calendars in use, it was possible to spread the slaughter procedure over two days. The Galilean worshippers had their lamb killed a day earlier (end of 13th), while the Judeans had theirs killed the following day (end of 14th). In both cases, the worshippers were eating their lamb on the same evening that it was killed. Jesus, who was a Galilean, may therefore have ate the Passover on the 13th of Nisan. – paraphrased from <http://www.xenos.org/classes/chronc.htm>. Others argue that it was not a proper Passover meal – see New International Bible Commentary, FF Bruce, General Editor (p 1223)

Yeshua was either resurrected on the Saturday Sabbath (most unlikely in my opinion – see note re wave-sheaf below) or during the first 12 hours of the 1st day of the week (Sunday).

Certainly it appears from Matt 28:1 (*Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it.*) that Yeshua was resurrected by dawn on the Sunday.

As token acknowledgment of God's provision of rain and harvest, the Hebrews were to participate in a ceremony of the presentation of the first grain of the harvest. Lev 23:11 informs us that the First Fruits ceremony was to be on the day after the Sabbath and thus would normally be on the 16th Nisan. If in the crucifixion week, the first day of the week of Unleavened bread was the Friday, then with 2 Sabbaths in a row, the First Fruits ceremony would be on the 17th Nisan (Sunday) rather than the 16th Nisan as normal. [Barley, as the first crop of the year was usually used as the wave-sheaf – this ceremony was basically a cutting of a sheaf of the grain crop and waving it at the temple before God]¹⁶

Let me very briefly address the beliefs that Yeshua was crucified on the Friday or Wednesday. In John 12:1 (*Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead*) we read that Yeshua entered Bethany. If the Passover (and Yeshua crucifixion) was on the Friday, then 6 days before is the Saturday or Sabbath. As an observant Jew (or more accurately, Judean), Yeshua would not, in all likelihood, have travelled far on the Sabbath. Thus, Friday seems unlikely (along with the issue of Yeshua being in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights!).

What of the Wednesday? If the Passover was the Wednesday then the 'Day of Holy Assembly' or Sabbath of the first day (15th Nisan) of the Passover Week was the Thursday. (*Lev 23:6 On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.*).

This means that the wave-sheaf offering would have been on the Friday (*Lev 23:11 He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the sabbath*). The sabbath being referred to here is the Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, namely the 15th Nisan sabbath. As discussed above this means Yeshua's representation as the wave-sheaf offering is brought into question and therefore this day seems most unlikely as well.

Also, if Yeshua's resurrection is represented by the parting of the red sea in the Exodus, thus opening the way to eternal life, and as it appears that this occurred during the middle or morning watch (the third watch of the night i.e. 2 AM – 6 AM was when the Red Sea was closed back over the Egyptian soldiers -Ex 14:24) – perhaps Yeshua also was resurrected between 10 pm Saturday night and 6 am Sunday morning. It also appears (Num 33:3) that the crossing of the Red Sea was 3 days after the Jews left Egypt.

This is clearly consistent with Matt 12:40 *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*.

Yet we read in Matt 20:19 *“And the third day He shall be raised.”*

Like Jonah, Yeshua was to be three days and **three nights** in the 'heart of the earth' (i.e. dead or 'asleep in the grave').

It is very clear that Yeshua was alive again, i.e. had been resurrected by the morning of the first day of the week. (Luke 24:1). This alone does not establish for how long he had been resurrected. If we assume his resurrection sometime during the previous night then taking a simple reading of 3 nights, Yeshua was dead for Saturday night; Friday night and Thursday night.

If we take this approach, how do we understand Luke 24:21 *“today is the third day since...”* - perhaps in this way: if Thursday, then the first day since in Friday; the 2nd Saturday and the 3rd Sunday.

¹⁶ If the crucifixion was in fact on the Friday it would require that the Saturday was the 15th Nisan and that therefore Yeshua was resurrected on the 16th Nisan.

We can be very sure that Yeshua was resurrected by the morning of the first day of the week, both from the statements that the woman visited the tomb on the morning of the first day and from the two on the road to Emmaus, some 12 kms away (Luke 24:13). We are told it was the same day and as they were Jewish it clearly wasn't the Sabbath (Saturday). [Note: some who argue for a Wednesday crucifixion and a Sabbath resurrection, argue that this verse refers to the day AFTER the third day]

[Lev 23:11 *'And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, for your acceptance. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest waves it.'*]

As Yeshua was the 'first-fruits' and 'wave-sheaf offering', he would have presented himself before Yahweh sometime after sunrise during the first day of the week. Of-course, if the 15th Nisan began on the Thursday, then because there were 2 Sabbaths in a row the wave-sheaf offering would still have been on the first day of the week.

As explained previously, let us look at the incredible parallel with the Exodus, where Yeshua's resurrection equates with the Red Sea crossing (the passing into freedom).

Numbers 33:5-8 (1998 Scriptures):

Then the children of Israel departed from Rameses (after sunrise on the 15th Nisan and Day 1) and camped at Sukkoth. (Night 1) And they departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. (end of Day 2 & Night 2) And they departed from Etham, and turned back to Pihahiroth, which is east of Baal-zephon. And they camped near Migdol. . (end of Day 3 & Night 3) And they departed from before Penehahiroth and passed over through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, (Red Sea crossing – probably between 2 am and 6 am and therefore not an extra day) went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah.

Also an aside which helps confirm this analogy or 'type' is Ex 15:2. Here we have described the Hebrews singing the song of Moses. This same song will be sung after the second coming of the Messiah as described in Isaiah 10-12.

[Also repeated in Ps 118:14 verse 22 quoted by Yeshua and applied to himself *"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner-stone."* & Isa 12:2 – follows on as conclusion to Isaiah 10 & 11 which is about the return of the Messiah.

For example, Isa 11:1 *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,* - in that day you will say: "Yah is my strength and song, and He has become my deliverance" - That is, 'God saves' – the meaning of Yeshua's name.]

Thus my argument is that Yeshua was crucified during the day (after sunrise) of the 14th Nisan (a Thursday) and rose on the morning of the 17th Nisan (the Sunday), giving the equivalent 3 days and nights.

Incidentally, there is reasonable historical and astronomical evidence that the 30 AD qualifies as a year when the 15th Nisan fell on the Friday.

I think it is wise though, not to be at all dogmatic about the Thursday or Friday, etc.

In the same way we celebrate our birthdays on the actual date, not day of the week, I think we are perhaps better to remember the Passover of our Lamb, on the anniversary of the date it occurred, – that is let us remember Yeshua's Passover meal and death on the 14th Nisan. Let us also celebrate his resurrection on the 17th Nisan. (While the debate remains as to whether the 14th Nisan was a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday in the year Yeshua was crucified, we can be much more certain that it was indeed the 14th and not 15th or 16th Nisan).

It seems to me that it would also be great to celebrate the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 21st Nisan) as 'Moshiach/Messiah's Feast'

A Judaic comment: *On this final day of Passover we strive for the highest level of freedom, and focus on the Final Redemption. .. we end Passover with "Moshiach's Feast" — a festive meal complete with matza and four cups of wine, during which we celebrate the imminent arrival of the Messiah. The feast begins before sunset and continues until after nightfall.*

An interesting coincidence appears in Isaiah 55.

Isaiah 55:11

*So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; **It shall not return to Me void**, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. " For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

We note from Isaiah 55:10-11 the prophecy that God's word would not return to the Almighty empty. The Messiah Yeshua was God's word – Jesus accomplished all he was sent to do and stated on the cross 'It is finished' (John 19:30).

Now look at the next verses that follow immediately this prophecy in Isaiah (Is 55:12-13). We read here the proclamation of joy at the coming Kingdom of God!

When Messiah Jesus returns and inaugurates the Kingdom of God the whole of creation will rejoice!

As I have already intimated Yeshua was the 'wave-sheaf' offering for the crop of human beings as he is the 'first fruits' of the new humanity, the new creation. He is the first to be resurrected, and enter life eternal.

Incredibly, he also became our High Priest at his resurrection and was therefore the High Priest who presented this offering of himself to God!

Hebrews tells us that *"every high priest is taken from among men and appointed their representative before God, to offer sacrifices for sin. For he is able to bear patiently with the ignorant and erring since he too is beset by weakness"*(Heb. 5:1, 2).

Thus it is said of Yeshua: *"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every way, so that he might be merciful and faithful as their high priest before God"* (Heb. 2:13).

Paul emphasized the uniqueness of Yeshua's priesthood and his relationship with his Father in 1 Timothy 2:5: *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, himself man."*

The High Priest was/is a mediator between the Jewish nation and their God.

Heb 9:11, 12;24 But Messiah, having become a High Priest ... entered into the Most Holy Place once for all, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood, having obtained everlasting redemption. For Messiah has not entered into a Holy Place made by hand – which are copies of the true things – but into the heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf,

Consistent with the idea that high priests are chosen from among *men*, God appointed the man Messiah Jesus (I Tim. 2:5) to the order of Melchizedek's priesthood (Ps. 110:4).

This is clearly a significant pronouncement as it follows on so closely from Psalm 110:1. Ps 110 is a Messianic psalm and Ps 110 verse 1 is by far the most frequently quoted and alluded to OT scripture in the New Testament (some 23 times!).

Let us summarise the way in which Yeshua's Passover mirrored the Passover of the Exodus:

Exodus/Israel Festivals, etc.	Yeshua
Lamb taken in house on 10 th Nisan	Yeshua entered Jerusalem on the 10 th Nisan
Lamb kept in house for 4 days	Yeshua stays in Jerusalem for 4 days, teaching in the temple
Lamb without blemish (Ex 12:5)	Yeshua was found to be 'without fault' (Luke 23:4,14)
Lamb sacrificed at twilight on 14 th Nisan	Yeshua shares the Passover Meal at this time and declares His sacrifice and then dies on the cross before the end of the 14 th Nisan and while lambs were still being sacrificed across the valley at the temple
The Lambs blood protected the first-born of the House of Israel from death	Yeshua's blood shed on the cross protects those who accept Him as Lord and Saviour from eternal death
The Israelites pass from bondage into freedom through the red sea during the morning watch, three days after leaving Egypt.	Yeshua is resurrected 3 days after his crucifixion and possibly during the morning watch or middle watch (Saturday night), demonstrating that all mankind can enter into freedom in the Kingdom of God
On the day after the Sabbath at Passover the ceremony of first fruits is celebrated – the wave-sheaf.	Yeshua is our wave-sheaf through his resurrection – he is the first fruit of those who have died and will live again
The High Priest could not be touched before He entered the Most Holy Place in the Temple.	Yeshua was untouchable at the moment after his resurrection when Mary Magdalene met him ¹⁷ .
The Jews took 3 days and 3 nights to travel from Egypt to the Red Sea and cross it into freedom	Yeshua spent 3 days and 3 nights in the grave, so that upon his resurrection we too may be resurrected into freedom from sin and from this sinful world. Yeshua's resurrection assures us that we too can be resurrected and escape death and attain to everlasting life in the Coming Age.
Foreigners not to share in the Passover celebration unless circumcised into the House of Israel	The Lord's table is not for foreigners to the Gospel – only for those whose hearts have been circumcised into the Anointed One, Yeshua

When Yeshua shared the Passover Meal he took the Matza (unleavened bread -has no yeast or raising agent) and broke it saying that it represented his body (Bread is the 'Staff of Life'). Yeshua said he was the 'bread of life'.

Note the stripes on the Matza – what does Isaiah 53 say? – by his stripes we are healed.

This Matza is essentially the same as the unleavened bread that Yeshua would have shared. Through the 'breaking of this bread' and the resurrection 3 days later, the new age was born. The resurrection marks the birth of a new humanity, children of God who are citizens of the Coming Age.

Thus the resurrection day (the 17th of Nisan) is Yeshua's birthday of believers!

¹⁷ Have you ever wondered why Yeshua told Mary Magdalene not to touch him? He has been raised from the dead. Mary Magdalene witnessed his shocking death and now he stands before her again, in all his resurrection glory. Surely, it would have been a most natural and overpowering desire on her part to wrap her arms around him, to touch him, to fully partake of this amazing miracle?

But what does Yeshua say: *"Do not cling to me, for I have NOT YET ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God...'"* (John 20:17).

Just as the High Priest could not be touched before He entered the Most Holy Place in the Temple, so was Yeshua untouchable at this moment. The Aaronic High Priest had to be pure before entering the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle or temple with the blood of the sacrifice (in fact, tradition tells us that the High Priest would even separate himself from his family for the whole week before he entered the Holy of Holies). So here the High Priest of the new creation, was maintaining his purity before he ascended to God to present himself as the 'wave-sheaf' offering, the first fruits of the new humanity.

On standing before the throne of God Almighty he may have said something like: "I am the sample of the harvest you will receive, please accept the coming harvest if you are pleased with me". Once this newly anointed High Priest had accomplished this task, he was free to be touched (as he instructed Thomas to do), to be hugged and held (This understanding from 'The Feasts of Israel' by Frank Selch).

Our King is alive; our King is about to return. Praise God!

Praise and bow down before his Father and ours; before his God and ours (John 20:17); before Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob; before HaShem (the Name)!

The most common Psalm read or sung as part of the Passover meal is Ps 118. Yeshua explicitly applied part of this Psalm to himself.

Ps 118:

1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!	For His mercy endures forever.
2 Let Israel now say,	"His mercy endures forever."
3 Let the house of Aaron now say,	"His mercy endures forever."
4 Let those who fear the LORD now say,	"His mercy endures forever."
5 I called on the LORD in distress;	The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.
6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.	What can man do to me?
7 The LORD is for me among those who help me;	Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.
8 It is better to trust in the LORD	Than to put confidence in man.
9 It is better to trust in the LORD	Than to put confidence in princes.
10 All nations surrounded me,	But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
11 They surrounded me,	Yes, they surrounded me; But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They surrounded me like bees;	They were quenched like a fire of thorns;
	For in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13 You pushed me violently, that I might fall,	But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and song,	And He has become my salvation.
15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation Is in the tents	of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted;	The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
17 I shall not die, but live,	And declare the works of the LORD.
18 The LORD has chastened me severely,	But He has not given me over to death.
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness;	I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD.
20 This is the gate of the LORD,	Through which the righteous shall enter.
21 I will praise You, For You have answered me,	And have become my salvation.
22 The stone which the builders rejected	Has become the chief cornerstone.
23 This was the LORD's doing;	It is marvelous in our eyes.
24 This is the day the LORD has made;	We will rejoice and be glad in it.
25 Save now, I pray, O LORD;	O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.
26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!	We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.
27 God is the LORD, And He has given us light;	Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
28 You are my God, and I will praise You;	You are my God, I will exalt You.
29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!	For His mercy endures forever

To finish, I would like to place here a brief article on **the True Meaning of** (the first) **Passover** by *Hakham Meir Yosef Rekhavi*¹⁸, a Kariate Jew (the Kariates are a Judaic sect that accept only the written Torah; that is, they reject the Oral Torah, the traditions of men that our Messiah railed against so much).

His article is in blue with some comments by me in red.

We can trace our birth as a nation back to a dark, foreboding night, our last in Egypt (Exodus, Chapter 12). There are no parades, picnics, parties or firework displays to commemorate this event. Everything takes place inside a home, with a family or cluster of families gathered around a table.

(Our Messiah's Passover was a dark, foreboding day with few family present)

Participants partake in a meal consisting of a roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread, while reciting portions of the Mikra (TaNaK or OT – 'that which is read'), which relate to YHWH's promises and deeds in connection with our redemption. This Independence Day is a service dedicated to YHWH whose deliverance of us from bondage was an expression of his love for his chosen people.

(Our Messiah truly delivers us from bondage)

Each item, the roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread all have their place and their significance.

¹⁸ <http://www.karaites.org.uk/passover.shtml>

It is not a party. We were born in slavery, a fact that exerts a sobering influence and places the attainment of any subsequent glory into correct perspective, and a fact that teaches humility.

(Likewise, all since Adam has been born into the slavery of sin)

More than anything else, our Independence Day, our Freedom Festival expresses this one fact: YHWH did it. No armies stood against the mighty Egyptians.

(No Armies of strong men stood and helped our Messiah – only our Father did it as it was His will – ‘Not my will but Your’s Father’.)

Freedom came in the blackest night while families huddled around the Passover table, their bags packed, waiting for deliverance. Deliverance not just from the bondage of the body and physical pleasures of life but from spiritual servitude. When YHWH's time came, the Egyptian captors not only released us, but begged us to go and showered us with gold and riches.

(At this time the world may not be showering us with gifts but they will! Eg Zec 14:14)

We remember that event with humility and praise; there is no room for pride. Amen!

Later, when Pharaoh changed his mind and set his chariots loose upon our fleeing tribes, YHWH came through again. All Israel stood a trembling, already having doubts about their freedom.

This was after 3 days – likewise our first brothers of Yeshua stood around, huddled in fear because their King was dead!

But YHWH destroyed the great Egyptian army affirming that he does not remain aloof and distant from the affairs of mankind.

But our Father destroyed death!!!

*In the events of the Exodus we realized that YHWH was not just a national deity but the King of all Creation, the Master of History, YHWH is our Savior **and he alone**. Amen!*

We were redeemed with a purpose, to serve YHWH and to keep his Torah.

Amen! Yeshua is the completion of and perfection of the Torah, the divine instructions of God!

True freedom is not just the negation of slavery, in whatever form it manifests itself, but the willing acceptance of a higher discipline.

Israel attained complete and true freedom at Sinai when we willingly accepted the discipline demanded by the Torah. We were released from subjection to an earthly master in order to prove our worth as a chosen people prepared to serve YHWH. The truth has therefore been impressed upon us: there is no absolute freedom!

Only a choice of masters, we can serve YHWH and be free, or else serve man and be enslaved. Amen!

*Therefore for us, the Children of Israel, independence from Egypt means dependence upon YHWH. This pattern of dependence was to continue throughout our time in the wilderness. **When we ran out of water, YHWH provided. When food supplies failed, YHWH provided. When the 'Amelekites attacked, YHWH provided.***

Do we, you and I, brothers and sisters of our Messiah Yeshua have this degree of faith in Australia, this land of plenty and this time of favour – are we prepared to rely on our God as the Hebrew people did in their day of independence?

Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam

(Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe!)

Prepared by Paul Herring

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End Note:

“The Wars Of The Jews Or The History Of The Destruction Of Jerusalem” By Josephus

An excerpt from Chapter 9 regarding the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD:

*“...So these high priests, upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till 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, found the number of sacrifices was **two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred**; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy; for as to those that have the leprosy, or the gonorrhoea, or women that have their monthly courses, or such as are otherwise polluted, it is not lawful for them to be partakers of this sacrifice; nor indeed for any foreigners neither, who come hither to worship...”*